

Year 7 & 8 - Virtual Information Evening FAQs



Please find below a summary of the parental/carers questions raised from the evening and our responses.

Question	Response
1. When will students and parents receive a list of revision topics for the assessments?	Students have been issued a paper copy of their assessment timetable and supporting information booklet. These are also available in the News section of our school website along with the recording of the Information Evening.
2. Will students be placed into academic sets for any of their subjects?	At Helsby we only use academic setting for the grouping of students in those subjects where there are different tiers of entry and thus content requirement at GCSE. These subjects are Maths, Science and Modern Foreign Languages. All students began Year 7 in mixed ability groupings in all subjects. It is our intention to use the SAT (for Year 7) and CAT (for Year 8) assessment data along with assessment data gathered throughout this year to inform our academic setting arrangements in these subjects. Once we feel we have sufficient evidence to inform our setting decisions we will communicate these to students and their parents/carers. It is our intention to place students into academic sets in Maths at some point in Year 7; in Modern Foreign Language at the start of Year 8, and in Science at the start of Year 9. We continually review students' academic groupings throughout their time at Helsby High School to ensure they are placed into the most appropriate group for them to ensure they reach their full potential.
3. As target grades are based on CAT or SAT results, will they be reviewed at any point?	Whilst we use SAT (for Year 7) or CAT (for Year 8) data to determine students' GCSE target grades, it is our intention to review students' GCSE target grades at the end of Year 9 in readiness for them commencing their GCSEs. This is to take account of any national changes to how academic progress for students is measured, as well as taking into consideration students' progress across Key Stage 3. We will provide students in KS3 with a yearly target that shows progression towards their GCSE target. Target grades are not a limiting factor in students learning and progress, and students are encouraged to at least meet if not exceed their target grades.
4. How are students' target grades set for other subjects that are not English or Maths?	We follow the same procedure for setting targets for all subjects and use the average English and Maths score as the baseline for all subject targets. GCSE performance differs between different subjects and hence students' targets will be different for different subjects. This is the same system that is used nationally by the Department for Education to measure expected student progress across all subject areas.
5. As students' targets are related to GCSE grading criteria, how do we know if a student is on track?	Students' targets are set based on their performance in the KS2 SAT (for Year 7) assessments or CAT (for Year 8) assessments conducted in September and national average progress from their score. We will report to parents the end of year target grade that works towards students' GCSE targets in each subject area. We also report students' Current Grade with a Progress Indicator to reflect our professional judgement as to whether or not

they are on track to achieve their target grades. We do not have an 'average grade' that students should be working towards as all our targets are set for the individual student to meet their academic needs.

6. Why are the GCSE grades on a number system from Grades 1 to Grade 9?

The GCSEs were reformed a number of years ago so that students are now awarded numbered GCSE grades. Therefore, we use this same numbering system with our target and reported grades to students and their parents/carers so that they are in-line with the grades that students will be awarded in their GCSE qualifications. A guide to their equivalence to the old lettered GCSE grades is as follows:

GCSE Grading	
New Grading Structure	Old Grading Structure
9	A*
8	
7	A
6	
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
	G
U	U

7. Is there a system for providing feedback regarding homework?

Homework is set to provide students with an opportunity to review their learning and practise its application in context. It is set to reinforce learning from the classroom and all students are encouraged to complete it to aid their progress and develop their independent learning skills.

If a parent/carer has a query regarding any aspect of their child's academic learning, they are to contact either the relevant year admin email address or the Student Support Coordinator who will be best placed to direct and respond to such queries.

Year7admin@helsbyhigh.org

Year8admin@helsbyhigh.org

Year 7 SSC cdalrymple@helsbyhigh.org

Year 8 SSC hparkes@helsbyhigh.org

8. Is there an explanation of the GCSE assessment/grading system?	This will be provided along with the written reports.
9. Students are graded each lesson for their attitude towards learning on a scale of 0-5. Can parents view this?	Currently this is available only as a summary on student reports. However we are looking to develop this area of communication to parents/carers.
10. Will there be an opportunity to meet students' teachers face-to-face?	Throughout students' time at Helsby High School there will be numerous Information Evenings and Consultation Evenings. Following on from parent/carer voice we have decided that we will offer a blended approach to how such events will be conducted moving forwards, with some conducted remotely and others face-to-face. We will communicate with parents/carers in advance our intentions for how each event will be hosted.