

3rd April 2020



King Henry VIII Senior School
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Headmaster: Jason Slack BSc, MA Ed

Dear Parents and Pupils,

Thank you for your patience with regard to further information about the awarding of grades for GCSEs and A levels. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) are the Government department that regulate GCSEs and A levels. They are the body responsible for monitoring exam boards in England so that grades are awarded fairly. Ofqual have now released guidance to schools on how exam grades will be awarded to pupils taking A levels and GCSEs in the absence of exams this summer.

At this stage the announcement only applies to GCSE, A Level, and Extended Project Qualification. We have tried to get clarification regarding IGCSEs, the FSMQ (GCSE further mathematics) and International A Level (geography) and have been told that more information will follow soon. Many independent schools follow courses in IGCSE and I would hope that they will follow a similar pattern to GCSEs. I will write again once there is greater clarity regarding this.

The information published by Ofqual was only made available this morning and we are still trying to gain a better understanding of what this means within school. I am meeting with senior colleagues on Monday morning so that we can plan how to implement these instructions in the coming weeks.

The headlines are:

- Schools are being asked to provide the most likely grade that candidates would have achieved in the exams had they been able to carry on as normal.
- Within each subject, schools are being asked to rank all pupils in order of merit.
- Schools are not allowed to share the grade or rank order with pupils/parents.
- Grades submitted by schools will be statistically analysed and standardised across the country so that the final grade awarded may not be the same as that submitted. This standardisation will help prevent schools being too generous or harsh in the awarding of their grades.

Schools are being asked to consider a range of evidence in arriving at the grade awarded for each pupil in each subject. You will be aware that teachers at King Henry VIII School know their pupils very well and are strongly placed to assess the work that has been completed by each pupil. I want to reassure you of our ability to follow the government instruction in exercising our holistic and professional judgement.

In the interests of transparency, all of the documents that have been distributed to schools are published on the Ofqual website and are available for everyone to read here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcses-as-and-a-level-awarding-summer-2020>

Whilst work on this exercise will inevitably start straight away, it is important to realise that Ofqual have explained that the submission of the information will not be expected before 29th May (at the earliest). Teachers at school will have time to draw together the necessary information. We will draw upon the vast experience of our Heads of Department to establish clear instruction on how to collate the information needed by exam boards that takes account of the inevitable differences across different subjects. This work will be closely monitored by myself and the Senior Management Team.

For our GCSE pupils, once we have collated everything that we need and submitted it to the examination boards, we will begin an introduction to A Level course. More information will follow about this after Easter.

You will appreciate that there is a lot of information to digest. Inevitably this will lead to further queries. I will keep parents and pupils well informed as we progress through the coming weeks and thank you for your support in the meantime.

Yours sincerely,



J. Slack
Headmaster