

Friday 26th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Covid-19 and lateral flow testing

A huge thank you to all those parents who are ensuring that their children use the lateral flow tests we provided last Friday to test at home. We have already had a small number of asymptomatic positive cases identified and this means that carriers of the coronavirus are self-isolating instead of spreading the virus to their classmates. This helps us to keep children in school and to reduce virus transmission.

Please remember to report all lateral flow tests to school via the quick buttons on the home page of our website and, each time, to NHS Test and Trace.

Sadly, although significantly lower than prior to lockdown, virus rates in Tameside have stopped falling. This morning I was notified of the following by the Executive Leader of the Council: "[Our covid infection rate – which this week was at 113 new cases per 100,000 people - has plateaued and ranked us as having the highest rate in Greater Manchester and one of the top ten highest rates in the country](#)".

I'm sure you will agree that this is not a Top 10 that we want to be within; we certainly don't want any further disruption to education and so it remains more important than ever that all safety measures are fully embraced in school:

- Regular hand sanitising
- Silent movement around the building to reduce aerosol transmission
- Social distancing as much as possible
- Wearing face masks inside the building

As restrictions begin to ease in our local community, we need to keep everyone as safe as possible and prevent a new surge in virus rates.

Along with this newsletter, we are issuing a letter from Dr Jeanelle de Gruchy, Tameside's Director of Population Health with more information about the Covid-19 situation in Tameside. Please note that this letter states that "[Secondary school pupils must now wear face coverings in classrooms...](#)"; from Monday 29th March this will be expected of ALL pupils unless they are medically exempt.

Please remember that if your child (or anyone in your household) has symptoms of Covid-19, they must NOT attend school and a Covid test must be arranged. It is really important that you continue to notify us as soon as possible if your child tests positive so that we can identify any close contacts and direct them to self-isolate; lots of information and guidance can be found [here](#) or you can ring 111 if you're worried.

A reminder about temporary changes to our school uniform policy:

Due to the need for good ventilation to reduce the possibility of virus transmission, classrooms are still sometimes colder than normal. As a temporary measure, **in addition to their normal school uniform**, teachers will allow pupils to wear additional layers in classrooms that are too cold as shown overleaf.

Year 7	Years 8 and 9	Years 10 and 11
Non-PE day		
Normal uniform: White shirt Blue school jumper Blazer Black skirt/Black tailored trousers Black shoes Blue and red tie	Normal uniform: White shirt Blue school jumper Blazer (optional) Black skirt/Black tailored trousers Black shoes Blue and red tie.	Normal uniform: White shirt Black school jumper Blazer (optional) Black skirt/Black tailored trousers Black shoes Black and red tie.
Plus if cold in classroom: Blue Hyde PE hoodie preferable (or a plain black hoodie with no zip) and/or Winter coat (no denim jackets)	Plus if cold in classroom: Black Hyde PE hoodie preferable (or a plain black hoodie with no zip) and/or Winter coat (no denim jackets)	
PE day		
Normal PE kit: Royal blue games polo shirt with Hyde logo Trainers (appropriate for PE and different to school shoes) One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Black shorts with Hyde logo (girls and boys)• Black tracksuit bottoms with Hyde logo (girls and boys)• Black skorts with Hyde logo (girls only)• Black leggings with Hyde logo (girls only)		
Plus if cold in classroom: Blue Hyde PE hoodie preferable (or a plain black hoodie with no zip) and/or Winter coat (no denim jackets)	Plus if cold in classroom: Black Hyde PE hoodie preferable (or a plain black hoodie with no zip) and/or Winter coat (no denim jackets)	

All pupils are expected to continue to wear their full school uniform as normal and should expect to remove coats on entry to school as has always been the case. It will be the teacher's decision that the room is/isn't too cold as not all classrooms are affected. **No hoodies, jumpers or jackets other than those mentioned above, should be worn inside the building at all.**

These temporary measures will be reviewed at the end of April.

End of Term

School finishes for the Easter break next Thursday (1st April) and pupils return at their normal time on Monday 19th April. Families entitled to free school meals will receive vouchers to cover this period.

Information relating to Year 11 qualifications

On the following pages I am including an outline of how grades will be assessed for this year's Year 11. We are still waiting for final information and guidance from the exam boards and for a decision about when Year 11 will 'finish' school. As soon as we know more, we will let you know too.

I wish all of our pupils and their families a pleasant weekend. Keep safe.

Best wishes

A Radcliffe .

Andrea Radcliffe

Headteacher

The grading of GCSEs and other qualifications in summer 2021

How will grades be awarded this summer?

Grades for GCSEs and most other qualifications will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams' regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will **assess students against a national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Each department will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Our school results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**.
5. If students do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to **appeal**.

So, do teachers award the grade?

Simply: no. The grade students achieve will start with their teachers' assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally-defined standard, not each teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual.

Does this mean grades are decided by an algorithm?

No, unlike last year, students' grades will not be changed by a formula. The internal and external quality assurance measures will all be done by humans, not an algorithm. There is no limit on the achievement of students, *providing they have evidence that they are working at that grade*.

What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?

This year, teachers will only assess students on content they have been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means students will not be disadvantaged if they individually, their whole class or whole year group have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of students' performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual. Students who would usually have extra time in the exams will benefit from the same arrangements in teacher assessment.

Will grades be different between different schools and colleges?

No, the standard against which teachers will be assessing students is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

What evidence will be used?

Teachers are able to draw on a range of assessment evidence from across a student's study of the course, up until 7 June, 2021. This may include homework tasks, mock exams, and papers set by the exam boards. This may include evidence from before the second lockdown, as well as evidence from March – June. The exam boards are producing assessment materials that will be sent to us before Easter. Different departments may use different sources of evidence, and there is no requirement for any one type of assessment to be used – it's about a performance across a range of evidence.

The exam boards are only giving out past papers, how is this fair?

Most of the assessments provided by the exam boards will be drawn from past papers, although there will be new questions as well. There is significant research that even if students have seen assessments questions before, it does not reduce the validity of the assessment. Furthermore, exam board questions are only one of the many pieces of evidence we will use to assess students this summer.

Can students and parents make the case for why a student should get a higher grade?

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess students on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence they are committing exam malpractice.

In 2020, any undue pressure by student or parent who placed undue pressure on teachers to increase grades was also considered exam malpractice. It is likely to be the same for 2021. If students or parents are found to be putting teachers or leaders under undue pressure to increase grades, then this matter will be referred to the exam boards and an investigation into malpractice may ensue. This may result in the student's certificate being removed entirely if malpractice is deemed to have taken place.

Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students, including marked or graded pieces of work.

However, we are not allowed to disclose the final submitted grade we give to the exam board.

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

What should students do to improve their grades?

The best thing students can do now is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and read around their subjects. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their own hands.

End.