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Dear Parents

Target Grades for GCSE Courses

At Bishop Wordsworth's School we want to help your son to achieve the best possible exam results that he can. One of the ways we can do this is to set Target Grades that are achievable but offer some degree of challenge. These will help your son to have a clearer idea of the grades that he should be aiming for. They provide an effective way for him and his teachers to monitor and evaluate his performance throughout the course so that advice and guidance can be tailored to his needs.

Mrs Jenner will be speaking to the whole of Year 10 about the importance of these in an Assembly next week but as Target Grades will appear on reports it is important that you are aware of what they mean and how they are produced:

- At the beginning of Year 10 I generate the initial grades based on your son's performance in the Year 9 Exams.

By comparing the Year 9 Exam performance of students in previous years against their GCSE results I can identify general trends, and from these project forward from a student's Year 9 Exam %. I assume that no student will achieve less than a 4 grade in any subject. In reality, only a small proportion of GCSE grades are below 5 (4.7% of GCSE grades at BWS were 4 to 2 in 2018 and there were no grades below this). Where subjects do not have an exam % (e.g. Art, Bs and Dt) I have used the student's average Exam %.

It is important to note that this is merely a starting point for the next stage.

- Your son and his teachers will be discussing these raw grades over the next few weeks with a view to producing achievable but aspirational Target Grades.

One of the arguments against relying too much on such a mechanistic approach as the one outlined above, is that it doesn't take into account the individual student. That is why we feel that it is important for staff to be able to use their professional judgement and experience to set targets for each of their students that are both achievable but offer a degree of stretch and challenge. Also, it is important that your son is involved in the process so that he understands what these Target Grades mean.

- At the start of Year 11, your son and his teachers will have a further opportunity to adjust the Target Grades in the light of his progress over the previous year.

In most cases it is assumed that they will either stay the same or go up, though they may be lowered if the teacher feels that this is a more realistic Target Grade for your son.

It is important to remember that these are not predicted grades. They are grades that we feel your son should be aiming for and be able to achieve with hard work in Years 10 and 11.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at the school.

Yours faithfully

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