



St Peter's Catholic High School

SMC/LOV/ABA

8th December 2015

A Specialist Visual Arts College



Dear Parent/Carer,

As you will be aware the English and Maths GCSEs have undergone several significant changes recently. For those students who will be assessed in summer 2017, our current Year 10, the format and duration of the examinations will be markedly different to previous years. Your child will now receive a numerical grade (1-9, 9 being the highest) in English and Maths only.

Changes to English

Firstly, the tiering system has been removed. This means that all students will be entered for the same paper. No Higher or Foundation tiers exist. This applies to both English Language and English Literature. The courses are all terminally assessed; this means there is no coursework or controlled assessment on the new specifications.

In the English Literature qualification there will be two **closed book** exams. This means that, whereas in the past students have had access to the text they have studied in the exam to enable them to refer to it, they will now no longer have that option. Students will still be expected to have a good grasp of the whole texts they will be studying – and the emphasis is very much on *whole texts*, so a deep knowledge of the texts studied is very important. All the marks therefore are allocated on the written papers being sat in summer. As such we will be running the two English GCSEs alongside each other to replicate the situation the students will experience at the end of Year 11.

Changes to Maths

There will be three papers rather than the previous two papers. One of these papers will remain as a non-calculator examination with the other two being calculator papers. There will still be two tiers of entry, Foundation and Higher, with the vast majority of pupils completing a Higher tier examination. There will be no coursework or early entry, with all students completing the examination at the end of the course.

The most significant change will be the increase in the number of questions that require students to use and apply mathematics, problem solve, communicate and reason. These are questions that often prove to be the most challenging questions. The Department is addressing this change, but students must be prepared to adapt to these new strategies.

As outlined in the previous letter sent home with Year 10 Interim Reports, how these grades are being reported has shifted as well. The targets for students have been adapted to reflect these changes. It is expected that a Grade 5 will most closely resemble the current 'C' pass grade, especially from the perspective of sixth-form colleges and higher education establishments.

The skills expected from the students are very similar to those that have been embedded since Year 7 and before and as such I have full confidence in the successful outcomes of the Year group at the end of Year 11. All students will be closely monitored for progress and appropriate intervention will take place as and when it is required to ensure students reach their full potential. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

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Head of English

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