



Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

www.midsomernortonschoolspartnership.com

Executive Headteacher/CEO: Alun Williams

Registered Address: Norton Hill School, Charlton Road, Midsomer Norton, BA3 4AD
Company No: 7365778

3rd April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this will be my final update before the Easter weekend. I thought I would share with you some information that I have received about two important developments:

1) The expected peak for Coronavirus in the South West and Easter weekend school opening:

It is expected that the peak infection rate for the South West will be sometime around or shortly after, the Easter break. This is based on computer modelling which takes into account the impact of social distancing and lockdown of unnecessary activity for the population as whole. As a result of this forecast, the NHS and other services are expecting there to be increased demand on services from the Easter weekend onwards. To help support key frontline workers and vulnerable children, I have arranged for schools in the Midsomer Norton Schools' Partnership to remain open over the Bank Holidays and also the Saturday and Sunday of the Easter weekend. If you are a key frontline worker and are required for additional shifts, schools will be open over the Easter weekend to support you. Likewise, vulnerable children will also be able to attend where appropriate. Please do keep in mind however, that the safest place for children is at home and this provision is only being arranged for critical care needs. Please contact your school in the usual manner to book in over the Easter weekend.

2) Year 11 and 13 Final Grades for 2020:

I have received today official guidance on how GCSE and A level exam predicted grades will be calculated. As we thought, schools will be required to estimate grades based on work completed so far by pupils in Years 11 and 13. Evidence for estimated grades will come from pupil books, past assessments, coursework, mock examinations and the judgment of the teachers about the likely progress pupils would have made if schools had continued to remain open. At this stage, this process only covers GCSEs and A levels. It does not cover vocational or technical qualifications. We await further guidance on these qualifications from the relevant awarding bodies.

In order to make the awarding of predicted grades fair across the country, schools will be asked to rank order all pupils in each subject, as a way of indicating how secure each predicted grade is for each pupil. Exam boards will then look at the progress of pupils over many years in each school, as well as the emerging national picture, to produce grades for the 2020 cohort. Further statistical testing and analysis will be undertaken by exam boards at cohort level in schools and final grades issued.

OFQUAL has now formally asked us to NOT to send these predictions to parents/carers. I know some schools have written to parents/carers already as part of the normal reporting process. Any grades that have been sent out recently will be used by teachers to arrive at the predicted grades, but cannot be taken as the final grade students will be given. It is likely that pupil grades will be issued by the awarding bodies in July and OFQUAL have committed to ensuring they are available no later than the usual August deadline. I attach a letter to this communication from OFQUAL about this process for your information. In this communication it is clear that teachers and schools should not be asked about the predicted grades awarded. Therefore, please do not contact us about the grades at this point. We have been asked to submit the predicted grades by the beginning of June. If we have any further updates, we will of course contact you.





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I know this is a very stressful time for pupils and parents/carers, but please rest assured, we will do our best to ensure pupils receive the grades they are entitled to and that no child will be disadvantaged during this extraordinary situation.

Kind regards

Alun Williams
CEO





A message for all GCSE, AS and A level students this summer

I understand how unsettling the past weeks have been for you, since the [announcement that exams have been cancelled this summer, and that you are urgently waiting for news](#). I wanted to let you know what we are doing to provide you with grades. Our over-riding aim in this is to be fair to students this summer and to make sure you are not disadvantaged in your progress to sixth form, college, university, apprenticeships, training or work because of these unprecedented conditions.

How will grades be calculated?

Your school or college will be asked to send exam boards two pieces of information for each of your subjects, based on what they know about your work and achievements:

- the grade they believe you were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned
- within each subject, the order of students at your school or college, by performance, for each grade. This information will be used to standardise judgements – allowing fine tuning of the standard applied across schools and colleges

Your school or college will consider a range of things like your classwork and homework; your results in assignments and any mock exams; any non-exam assessment or coursework you might have done; and your general progress during your course.

This information will allow us, with exam boards, to standardise grades across schools and colleges, to make sure that, as far as possible, results are fair and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because their schools or colleges are more generous or harsh than others when

making those judgements. That means the final grade you get could be different from the one your school or college sends to the exam board.

Do I need to complete any new work for my school/college to submit a grade?

Your school or college is not required to set additional mock exams or homework for your centre assessment grade, and you won't be disadvantaged if you were not set, or were unable to complete, any work given out after schools were closed.

Can I see the grades my school/college submits for me?

No, this information will be confidential. 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.

I am a private candidate – what does this mean for me?

If you are a private candidate (for example, home-schooled, following distance-learning programmes or studying independently) the centre you are entering with should include you where the head teacher or principal is confident that they and their staff have seen sufficient evidence of your achievement to make an objective judgement. We are urgently exploring whether there are alternative options for those students who do not have an existing relationship with a centre and who need results this summer to progress. Unfortunately this is unlikely to be possible for all private candidates, some of whom may instead need to take exams in the autumn to get their grades.

We appreciate that this is a matter of real concern to private candidates and will provide an update as soon as possible. We have asked organisations that represent universities and FE colleges to consider the steps that providers could take when making admissions decisions this summer for any private candidates who do not receive a grade. They have told us that they believe that institutions will consider a range of other evidence and information for these students to allow them to progress wherever possible.

When will I get my results?

We're working hard to get results out as soon as is possible – results won't be delayed after the dates they were expected in August, and ideally they will be issued a little earlier, so you can have the certainty you need.

Can I take my exams another time?

We are working with exam boards to offer additional exams in the autumn term as soon as it is possible to do so. We'll let you know about these in the coming weeks.

The information we have published covers GCSEs, AS and A levels, plus Extended Project Qualifications and Additional Extension Awards in maths. You can find out more about which qualifications and students are included, and the current arrangements for those which are not, in our [detailed guidance](#); along with answers to other questions that you and your parents or carers might have. We will keep updating our guidance as new

information becomes available, including to share details about vocational and technical qualifications as soon as we can, so please keep an eye on our website.

Please be reassured that the grades you get this summer will look exactly the same as in previous years, and they will have equal status with universities, colleges and employers, to help you move forward in your lives as planned.

With every best wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S Collier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

Sally Collier

Chief Regulator, Ofqual