



King's Group  
*Academies*



King's Academy  
**Prospect**

Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading

Berkshire RG30 4EX

Tel: 0118 959 0466

[enquiries@prospect.reading.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@prospect.reading.sch.uk)

<http://www.kgaprospect.uk>

Headteacher: Mr D Littlemore

7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Dear families of Year 11 students,

## **Year 11 Update**

### **Academic Review Day Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> January**

You will be invited to make a 10-minute appointment with your child's tutor to discuss their overall progress and how to support them for the remainder of this year, including during the mock exams. In addition, all Year 11 students are invited to be in school during this day to undertake supervised revision. Some students are expected to attend targeted intervention sessions in English, maths and science. More information will be sent out next week.

### **Mock Exams**

Next term all Year 11 students will sit mock exams. These begin on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. Mr Jenkins is busy finalising the timetable and this will be sent home to you before the end of term. We expect all students to approach these mock exams with maturity and integrity as they will be a strong indicator of progress to date, and the results will be used to plan further intervention and support. In addition, these assessments may also now be used as evidence towards Teacher Assessed Grades, should exams be cancelled this summer. More information regarding this is below.

Please refer to the KS4 handbook and year 11 revision guide and to the materials sent out following the Year 11 information evening on how to support and prepare your child for their mock exams. In most subjects, students will sit exams, which will mirror the format and content of what they may face in the summer. Departments will be using a mixture of past paper questions, as well as exam questions from other sources to make up the papers and mark schemes.

### **Confirmation of contingency plans for the summer**

Ofqual have now confirmed the contingency arrangements should exams not be able to take place next summer. It is still the very firm intention of the Government that GCSE and vocational exams should go ahead as planned, with appropriate adaptations to recognise the impact of the pandemic.

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King's Academy College Park, Crofton Road, North End,  
Portsmouth, England, PO2 0NT  
Registered in England - Company No: 09017776

Tel: (+44) 023 92 629949  
[info@kingsacademies.uk](mailto:info@kingsacademies.uk)

However, there is now a “Plan B” in place, which will come into effect if a decision is taken to cancel exams. Some of the key points of the contingency arrangements are:

### Teacher Assessed Grades [TAGs]

- In the unlikely event that exams are not able to go ahead fairly or safely, schools will be asked to generate Teacher Assessed Grades.
- If it proves necessary to cancel exams in some parts of England, exams will be cancelled for all students and the TAG approach will be implemented nationally.
- Specific guidance on how to determine TAGs will only be published to schools if the decision is taken to cancel exams.
- Teachers must not attempt to determine TAGs before any such guidance is published.
- Ofqual has published guidance for teachers on how to collect evidence of students’ performance this year for use should TAGs be needed.
- Schools should plan assessments throughout the academic year to use as evidence if TAGs are required.
- Students should be told which parts of the subject content will be covered by each assessment, but they should not be told the questions in advance nor be able to predict the questions from information given to them.
- Teachers setting assessments after the advance information for the summer 2022 exams has been published (on Feb 7<sup>th</sup>), should take that advance information into account when deciding how to assess their students.
- Assessments taken to inform TAGs should cover only content the students have been taught by the time of each assessment.

### Timing of TAG assessments

- Schools should plan assessment opportunities to a timetable that secures evidence which could be used to inform TAGs if necessary.
- Each school should decide when the assessments will take place.
- Normal assessment points should, where possible, be used to provide evidence to inform TAGs if they are needed.
- The guidance indicates that three assessment opportunities across the year would be a sensible model.

### Special consideration

If a school is satisfied that a student’s performance in one or more of the assessments was affected by an event that was outside of the student’s control **at the time of, or immediately before**, the assessment, such as illness or family bereavement, the school should adjust their marking of the assessment. The [Joint Council for Qualification's \(JCQ\) approach to special consideration](#) provides a helpful reference point.

Links to the guidance from the Department for Education and the outcome of Ofqual’s consultation can be found here:

[Guidance for schools, colleges and other exam centres on contingency arrangements for students entering GCSEs, AS and A levels, the Advanced Extension Award and Project qualifications in summer 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Decisions on contingency arrangements 2022: GCSE, AS, A level, Project and AEA - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Implications for the rest of the year

- In addition to the mock exams in January, there is already a planned assessment and reporting point in March. If we do have to move to a TAG approach in the Spring Term, we will split this assessment period into two so that for all subjects, students will sit some papers in March (in the second half of the Spring term) and some in May (in the early part of the summer term). The reason for splitting this assessment period in two, is to provide students with more time to prepare and revise for each set of exams, in accordance with the guidance from the DfE and Ofqual. As evidence towards TAGs, teachers will use the results from these two sets of assessments alongside the results from the mocks in January and also from any controlled assessment or coursework. This plan is, of course subject to change following the latest information from the Department for Education and Ofqual and we will update you accordingly.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example prolonged absence from school due to illness), no other evidence will be used to inform Teacher Assessment Grades. This includes mock exams and assessments completed earlier this Autumn term for Reporting Point 1.
- The contingency arrangements for vocational subjects, including BTECs is different for each qualification. Evidence for TAGs can be taken from coursework, controlled assessment, practical work as well as from any actual exams already taken by the student. Teachers will update students on these arrangements.

Please e-mail me ([smccavish@prospect.reading.sch.uk](mailto:smccavish@prospect.reading.sch.uk)) if circumstances such as illness or family bereavement impact your child during the mock exam period in January, in order that we can make a note of these circumstances. Please note that special consideration is not usually applied when students' preparation for assessments has been disrupted for any reason, or if they are suffering from long-term medical conditions: it can only be applied for due to temporary difficulties at the time of specific assessments.

## Feedback from the January mock exams

Once teachers have had the opportunity to mark mock papers and moderate them within departments, we will go through them with students in class so that they can learn from them. However unlike for previous mock exams, students will not be able to write on these papers nor take them away with them – the Ofqual guidance makes it clear that we must retain the papers in school and keep them secure in case we must use them as evidence for TAGs. Departments will use other mechanisms to ensure that students can capture their mock to inform their learning. This may include photocopies of their work, which can be taken away.

## Marks and grades

Teachers will mark mock papers according to the relevant mark scheme that has been agreed in departments, so that students will be given feedback and a mark and grade for each paper. It is important to note that any grades awarded for a paper will be on just one component of the qualification. We are still planning to report on Current Working Grades (CWGs) and Professional Predicted Grades (PPGs) following the mock exams, in early February, but this will be confirmed next term. If exams are cancelled and contingency arrangements are put in place, it is likely that schools will be asked to generate Teacher Assessed Grades holistically, looking at whether all the evidence meets the required criteria of a certain grade in each subject. It is therefore important to remember that the results from the mock exams in January will not necessarily be an indicator of a possible Teacher Assessed Grade in the

summer.

We are essentially trying to plan for two possibilities – students taking exams next summer, in which case they need to know where they are at and how to improve – and the contingency “Plan B”, in which case we want to give students the best opportunities to demonstrate what they are capable of. The remainder of formal assessments this year will therefore serve a dual purpose, and we are trying to make sure that they are as useful as possible for students whether they take their exams in the summer as planned, or whether the assessments form evidence for TAGs.

Finally, I would like to express my apologies for the decision to cancel the visit to Ufton this week at such short notice. However, we were left with no other options. We are looking at an alternative visit in the Spring term. Mrs Crane will be in touch regarding refunds and please contact her if you have any questions.

Thank you for your support and patience. I appreciate that this is a lot of information to digest but please do contact the school if you have any questions or concerns. I will organise another information evening next term once the students have completed their mocks.

Kind regards

Mrs S McCavish