



4 May 2017

Dear Parents

I am writing to confirm the grading arrangements for your son's GCSEs and IGCSEs next summer. You may be aware that changes are coming in the way that grades are awarded at GCSE and IGCSE. These changes, like those at A Level, are being staggered by the government and Ofqual, and so will not come into effect for all subjects for your son's year group. Design and Technology (including Electronics), Economics, History, Maths, Modern Languages (French, German and Spanish), Music Science (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) and the Higher Project qualification will all be assessed on the old A*-G letter grading scale. The new numbered grading system explained below will apply in Art, Classics (Latin and Greek), Drama, English (both Language and Literature), Geography, the examined Physical Education course and Religious Studies.

There was a brief mention of this when your son was in the Third Form, at the Choices Evening, but because there were still considerable uncertainties regarding the coming changes – indeed, it was only towards the end of 2016 that examination boards and Ofqual agreed how exactly the new grades would be awarded – we could not give full information about them in the GCSE Choices Booklet.

The new style of grading replaces the top two grades of A and A* with grades 7, 8 and 9. The boundary between grade 6 and grade 7 will be set at the same point as the previous boundary between grades B and A. Roughly twenty per cent of the grades awarded above this boundary will be at the top 9 grade (with an adjustment to allow for a greater percentage of 9 grades to be awarded in subjects that tend to attract more able students, such as Latin and Greek), and the minimum mark for grade 8 will be half way between the minimum mark for grade 7 and the minimum mark for grade 9. In brief, a grade 7 will be what is currently a low-to-mid A grade, a grade 8 will be what is currently a high A grade or a low A* grade and a grade 9 will be what is currently a high A* grade. Grades C and B will similarly be split between grades 4, 5 and 6.

Since the new number grades have not yet been awarded in any national examination, it is difficult as yet to have a definitive idea of the standard that is required for an 8 or 9 grade. In view of this, and because many of the grades awarded in summer 2018 will still be on the A*-G letter scale, we are continuing to use letter grades in our reports.

In terms of admission to courses in the Sixth Form, the requirement of an A grade or better will be changed to one of a grade 7 or better where the new grading system is applied. For general admission to the Sixth Form, a minimum grade 6 in English Language will be required alongside a minimum B grade in Maths for all students. No universities have indicated that they will be expecting to see applicants achieve grade 9s, but those who currently expect students to achieve a certain number of A* grades at GCSE will be requiring grade 8s.

Yours sincerely

Mark Davies