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www.thomastallischool.com

Head: Carolyn Roberts  
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23 April 2020

Dear Year13 Parent or Carer.

### **Year 13 Update**

We are writing to you to explain what we can about how your Year 13 child's Centre Assessment Grades (CAGs) will be calculated. We are, of course, bound by the Government's guidelines about this and Ofqual's letter for students explaining their guidelines has already been shared with you. Please ensure you have read it. It is on the sixth form website at tallispost16.com.

#### **How grades are to be calculated for cancelled GCSE and BTEC examinations:**

By moderated teacher assessment. Staff in each subject will work together to place students in a grade for each of their subjects. For each student, teachers will consider what grade would be the most plausible if they were actually able to take the exam in the summer. Students in each grade will then be ranked. This will generate a rank order of students in each subject so that if the gradings need to be adjusted, then it is clear which students would be affected, in either direction. This is a difficult process and relies on teachers being fair and reasonable with our own students but also understanding the same process is being applied everywhere else. Finally, we will as a school consider whether the cohort of students and their grades taken together would be what we would have expected on results day, and whether this accurately resembles the national picture. Above all, we will ask ourselves, does it look fair?

We will complete this process by drawing on all the information we have about your child's performance: mock exams, coursework, in-class assessments, prior performance data. We will then submit this ranking to the exam boards, and they will adjudicate your child's results using statistical tools so that there are equal outcomes for our students compared to previous years. This process is reliant on the profession working together in a consistent, fair and ethical way. Your children, and others affected by this, deserve nothing less.

Please note: we will not discuss your child's grade, ranking, or details of our process with you. Please do not ask any teaching staff to do so. The advice from Ofqual which we must follow specifically states: "Please don't ask your teachers, or anyone else at your school or college, to tell you the grades they will be sending to the exam boards or where they have placed you in the order of students; they will not be allowed to share this with you."

Please also note that it is possible that the grades we submit may well not be the grades eventually awarded. Ofqual is proposing to standardise grades by looking at the historical outcomes for each centre, the prior attainment (key stage 2 and 4) of this year's cohort and those in previous years within each school, and the expected national grade distribution for the subject. This approach will place weight on statistical expectations that could determine the most likely distribution of grades for each centre (based on the criteria above); they will then use the rank order to assign grades to individual students in line with that grade distribution. This means that final calculated grades may "often differ from those submitted", but ensures a more consistent standard applied across schools which is "more likely to be fair".

Please rest assured that as per the grading information above, all of our Year 13 and Year 14 students, including students who were due to retake examinations, will receive Centre Assessed Grades for all of their subjects. Teachers at Tallis know their students well, and where illness or other personal circumstances may have affected a child's performance, teachers will bear this in mind when making their judgements.



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### **Submission of additional work for A-level**

Guidance from the Department for Education says that there can be no expectation that Year 13 work set after Friday 20 March will be completed. The Ofqual guidance published on 3 April makes it clear that there is no requirement to set additional mock exams or homework tasks for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade, and no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools were closed. We have advised our teachers that they should not be seeking any further work from students at this point to support centre assessment grades. Not all students will be able to respond; some will be ill whilst others will be living under more difficult circumstances at home.

However, in some subjects students will have completed, or nearly completed, non-exam assessment (coursework). In many cases the deadline for this to be complete fell before March 20. If your child hasn't yet completed this work, we may ask them to do so. This is because a candidate's coursework, completed at the end of term 5 of a six-term course, is often their strongest work and may be particularly helpful in deciding each student's grade and rank order.

### **Submission of work for BTEC**

We are still awaiting guidance about how BTECs will be graded and assessed. We don't yet know how coursework submissions will be treated. Our advice to you therefore is: please keep working steadily on BTEC coursework as set by your teachers and please be sure to meet their deadlines. If you are unable to meet deadlines for any reason, you must contact your BTEC teachers before the deadline expires to explain why, just as you did before.

### **Re-sit opportunities**

Students who feel that their grades from the summer do not reflect their ability will have the opportunity to take their exams in the autumn series or in summer 2021. If they choose to do this, both grades will stand.

### **Next steps for progression**

Please make sure your child has e-mailed a member of the Year 13 team regarding replying to offers if they have not already done so, making sure they have a lower insurance offer. Please also make sure that your child is on course to complete their finance form by 24 May as per the instructions on the tallispost16 website.

Please also see our website for suggestions about bridging work that students can complete to prepare themselves for university courses. It would be particularly sensible to seek out and begin reading material that is set for first-year reading lists. Your child's chosen university should be able to advise if these reading lists are not already on the website of the university concerned.

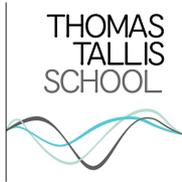
For our world of work students: our careers advisor Maria Elia is available on [melia@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:melia@thomastallis.org.uk) for on-going advice with interviews, C.V.s, apprenticeship opportunities etc. We are also updating the website.

For art college applicants: Mr Nicholls can offer advice on remote applications, on-line interviews, portfolio tweaks and so on. His email is [jnicholls@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:jnicholls@thomastallis.org.uk)

EtonX self-study course: Year 13 access code is OAL5GY8W

The school has registered for an EtonX Future Skills Programme in Research and Referencing skills, written by a librarian at Eton College. The course provides 7-10 hours of self-study

*inquisitive • collaborative • persistent • disciplined • imaginative*



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content and is intended to prepare students to produce written work referenced to the correct academic standard as soon as they begin life as an undergraduate. Invaluable! Please see the details below of how your child can access their course:

#### How your child can sign up to the EtonX course:

1. Visit the EtonX website and click [Sign up](#).
2. Choose Sign up with Access Code.
3. Enter the Access Code.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions. Your child must sign up with their school email address.
5. Get started!

Once a student has created their account, they can always log in at <https://learn.etonx.com/login> to finish registration and access the course. Sign-up issues, questions? Please contact [etonxoffer@etoncollege.org.uk](mailto:etonxoffer@etoncollege.org.uk)

#### **Accessing support from us for your child**

Please remember that we expect your child to make weekly contact with their tutor. Other members of the sixth form team are also available via email if any problems arise, or someone wants help or advice or is feeling low because of what is going on. Ms. Lumsden's email is [flusmden@thomastallis.org.uk](mailto:flusmden@thomastallis.org.uk), Ms. Astill's is lastill@, Mr Bradshaw's is jbradshaw@, Ms. McGowan's is omcgowan@ and Mr Wilks's is swilks@

We apologise for the length of this letter, but we hope you will find it informative and are reassured that, as always, we are trying our very best to do the right thing by our Year 13 students.

Yours sincerely,

The Tallis Post-16 Team