3rd April 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

As you may have seen, details were published today of how grades will be awarded to students taking GCSEs, AS levels and A levels. Details for how vocational and technical qualifications will be awarded this summer will follow.

Your child should receive a letter today on this subject from Sally Collier, who leads Ofqual, the organisation which oversees exams and qualifications in this country. That letter outlines the process, but I also wanted to ensure you heard from me today so that you understood how grades will be awarded to students this summer. I must say at the outset that the school and our teachers are prohibited from discussing an individual student's grades and we will not respond to any correspondence or enquiries about an individual's grades.

Your child's teachers will provide assessed grades in each subject they are taking. These assessments will be based on what the teacher believed each student would have achieved had they sat exams this summer, and on a range of evidence.

This will include:

- Students' classwork and bookwork, or performances in subjects like PE, music or drama
- Any non-exam assessment, whether or not completed
- The results of any assignments or mock exams, and
- Any previous exam results, which would be most relevant for sixth form students.

We have not been asked to set any additional homework or mock exams to make these assessed grades but the importance of, and right to, an education is of course critical and we will be continuing to provide support so that students carry on with their studies in preparation for the next stage of education. I would encourage you to support your child to help them do this and so they do not fall behind.

Teachers will also be asked to rank students in order for each subject, so as to split students awarded the same grade. These assessed grades will be confidential and teachers will not be allowed to share these grades with students. We have been asked to send these grades to Ofqual by the end of May/start of June.

Ofqual will then look at all the grades and decide what the final grades for each student in each subject should be. It is developing the model it will use to do this, so all grades are fair, but it expects to use a range of information to do this such as students' prior attainment and previous exam results at schools.

Your child will get their final grades in the summer – Ofqual has said that results will be provided no later than they had been expected, in August, but that the objective is to provide grades earlier than that so that you and your child have certainty as soon as possible.

www.theportsmouthacademy.org.uk

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There will be an appeals process and Ofqual has also said that it is working with exam boards so that there is an opportunity, if possible, for students to sit exams, if they would like to, in the autumn term. More information on that will follow, and I will share that when it is available from Ofqual.

Clearly these are unprecedented circumstances, and the situation in all walks of life at the moment is far from ideal, but I hope this provides some level of certainty of how the process will work this summer for exam grades for GCSEs, AS levels and A levels. Ofqual has said it would like to reassure you that the grades your child will get this summer will look exactly the same as in previous years, and will have equal status with universities, colleges and employers, so that young people can move forward in their lives as planned.

Thank-you for your ongoing support and understanding. I would like to reemphasise that parents and students must NOT make contact with the school or their teacher about their grades.

Further information can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/how-gcses-as-a-levels-will-be-awarded-in-summer-2020. I hope this gives answers to questions you may have, but if not, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, I hope you and your family are staying safe and are in good health.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Grey
Principal, The Portsmouth Academy

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