

14th April 2020



King Henry VIII Senior School
Warwick Road
Coventry
CV3 6AQ

Headmaster: Jason Slack BSc, MA Ed

Dear Parent,

I trust that you and your families are managing to stay well during the Easter holidays. Certainly, the nature of the Easter holidays has turned out to be very different from our expectations of just a few short months ago.

I have had a few common queries from several pupils and parents since my last letter of 3rd April and I thought it prudent to share relevant responses with everyone given that similar questions may have arisen from others.

Exam Board Information and 'Most Likely Grades'

We have received no further information from exam boards since my last letter. In particular, we are still awaiting confirmation that IGCSE and Further Maths will be treated in the same way as other GCSE and A levels. All of the indications and 'chatter' have suggested that this will be the case. Heads of Department and Teachers within Departments have been busy gaining a clearer understanding of the information required by exam boards, and the evidence on which 'orders of merit' and 'most likely grades' should be based. Ofqual have stated that the sources of evidence to be included will include the following, where appropriate:

- Mock Exams
- Coursework related to specification (or 'NEA')
- Previous whole school assessment points
 - Year 13:
 - November Assessments
 - End of Year 12 exams
 - Year 12 Feb assessments
 - Year 12 Nov assessments
 - GCSE Performance
 - Year 11
 - End of Year 10 exams
 - End of Year 9 exams
- Common pieces of work completed across year groups where results can be compared (end of topic tests, for example).

Of course, there may well be other sources of evidence that are specific to a given subject.

Teachers at King Henry VIII School pride themselves on their understanding of pupils as individuals. Indeed, I believe this to be a major strength of the school. Ofqual have asked that schools use their 'professional experience' using a full range of available evidence. Please be reassured that we have professional experience in abundance. We know your children very well and we are well placed to make a case for exam grades that are fair and take into account the full range of available evidence. Teachers within Departments will consult and collaborate very closely in coming to a collegiate, professional view of the required information.

Lessons after Easter

Heads of Department have been asked to carefully consider the nature and content of lessons delivered after Easter with the following points in mind:

Specification Content

Finishing the taught material of the specification must still be a priority at both A level and GCSE level. I appreciate that most subjects have already completed this. However, if there is still some content to be covered, then teachers will ensure that this is covered as a priority. This will be needed in order that pupils have a strong foundation of knowledge from which to start the next stage of their education (at university, or within the sixth form, for example). In addition, the Government have explained their intention to make the opportunity available to sit external exams available in the Autumn. Whilst we would hope that this isn't necessary for most pupils, we mustn't take away the opportunity of any pupil wanting to take one of these exams having been taught the full specification. We haven't been told any details of these external exams and I will let you know further details when they are available.

Coursework

The majority of coursework in the relevant subjects has been completed. However, there may still be some pieces of coursework that have not been finalised in some subjects. I have asked Heads of Department to consider the position of any unfinished coursework carefully. Heads of Department may well be asking pupils to carry on with coursework that is nearing completion, or was started before school closed. Pupils should not be concerned if Heads of Department do not ask for further pieces of coursework to be started. Ofqual have made it clear that 'Heads of Centre should exercise caution where that evidence [new pieces of coursework, for example], suggests a change in performance.' Heads of Department will be able to provide further details regarding the coursework for a particular subject.

Revision

It would seem unreasonable, at the minute, to set revision work for exams that won't be taken! Motivation to complete such work may well vary widely among the pupils. Arrangements for revision, if needed, for exams in the Autumn will be given when further details are known.

Moving Forward

Year 11:

We are currently working on a program of study that will engage Year 11 pupils in some A level preparation work later this half term. Further details will be sent when this is finalised. Our priority in the meantime is collating evidence for the 'rank order of pupils' for each subject and 'most likely grade'.

Year 13:

Our priority in the next few weeks is collating evidence for the 'rank order of pupils' for each subject and 'most likely grade'. Teachers will communicate with pupils should any further work be needed in line with the information shared in this letter. We will also be keen to support pupils with any concerns over entry to Higher Education and the UCAS process. Please get in touch if you feel we can help in any way.

I hope that all of the above makes sense. Please be assured of our best efforts and attention in supporting your children in the coming weeks and months and please get in touch if you have any queries. I wish you well for the remainder of the Easter holiday.

Yours sincerely,



J. Slack
Headmaster