



Friday 19 March 2021

Dear Students, Parents, Carers and Families,

I hope this letter finds you and your families safe and well. First of all, I just want to extend a huge thank you to all for the support and work everyone has put in during lockdown. Year 13 have returned ready to learn and have been hugely impressive, displaying a really positive attitude and work ethic.

The main purpose of this letter is to explain regarding the final year 13 review which is due to you by the Easter holidays and also the process of 'Teacher Assessed Grades' for year 13 which are replacing formal exams which have been cancelled this year.

Final YR13 review:

In normal circumstances we would now issue you with a final predicted grade, (basically the teacher's judgement on how well the student will perform in the exams) along with a progress indicator, an approach to learning score, whether or not a student is a cause for concern and action points where required.

This year we find ourselves in the most extraordinary situation and as such we cannot provide you with a predicted grade as students are not taking exams. We are in the process of collecting historical and holistic evidence, along with teaching and assessing through summer A to capture the most recent academic progress, so that we can arrive at a 'Teacher Assessed Grade'. With that process only just underway, it is not possible with any degree of accuracy to name a specific grade as a prediction.

Having spoken to the vast majority of YR13 this week and thought deeply myself about what is required, I do know that that we need to provide some kind of benchmark so students know of any areas to focus on, some kind of indication regarding post- 18 destinations, especially entry requirements for university and in light of this and given the limited options available, the final review will consist of the following information:

1. We will issue the original subject target grade that has been the teacher's guide in terms of expectation of what we would like students to achieve in each subject taken. These targets are based on historical results data in the top 25% of 16-19 schools and colleges nationally. It must be said that students would not usually see these targets but at this time, they have asked, (and I agree), that it appropriate to use these as a benchmark.
2. We will issue a progress indicator towards the target grade in terms of a student being either +/-/ or – compared to target grade. **It must be remembered that this is a broad judgement and not definitive.**
3. Student will be given an approach to learning score- the same as previous reviews.
4. Students will be given a 'cause for concern' indicator either Y/N- again as in previous reviews.
5. If any student is 'target minus' then they will be a caused for concern-Y and will get some action points in terms of how to improve.

Additionally, it is important to remember that the main reason for Huish Sixth not issuing student target grades in normal circumstances is that, fundamentally, we want students to be motivated by their own desire, work ethic and in essence set their own targets and ambitions. As a result of this, many students have felt empowered and ambitious enough to apply for some very prestigious universities with challenging entry requirements. It may well be the case that some of the target grades issued by us in this final review are lower than this entry requirement, so the student must take care to check where this is the case and do everything they can, with our support, to exceed the target grade issued.

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Year 13 'Teacher Assessed Grades':

Teachers are now beginning the process of collating evidence towards these in all subject areas with a timeline as follows:

Immediately: Process of collating evidence begins.

End of Spring B: Last teaching of new subject content.

W/B 19th April: Ongoing revision, consolidation and in-class assessment for all subjects along with on-going classwork, essay-writing and other relevant tasks.

W/B 24th May: Process of allocating grades and moderation/rank ordering begins.

Friday 28th May: Last day for YR13 students.

W/B 7th June: Moderated grades entered into school systems.

W/B 11th June: Final checking by Heads of Subject and Head of Sixth.

Friday 18th June: Deadline for all grades to be submitted to exam boards.

As you can see from this timeline, we are not conducting a formal 'mock exam week/assessment week' as we feel this would be out of kilter with the national decision to cancel exams. We also conducted a student voice exercise and 89% of YR13, (from an 86% turnout) supported this course of action. Instead we will be conducting on-going assessment in class with a mixture of evidence being taken into consideration from across the taught content as follows:

Primary Evidence:

Previous mock exams along with past papers and formal assessments- both historical and current- including some to be taken in Summer A in class over a series of lessons. Exam questions or other assessment methods, topic tests, sat in-class, under controlled conditions again both historical, current and any taken in summer A. Coursework and Non-Examined Assessment in the relevant subjects.

In the case of primary evidence, a thorough moderation process will take place.

Secondary Evidence:

Classwork and homework where we are confident that all work has been carried out completely independently.

Essays, and other significant lesson tasks that have been marked.

Knowledge quizzes and multiple-choice activities which may form a small part of a larger group of evidence in a particular topic.

In every case, teacher judgement will be used to select the evidence used and it is through this range of evidence that the 'Teacher Assessed Grade' will be judged. There is no allowance for predictions or 'what if' scenarios within the Ofqual guidance.

Appeals:

The Ofqual guidance for appeals is very clear as follows:

1st appeal:

Scenario:

A student who is unhappy with the grade awarded can ask whether an administrative/procedural error has been made.

Response:

The subject teacher/subject lead/exams officer will re-check the portfolio and the grade

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entry/submission- if a procedural error has been identified the centre can ask for a revised grade to be submitted with the rationale for the grade change; if the exam board accepts this, they will issue the revised grade.

If the teacher/HoS identifies that no error has been made we will inform the student/parents. If the student is still unhappy with the grade awarded then:

2nd appeal:

The student can ask for the centre, (via the head of subject/exams officer), to appeal to the exam board on their behalf if they are still unhappy with the grade. The exam board will then ask the centre to submit the portfolio of evidence via the exams officer and the board will consider the evidence and the grade awarded. If the exam board disagrees with the centre awarded grade, they will then determine a grade from the evidence submitted.

It is vital that we make it clear to students and parents that this could result in a grade going down as well as up.

Once a 2nd Appeal has been submitted, it is entirely the exam board's decision regarding whether or not a grade changes in any way- the centre has no part in the process from the point of submitting the evidence of a 'Teacher Assessed Grade'.

The final thing to point out is that we cannot discuss, in any way, with students or parents, possible grades being awarded and we ask that you support us in allowing time and space for us to conduct this process in an objective manner. A-Level results day is Tuesday August the 10th, (details regarding how this will take place will be issued nearer the time), and until that time we cannot enter into any dialogue regarding grades.

If you have any subject specific questions following the issuing of the final year 13 review please get in touch with your child's teacher or Head of Subject. If you have any general or overarching queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With the very best of wishes,

Andrew Woodward
Assistant Principal: Head of Huish Sixth