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Dear Parents/Carers

GCSE Centre Assessed Grades 2021

It has been wonderful to embark on my first week at Rayner Stephens with supporting the GCSE Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) process for Year 11. The key aim is to support both staff and learners through this process and ensure the best outcomes for the learners.

Further to my letter before the Easter break, I am now in a position to provide *the full assessment topic overview by subject* and the assessments that will take place in the hall week commencing **10th May 2021**. Please feel assured that all of this information will be communicated with your son/daughter week commencing **Monday 26th April in our Year 11 assemblies**. It is also important to note the assessments will be 45 minutes or less dependent on the topic, these are not mock examinations.

There is a lot of information contained in this letter so I will try to keep it as succinct as possible.

How we will assess the grades:

- Teachers will use the exam board criteria for each course to assess learners and determine a grade.
- We will base our assessment on the standard at **which learners are currently working, we are unable to forecast a grade**, it's an evidence based assessment, using a range of learner assessment pieces.
- *Learners will only be assessed on what content has been delivered 'securely'* (this is to ensure there is fairness in the awarding of grades. We will ensure that learners have covered sufficient content to allow for progression (to Post-16 study).
- We will use a broad range of assessment evidence, in line with guidance from awarding bodies, but we will need to be confident that it is the learner's own work.
- In deciding if the evidence is the learner's own work, we will take into account whether the work was produced in controlled conditions (supervised by a teacher or adult) and whether the standard is in line with other evidence that we have for that learner.
- Each department will determine its own portfolio of evidence, which provides the best overview of learner attainment for their subject in the circumstances and in consideration of the impact of COVID 19. The evidence can come from any point during the course of study, but recent class work and forthcoming assessments, will form the main evidence base. The only exceptions are in Art, Design technology, BTEC Health & Social Care, BTEC Sport & Music where course work and/or controlled assessments have already taken place.
- Final grades will only be determined at the very end of the process and could be higher or lower than grades included in reports or for particular assessments.



- Learners will be made aware of which evidence is being used to assess their grade but will not be informed of the grade **until the results day in August**, in line with Ofqual's instructions.
- *Learners will always know if and when the work they are doing could count towards their evidence. They will not be assessed without their knowledge.*

Exam Access Arrangements

Exam access arrangements are in place for learners who have been awarded and assessed for 'exam access arrangements'. We will be asking each of these **learners to sign a form after each assessment** to confirm they have or have not used their access arrangements, this could be additional time, reader pen etc. If you have any queries about this please email me to discuss further.

How we will ensure the grades are fair:

- We will carry out quality assurance (including moderation) and check grades thoroughly before they are submitted.
- Moderation processes will anonymise learner details to prevent possible bias.
- All grades will be quality assured by the Head of department, Senior Leadership team and external consultants.
- We will consider previous results from Rayner Stephens to ensure that this year's grades are not unduly harsh or lenient.
- Exam boards will carry out external quality assurance. If there are concerns with the grades submitted, the awarding body will work with the school to address this before results are released.

I appreciate how difficult this situation is for the learners. However, I can reassure you that we are *taking the responsibility of assessing their grades with the utmost seriousness and we will give them every chance to demonstrate what they can do to gain the excellent results they deserve.*

So, what does this really mean for our learners?

A timeline of what will be happening in the next few weeks to gather the assessment evidence, has been provided to support this letter. What I can assure you is that we will guide our learners through this with a great deal of care and they will be given every opportunity to demonstrate their ability. *I am sure you will understand that it will not be possible for us to enter into a conversation with you about the grades to be awarded in the summer, and I would please ask you to refrain from contacting individual teachers to ask about grades, as they are not permitted to discuss this.*

The most important message is for our learners to continue to work hard and act on the feedback provided by their teachers because there will be lots of opportunities to demonstrate their ability. We have every confidence in them. Topic 1.3 Putting a Business Idea into Practice. In the meantime, we will do everything we can to make our learners final term the very best possible. Thank you for your ongoing support and please do contact us if you need anything at all.

Important dates:

- We will determine and send the grades to the exam boards by the **18th June 2021**.
- GCSE and vocational results will be published for learners on the **12th August 2021**.
- Year 11 Post 16 preparation **07th -25th June**
- Official Leavers Date **Friday 25th June**

Please note. That up to the 25th June **learners may be contacted to come into school on any given day to complete portfolio work for any subject**. When not in school, they will continue with remote learning. The work during this period will be provided by Tameside local colleges to support their transition to college.

Kind regards,

Sonia Schofield