

18th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter reaches you and your families in strong health - body, mind and spirit. First, I wanted to praise the positive start our Y11 and Y13 students have made since returning from a prolonged lockdown period.

The purpose of this letter is to provide as much clarity on the processes and timeline for Y11 and Y13, as well as providing an update about what we are still waiting to have confirmed from the exam boards and Ofqual.

It is important to stress that previous communication on 12.2.21 regarding the timeline remains the same.

- Students will complete a diagnostic assessment from 15.3.21
- Students will complete a final set of assessments during the summer 1 term. These will be 'exam board topic tests', where students will be given clear guidance regarding what topics to revise and prepare for.

Here, I wanted to stress the reasons to complete diagnostic assessments this week. First, these assessments are not mock examinations and no grade will be derived or given to students as a result. This process has been designed to give students valuable practice that will help them be more prepared for their final assessments in summer 1, especially considering no formal assessments were completed at the end of Y10 or Y12, and the last formal assessment was completed in November. Most importantly, these assessments will reveal areas of focus, which curriculum leaders will use to target revision and help select what topics to assess after Easter. Ultimately, we want to ensure all students are fully prepared given the circumstances. I am confident that this week's process will greatly assist students and staff.

As previously communicated, the centre assessed grades (CAGs) students will be awarded, will be based on a range of assessment evidence during Y11 or Y13. Below will summarise some key points and provide a clear timeline of key information regarding the processes for Y11 and Y13.

What is the difference with CAGs this year?

Fundamental differences with this year's process revolve around the proportion of curriculum content missed due to disturbances by COVID-19 and the timing of the most recent lockdown. Last academic year the process was a lot simpler – essentially a forecast or prediction about the likely grade students would have achieved if the exams would have taken place.



ISAAC NEWTON ACADEMY

The key difference this year is that **CAGs will be based on a range of assessment evidence** that indicates what grades students should be awarded. Furthermore, students this year will complete final assessments in the summer 1 term that will help schools formulate accurate CAGs. Additionally, schools will be required to provide their evidence to the exam boards regarding how they formulated CAGs e.g. assessment scripts.

It is important to stress that we are responding quickly to new information from Ofqual regarding the process this year, whilst trying to stay a step ahead to support our students and staff with our planning.

What role do exam board topic tests play?

These assessments will form **part of the evidence bank** each subject will look at when formulating CAGs. We do believe, due to the nature of these assessments that **focus on specific topics that students will be informed about in advance**, students will perform best on these assessments. Subject leaders will select the topics for their students based on aspects of the curriculum that they feel students are most secure in. Therefore, I strongly encourage students and families to see these assessments as a great opportunity to provide teachers with key evidence to help inform their CAGs based on curriculum content that has been covered.

What are we waiting to have confirmed?

Unfortunately, we are still waiting to receive confirmation from the exam board regarding specific information about the exact nature of these 'exam board topic tests'. The only information we have been given is that **communication will be given by 31.3.21 from the exam boards e.g. AQA.** However, release of these assessments might not happen until after Easter.

I appreciate that this is just before we break for Easter. Therefore, **curriculum leaders will communicate the topics that they wish students to focus on by 26.3.21**, with some subject areas communicating this earlier. This will provide students with adequate time to prepare effectively for their final assessments in Summer 1 as they will have clear direction, which normally they would not receive. I believe this will provide students with confidence and clear guidance, which will greatly assist their performance.

These final set of assessments will be exam style questions students are familiar with, using the same assessment objectives and marking criteria students and staff are familiar with also. However, their key difference is their length and critically that they will focus on specific topics. Therefore, they must not be confused with normal mock examinations, whereby students complete the full range of exam papers under full examination conditions.

What is the timeline for Y11 & 13?

- W.C 15.3.21 students will complete their diagnostic assessment. Students will be given feedback on performance and areas for improvement, but no grade will be given.
- W.C 22.3.21 students will have assemblies guiding them through the processes and timeline.
- 26.3.21 students will be given guidance by curriculum leaders on what topics to focus their revision on, which will link directly with their final assessments in summer 1.
- 26.3.21 students will be given a draft assessment timetable. (*Note: It will remain draft until final confirmation from exam boards*).
- 30.3.21 parents/carers will have an information evening to outline the CAG process this year.
- 6.4.21 to 15.4.21 will have academic intervention sessions and opportunity to revise independently at the academy.
- 20.4.21 to 23.4.21 students will have normal lessons during first week of summer 1.
- 26.4.21 to 14.5.21 students will have their final assessments based on the exam board topic tests. Students will continue to follow their normal timetable when not completing assessments, which will focus on preparation for upcoming assessments.
- W.C. 17.5.21 will be given to “mopping up” any missed assessments and providing further opportunities for subject areas to gain further evidence for individual students where it is necessary. Students will follow their normal timetable for the remainder of summer 1.
- W.C. 7.6.21 students will be given 1:1 meeting with curriculum leaders to discuss their assessment evidence, with the aim of supporting students and the academy making appropriate post GCSE and A-level destinations in advance of results release.
- 17.6.21 student’s final day. (*Note: This will be confirmed during Summer 1 term*).

The above timeline does not detail the many other activities teachers, curriculum leaders and SLT will undertake to ensure the entire process is managed rigorously and with integrity. However, I hope it provides the key aspects of the timeline.

Lastly, it’s important that we work collectively and trust the processes that INA and Ark have put in place to ensure all students are awarded fair and accurate CAGs. However, I do ask for your patience and understanding whilst we operate in a climate whereby schools are still yet to receive final details.

Yours sincerely



Morgan Haines
Principal