



STATION ROAD KNOWLE SOLIHULL B93 0PT  
01564 773 348  
WWW.ARDEN.SOLIHULL.SCH.UK

4<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parents & Guardians of Year 13 Students

### Summer 2022 Exams Contingency Plans Update

We wrote to you last half term outlining important information regarding the summer 2022 exam adaptations, mock exams and revision. As promised we are now writing again to summarise the information you need to be aware of with regards to:

- Contingency plans in the event of a cancellation of the summer exams
- Autumn Term assessment timetable and information about revision.

The timing of this letter coincides with Parents Consultations; this is purely a coincidence and we do not wish it to detract from the core purpose of the consultations, which is to discuss the following:

- What is working well for your child
- What areas of knowledge and/or skills need to be improved
- Advice outlining how to make those improvements
- Any concerns with behaviour or engagement in class or learning in general

Individual subject teachers are not in a position to discuss contingency plans, so if you have questions once you have read all the information in this letter, please contact the school using [office@arden.solihull.sch.uk](mailto:office@arden.solihull.sch.uk)

### **Contingency plans if examinations are cancelled**

Ofqual have confirmed that if exams are cancelled, grades will be determined through teacher assessment - Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). The full details of their proposal, and their reasoning for this decision, are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/contingency-arrangements-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea/contingency-arrangements-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea>

We have already spoken to all Year 13 students, in an assembly, about these contingency plans.

Schools have been asked, by Ofqual, to plan assessment opportunities for TAGs in advance. They state that the timetable of assessments should include the opportunity to gather some evidence early in the academic year, for example, before Christmas. This will protect against further disruption that may happen in 2022. These assessments should provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding across the full range of content that they have been taught. Ofqual suggests that a sensible pattern could be to plan to assess students once in each of the second half of the autumn term, the spring term, and the first half of the summer term.



ARDEN ASSOCIATE HEADTEACHER: MR D WARWOOD BSC (HONS) | TEL: 01564 773348 | EMAIL:

OFFICE@ARDEN.SOLIHULL.SCH.UK

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Assessments for Year 13 already take place in the autumn term as part of the teacher's ongoing informal assessment of student progress. We will make the following small adaptations to ensure that all students:

- are aware that these assessments would form part of a TAG judgement
- have a revision list that complies with the Ofqual guidance
- who are entitled to reasonable adjustments such as small room, use of laptop, etc have access to that dispensation.
- take the assessment simultaneously; where there is more than one class in a cohort the assessment will be scheduled to take place in the Hall/Gym
- only sit an assessment of typically 1 hour, to a maximum of 1h 20mins duration

We are not able to suspend teaching for a period of two weeks as for the Year 13 spring mock examinations. Some of the assessments, therefore, will take place in class, specifically those where simultaneous completion can be assured. Some will be scheduled in the School Hall or Gym.

Your child will receive their revision lists directly from their teachers.

Most, but not all, of the assessments will take place in the two week period starting 29th November. Teachers will be asked to communicate specific timings to their students for the subjects where the assessments take place in class. The schedule for those subjects with multiple classes will be given to students as soon as possible..

Please be assured that providing revision lists, making it very clear to students which assessments 'count' towards TAGs, and keeping the assessments relatively short are deliberate measures, to allow Arden students to do as well as they possibly can.

The format and timing of the additional assessments in the spring and summer terms will depend slightly on the outcome of these assessments and the progression of the pandemic. We have a provisional plan in place and will share further details with you closer to the time.

### **FAQs about the contingency plans**

This list of answers to a set of FAQs has been compiled to help address any questions that you may have:

#### **This sounds like a lot of assessments?**

It is no more than we would need to do normally. Teachers assess student progress regularly over the duration of a course. The only difference is that some of them will now happen in the School Hall/Gym rather than in the classroom. In a normal school year the amount of hours spent assessing pupils would be more than the total hours contributing to TAG assessments. This will also be the case this year, as teachers will need to carry out other classroom based assessments.

#### **My child will perform better in real exams than in the mocks. Is this process disadvantageous to them?**

The level of performance in an assessment is usually due to the amount of work put into the revision and preparation for the assessment. We always encourage all students to work as hard for mocks and other internal assessments as they would for real assessments. Revision lists will help them focus their revision. The TAG assessments will cover a much smaller proportion of the course than real assessments, which will help students to do well.

**What if my child misses a TAG assessment?**

We will allow them to complete the assessment once they return to school. If that is not possible then we are able to look for alternative evidence, or, failing that, make a judgment on the information we do have.

**Will you be giving out TAG assessment grades?**

No, we are not able to do so. We will provide feedback and students will be able to see their marks. However Ofqual will not permit schools to release TAG grades or the grades of individual TAG assessments prior to the August results day

**How will you know the assessments have been correctly marked?**

The marking of all TAG assessments will undergo standardisation and moderation. This will also include standardisation of marking using expertise from other schools in the Trust.

**It sounds like these assessments will be used to make TAG judgements, inform predicted grades, be practice for real exams, provide teachers and students with feedback. How can an assessment be used for more than one purpose?**

It is completely normal and a standard part of teaching that the data from an assessment and the action of completing the assessment, serves many purposes.

**I don't agree with these contingency plans for replacing exams, can I complain to the school?**

These arrangements have not been determined by Arden. They are based on the guidance issued by Ofqual in October. They provided a period of consultation where parents, teachers and students could pass on their point of view. If you would like to read the full consultation it is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/contingency-arrangements-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea/contingency-arrangements-gcse-as-a-level-project-and-aea#consultation-arrangements>

Ofqual have their own complaints procedure should you wish to raise any concerns with them:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual/about/complaints-procedure>

**Autumn term assessment timetable and information about revision**

We always advise all students to take any assessment seriously. In particular any assessments taken in normal circumstances during this autumn term help to inform UCAS predicted grades.

All students are aware that one of the assessments that they complete this half term would be used to inform a TAG judgment in the event of the cancellation of exams. We are in the process of finalising the timing of those assessments and we will share that information with students as soon as we are able.

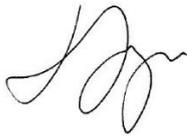
Heads of Subject and teachers have already received training regarding the actions we need to put in place. They will continue to support students by modelling revision strategies, providing assessment practice and giving feedback.

Revision lists for any TAG assessments will be provided to students via Edulink and/or Google classroom. They should have these by the end of next week.

**Summary**

Despite all the planning and information in this letter it is worth noting that **we do expect examinations to go ahead this summer 2022 as planned**. The work that we are putting into the contingency planning simply means that we are fully prepared for that, albeit unlikely, scenario. If examinations are cancelled we will do all we can to ensure our students receive a fair and accurate grade that accurately reflects their performance in each subject.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Page', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Linda Page**  
Deputy Headteacher