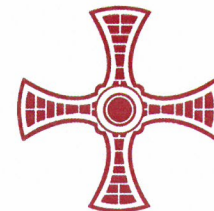




# St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College



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**Head Teacher:** Mr. D. Juric  
**Chair of Governors:** Mr. G. Moorhouse

15<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and Students of Year11 and Year13

Firstly, I would like to say how pleased we are to have students back with us once more. Congratulations again on how well you adapted to new ways of working, and I commend you not for the first time on the tremendous effort you made to engage with lessons over this period. I am writing to you today to update you on our plan for the assessment and grading of students this summer. As previously stated, full guidance has not yet been published. However, based on what has been published so far, we believe that this plan will meet exam board requirements, and also represent a fair process which provides students with the best chance of success, while maintaining the necessary level of integrity in the system. I understand the uncertainties you are bound to have. I empathise as my own daughter was part of last year's grading arrangements at GCSE. However, I assure you that our objective is to give students the fairest and best opportunity to succeed, while also of course complying with all regulations and guidance in a thorough and correct manner.

Before outlining the process, I do want to underline the basis of this year's grading, as stated by government. It is important to understand what schools are being asked to do, and what they are not being asked to do. Last year, schools were asked to look at the work students had produced up until lockdown, and then use that information to estimate what they thought that suggested students would have been most likely to have achieved if lockdown had never happened. This is not what schools are being directed to do this year. Schools are not being asked to make a prediction or estimation. This year schools are directed to make a judgment of the grade students are performing at, by assessing them on what they have been taught. Schools have been told to reflect the standard at which students are performing now. Hopefully, this clarification is useful to you.

The detail below will hopefully help you understand the process:

In order to assess the level at which each student is performing now, each subject will have 3 assessment weeks between now and the end of May.

Within each assessment week, a subject will use two lessons to assess students. Each assessment will be 45 minutes in duration, but some subjects might choose to spread one single assessment over 2x45 minutes, rather than 2 separate 45 minute assessments, in any one week.

Assessments will take place in class, but access arrangements which need to be in place may alter that for certain individual students.

Assessments will be staggered in order not to overwhelm students. Most subjects will begin assessing the first or second week back after half term. However, certain subjects may begin to assess in the final week of this term. If this is the case, we will inform the students concerned this week.





Students will be informed in advance of when exactly each assessment will be taking place and they will be issued with an assessment timetable. If a student is absent, wherever possible they will complete the assessment upon their return. If this proves impossible, we shall use other appropriate evidence from work the student has already completed.

A subject's assessments will only assess those areas of the course which have been taught. Content which has not been covered will not be assessed.

Assessments will use exam board materials. Coursework will also be factored in for those subjects where it is a component.

The arrangements above will apply across all subjects, but there may be the very occasional exception where the specific requirements of a particular subject necessitate a slight variance to the process.

We are also looking at whether and how any previously assessed work might be factored into the overall picture, but we will wait for guidance before deciding how/whether to proceed with this.

This term, students will revisit topics and new teaching will be minimal. Time may be spent on coursework in some cases, if necessary.

The procedures for Vocational courses will follow separate published guidance, but is expected to be very similar. We shall update those students concerned as soon as possible.

All assessments will be completed by the end of May, but **this will not be students' leaving date**. Students will return full time to school/ Sixth Form Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June. We will inform you of students' leaving date once that has been decided.

Based on the assessments, and any coursework, and possibly some other previously assessed work, subjects will make a balanced judgment on the grade at which each student is performing. The assessments will be marked using exam board mark schemes and in line with their guidance on how to make fair and consistent judgments. Marking will be internally standardised across departments and we will be complying with both internal and external quality assurance procedures. The school may also be selected as part of the national sampling process of standards across schools. Exam boards will review schools' grades before Results Day.

As we have already told you, Results Day for A Level will be 10<sup>th</sup> August, and for GCSE 12<sup>th</sup> August. There will be an appeals process in place. We will send you further information about the distribution of results and the appeals process next term, when we have more information. Please note that schools are not permitted to tell students their grade before Results Day.

We hope that this information is useful for you. We shall be talking to students about the assessments in school. The above arrangements are based on our understanding of the information published to date, and are therefore subject to change, but we would expect any changes to be minimal. I can assure you that all teachers and other staff will be doing all that they can to help students achieve their very best, and I urge students also to help themselves by attending all lessons, engaging fully in classwork and homework, completing all tasks and maintaining a focussed and mature approach. I wish all students the very best with the forthcoming weeks.

Yours faithfully



**Mr D Juric**  
**Head Teacher**