

29 January 2021

Dear Year 10 parents, carers and students

An update for Year 10

I hope my letter finds you well and that you and your child are continuing to keep safe during this lockdown period.

Thank you for all your support in helping your child engage with the remote learning. We know that it would be better all round for all students to be in school. We look forward to the day when that will be the case again – we miss having all students in school.

You will have heard the Prime Minister's announcement this week that schools will not reopen to all students until at least Monday 8 March and that ahead of confirming the actual return date schools, parents and students will be given at least two weeks' notice.

Until such time, our live and recorded lessons and live form time every day at 12.45 pm (this is compulsory and is a safeguarding check) is how we will continue.

Last week I wrote to you regarding our decision to press on with early entry RS for the whole year group and in that letter mentioned that the RS team have mapped out what needs to be taught including an approach to assess what students know and need further support on. This is the same approach we have introduced for Year 11 in the light of national examinations being cancelled this summer.

This letter has three elements appended to it:

1. The assessment being done in RS up until half term.
2. A reminder of ways to make home learning effective and our expectations.
3. A list of 'frequently asked questions' with answers around early entry RS.

There are four lessons per week dedicated to RS: one is a recorded lesson, two are live lessons and one will be given over to assessment. You will see on pages 3 and 4 a range of '**frequently asked questions**' around the assessment approach we will be using for RS specifically in the coming weeks.

Of course, it is really important that **all students engage in all their lessons**. We have been taking a close look at how each student is engaging in each of their subjects. You will receive a report via the *Parent App* next week relating to engagement with lockdown learning and we will then follow up with a remote parents' evening on Monday 8 February between 3 and 6pm. Please sign up for your slot by accessing our *Parents' Evening Booking System* found here: <https://lowtonchurchofengland.schoolcloud.co.uk/>

Finally, we were pleased to receive votes for our parent governor vacancy and I am delighted to inform you that Mrs Helen Tracey has been elected as Parent Governor and her 4-year term begins from 27th January 2021.

Yours faithfully

Kieran Larkin
Headteacher

CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

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Y10 Religious Studies: Assessment Overview

Spring term 1 (25 January to 12 February 2021)

Subject	Week beginning 25 January	Week beginning 1 February	Week beginning 8 February
10Y3 10X2	Religion and Life Stewardship Animal experiments Eating meat (A01 and A02) 25 minutes	Religion and Life Evolution Abortion (A01) 15 minutes	Religion and Life Euthanasia (A02) 15 minutes
10X1 10X3 10Y1 10Y2	Religion, Peace and Conflict Terrorism Pacifism Just War Theory (A01) 20 minutes	Religion, Peace and Conflict Weapons of Mass Destruction (A02) 20 minutes	

A reminder for students on effective home learning and our expectations across all subjects.

- Try to retain the structure of a normal school day and timetable.
- Start lesson 1 at 8:35am.
- Take a mid-morning break at 10.15am and have lunch as you would in school.
- Spend 50 minutes on the work from each recorded lesson.
- Check all your notifications on SatchelOne to ensure you are reading and acting on the feedback from teachers.
- Use the examples given in the video lessons and the work shared during live lessons and feedback from staff given on Satchel One to improve or develop your work.
- Keep in touch with your teachers and ask for help if you are finding the work difficult.
- Attend live form time each day – this is compulsory and is a safeguarding check.

Assessment to support early entry RS in summer 2021 - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Will every 'test' be used as evidence towards the teacher assessed grade in a subject?

We will use the full range of evidence available to us to arrive at an informed teacher assessed grade. This includes previous, current and future work. The Government has said that there will be some form of moderation process. It will be a few weeks before we hear the detail of this, but we can reasonably expect it will make sure that each student has a range of supporting evidence that matches the teacher assessed grade the school provides.

2. What if I don't do well in some assessments or pieces of work, but do better in others?

The teacher assessed grade will be informed by all the work completed over time using a 'best fit' approach to arrive at a grade based on all the evidence available to us. The work in the coming weeks and months is likely to be of a higher standard than that produced up to now and in Year 9, so it is really important that each student engages in all the work we provide now, carries on with their revision as if the RS exam was going ahead and does their very best in each of the assessments in the coming weeks and months.

3. Will we know our grades in each subject from the graded assessments?

Each graded assessment is intended to give an indicative grade for that piece of work of the standard that is broadly demonstrated in that piece of work. It is very likely that the grade in each assessment is not the same each time – that would be surprising as some students will find some topics easier/harder than others. However, because we will have a broad range of graded assessments to refer to we will be able to arrive at a 'best fit' grade. This will not be a simple 'average' of all assessments as we would reasonably expect students grades to get better in the coming months as they complete the course content and the gaps in their learning are addressed and closed. Some graded assessments will cover more content than others.

4. Will we know the final teacher assessment grade that the school submits?

Last year, schools were told not to share the data submitted to exam boards with parents or students ahead of results being awarded in August. We will wait to hear what the final guidance on this is for this year. For now, the important thing is that each student does their best in each of the graded assessments to demonstrate what they can do and this will help us finalise the teacher assessed grade in that subject.

5. How will you stop students from copying the work of others and 'cheating'?

The vast majority of students submit their work as their own. However, we are aware that a very small number of students are sharing their work and it is quite obvious to spot. Where this is the case, the grade from that work will not count and we will exclude it from our records for that student when deciding their teacher assessed grade. If students do not follow our expectations it will severely impact the reliability of the evidence we are able to draw on and will impact on the grade that can be given. When students are back in school it will be much easier to administer assessments in a more formal setting.

6. Will there be an opportunity for students to catch-up work missed last year?

The exam boards had already published revised detail on what would be in the examination had it been going ahead. As exams are not going ahead, we will now do all we can to ensure that each student has evidence that covers as much of the full subject content that was going to be examined. We will also wait to see the full detail of what is published by Ofqual and the Government following the current consultation. The outcome of this is expected towards the end of February/early March.

7. Why are you not waiting until the Government publishes the full detail of the arrangements for this summer?

Given that we have been told that the examinations are not going ahead and grades will be issued based on teacher assessment, it is in the best interest of students to now start gaining a full and detailed picture.

We cannot go ahead with a mock as we had first hoped and the challenges of doing them remotely are too large to overcome. Either way, mocks would be just one part of the overall grade. It is worth remembering that mocks are typically lower than the final grade a student achieves and so a student's final subject grade would be lower if we relied solely on mocks.

8. I am concerned that there will be too much testing and not enough teaching. How will you get the right balance on this?

We know that assessments and testing is part of what we need to do, but our top priority is to ensure the full teaching of the course is done. It is better to think of the graded assessments as 'little and often' - as regular 'check-ins' to see that what has been taught is demonstrated in appropriate tasks and questions that reflect the GCSE grades. Graded assessments done remotely will not be a full exam paper – that does not make sense or indeed fair to do. However, part of our approach will be to break up an exam paper into chunks so that we can build up a picture over time as well as provide other assessments to form an overall picture.

9. How will remote lessons help a student to do their best and demonstrate what they are capable of?

We deliberately have a 'blended approach' of recorded lessons, live lessons and time given over to feedback. The recorded lessons allow students to work at their own pace, rewind, pause and revisit what has been taught. Live lessons are more interactive and allow for feeding back on work to the whole class or setting up future work. They are very dependent on a stable Wi-Fi connection and no Internet issues. We think this balance allows the best of both approaches. This has recently been endorsed by Ofsted in their recently published review of remote learning.

10. Will previous assessments be taken into account?

Yes, absolutely, but we recognise that these may well be lower than the final grade a student would have got in their examination if they had taken it this summer. We will not unfairly disadvantage any student by what has happened in the past that they cannot now change through no fault of their own. The message to students is clear. Make it count now and in the coming weeks and months. This is the time to engage with all your work and get the best possible grades at the end that will give you the options to choose what you can do next year.

11. How are students made aware of their recorded lessons?

The work for each day is posted on SatchelOne. Every student knows their login details. Every parent can check the work that has been set using the login details sent for SatchelOne and use the password reset function if needed.

12. If a student is entitled to special arrangements, will this be taken into account in the graded assessments?

We will do everything we can to ensure a student is not disadvantaged. Some students who are eligible to be in school fall into this category and we will make sure that they complete the graded assessments with all arrangements they are entitled to. When students are back in school we will make sure that any student entitled to special arrangements has those needs met and we will do all we can remotely to ensure they can access what is being taught and assessed.

13. Will students be told in advance what is going to be in the graded assessments?

We will adopt the method that we were going to do for mocks (that are now not going ahead). That is, we will give advance notice of the topics or skills that are being assessed, but not the actual questions they need to answer.

14. Will students be able to use revision aids to help them with the graded assessments?

Our overarching aim is to find out what students understand and can do. We are looking to establish a fair and informed grade. We are not looking to catch students out by giving them assessments that make this hard for them to do. However, we do need to make sure that students have sufficient evidence to back up the teacher assessment grade. Our graded assessment approach will allow us to tailor and adjust assessments over the next few months to ensure that any gaps can be retaught and reassessed giving every student the chance to show us what grade they are capable of.

15. When will the graded assessments start?

They are happening already and we will continue with them as part of our teaching model between now and June. RS has four lessons per week: two live lessons, one recorded lesson and one given over to assessment. It is best to think that every piece of work being completed now is helping to inform the final teacher assessment grade.