



## ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Executive Headteacher: Mr Martin Tissot, MA, MBA, NPQH

Dear Parent/Carer,

March 2021

### Public Examinations 2021

On the 25th February, Ofqual released the results of their consultation, which guides how GCSE, BTEC, AS and A-level qualifications will be decided this summer because the examination boards are not providing formal examinations. The process is that teachers and departments will allocate grades, facilitating students moving on to the next stage of their education, employment or training.

We will attempt to ensure that grades are determined objectively and consistently at St Thomas More.

All grades will need to be submitted by schools to the examination boards by the 18th June. A level results will be released by the school on 10th August, GCSE results will be released on the 12th August with vocational results being available at the same time.

### How your child's grades will be determined:

At present, St Thomas More is determining our plans following this announcement, and is finalising how we will collate the evidence needed to determine grades for our students. We are still awaiting further guidance from the examination boards however, processes and procedures may have to be amended when this guidance is received.

This new method of assessment may be advantageous to students who now have multiple opportunities to provide evidence of performance rather than having to rely completely on a series of formal examinations in the summer. I must stress that we have three months ahead of us, where students can demonstrate their ability and improvement and the grades are still 'all to play for'. Grades will not be issued based on potential; students must provide evidence of the level that they are currently working at.

### Our assessment will be guided by the following points:

- We will only use evidence of performance to judge the standards at which students are performing and in preparing final grades in each subject taken.
- Only content that has been delivered to students will be assessed.
- A full range of evidence available will be used to determine grades. However, in collating this evidence the school will need to be confident that it is the student's own unaided, original work and that inappropriate levels of assistance e.g. help from home, have not been accessed.
- The evidence may be taken from any point in the course, but more recent evidence is likely to be more representative of attainment.
- Two assessment windows, where students will take formal tests based on examination board materials, will help to provide further evidence to support the grade given to the students. A clear set of topic lists will be provided to the students to enable them to focus their studies.

### The evidence base could include:

- Work produced in class or at home (including remote learning, where the school is confident it is unaided work). This is expected to be similar in format to examination board material and marked using examination board mark schemes.
- Tests and mock exams taken over the course of study, including between now and the end of the course.
- Work produced in response to the additional assessment materials (mini tests) to be provided by the exam board.
- Non-exam assessment (NEA) work even if this has not been fully completed.
- Records of capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE.

Where access arrangements or reasonable adjustments are required, these will be provided and/or taken into account, in the normal way.

Over the coming months, there will be further assessment opportunities for all students. These will occur at intervals and will allow us to build a picture of all students' performance in each subject. Where there are more formal tests, topic lists will be provided alongside timetables of when these assessments will be, and we will notify parents.

Students should strive to do their very best in both NEAs and all assessments as both will be taken into consideration as to the final grade awarded. The school will continue to offer extra sessions and intervention to ensure that students are given the best opportunity to do well in these assessments.

Using all the pieces of evidence, teachers will then form a holistic judgement on students' performance to reach a conclusion on the final awarded grades in each subject. Students and parents will not be told the grades before results day.

#### **How the school and the examination boards will ensure fairness of grades:**

Teachers will be given training and support as to how to produce student grades fairly and consistently using guidance from the exam board and exemplars.

St Thomas More will ensure that all grades are as fair as possible by implementing robust internal quality assurance systems (including moderation) and checking of grades before they are submitted. Examination boards will review our quality assurance processes and once grades are submitted, the boards will conduct various checks on the results to make sure grades submitted are fair and consistent across centres.

Where there are any concerns, the examination boards will work with the school to address this before results day although exam boards will not 're-mark' any student work.

#### **Appeals and re-takes:**

There will be an appeals process if a student is not satisfied that results were awarded fairly and correctly. It is worth remembering that in any appeals process, results can go down as well as up. Please note that examination boards are planning an opportunity to re-sit examinations formally in the autumn.

#### **Next steps:**

We will be holding a parents' information meeting via ZOOM on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 5.30pm. The link will be sent to you.

It is essential that students continue to work hard over the next few months; complete all work set by their teachers and prepare for any assessments as if they were final exams. In this way, the work that is produced will evidence students' best achievements.

#### **The first assessment window, where students will take formal tests based on examination board materials, will be in the week beginning 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (first week after the Easter holidays).**

We will not be able to discuss with students, parents or carers the grades we will submit. Therefore, we would be grateful if parents and students do not contact subject teachers with specific queries about grades because they will not be able to answer such questions.

I hope this letter provides a clear idea of how grades will be ascribed this year and will motivate our students to work hard until the end.

We are pleased that there are opportunities for students over the coming months to demonstrate their qualities and achieve the results they deserve. We are grateful for your continuing support at this crucial stage.

Yours sincerely,



Alex Rosen  
Head of School