

Ref: GDZ/TAGs

4 May, 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that my letter finds you and your family well and that you are soon able to spend more time with those outside your immediate 'bubble' and doing more of the things you enjoy.

As you may already be aware students who were due to sit external examinations this summer, and their teachers, are working incredibly hard on completing different assessments and gathering evidence in order to submit Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) for examination boards. It is a process that has some complexities and we are hugely grateful of the support you are providing - and are keen to reassure you that staff in our Academy are very sensitive to the pressure(s) this places on our students, and would ask that if you have any reservations about your son or daughter's health or wellbeing you do not hesitate to let us know. Our learning managers work particularly closely with students in their year group and are very experienced in offering any aspect of advice, guidance and support during examination and assessment periods.

Given that this year students will secure final grades based on evidence which informs a TAG we have developed a series of documents to support this process which we are keen to share with you. You can locate on the Academy website specific information relating to;

- The Centre Policy - for Outwood Academy Portland
- A sample of assessments we are using as evidence
- An example of our student evidence form

They can be found by locating and clicking on the dedicated tab 'Teacher Assessed Grades' on the website.

All students in our Academy, and indeed across the Trust, will be taken through the evidence to be submitted for their TAG and we will document this process by asking them to confirm that they have done so. We hope that this will provide both transparency and security to you, minimising any instance of a student being awarded an incorrect grade and then needing to undertake the process of appealing.

Where students might, in a normal examination series, have been given 'special consideration' where serious and unforeseen events impact negatively on the student, this year special consideration will be applied differently. For example, alternative pieces of work might be submitted where a student was ill on the day of the assessment and schools do have a relatively wide remit in terms of determining the grade to be awarded - indeed, the student's performance throughout the course can be taken into account.

In addition, schools can notify the examination boards of what are known as 'mitigating circumstances' where short term and unforeseen events (such as sudden serious injury) affect the student's ability to complete assessments, and these are things that are very much over and above every day events. Any events which might constitute 'mitigating circumstances' should be raised at the time of the assessment and prior to the submission of the TAG.

We are optimistic that our systems of gathering evidence for the TAGs are very robust and we are endeavouring to ensure that every submission is accurate; based securely on the evidence. All final grades will have to be subject to scrutiny by the academy principal, the subject director, the head of department, and most significantly, the subject teacher. Assessment records for each subject cohort will be retained and evidence will be standardised across the Trust where possible. Where your son or daughter is a student who has special educational needs teachers will also work with the inclusion team when looking at the gathering of evidence for the TAG.

Different subjects at GCSE have sought to utilise different methods of assessment when gathering evidence and may include, but may not be limited to;

- Student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by the exam board, including questions, past papers or similar materials
- Non exam assessment work
- Student work produced in tasks designed/devised by the Academy (which may include activities that took place during remote learning)
- Records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study e.g. music/drama/PE

I appreciate that this may be a lot of information for you to absorb and I would urge you to make contact with us should you have any concerns around TAGs. In addition, should you have any questions as the result of this communication please contact Mrs Perry via her email address **j.perry@portland.outwood.com** as she has been specifically allocated to supporting parents with this process and will be happy to help you.

Yours faithfully,



Mr G Dzoboku
Principal