

Wednesday 13 January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write further to my letters of [5 January](#) and [6 January](#) to keep you up to date with the developing situation regarding alternative arrangements for exams in 2021, as a result of the Secretary of State for Education's [statement to Parliament on 6 January](#).

Today, the Secretary of State for Education [wrote](#) to the Chair for Ofqual (the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) regarding assessment options for qualifications in 2021. In this correspondence the Secretary of State confirmed that as students will not 'be in a position to sit their exams fairly this summer... alternative arrangements are needed to award qualifications'. As a result, the DfE and Ofqual will jointly 'consult on alternative arrangements for GCSE, AS and A levels which should involve the awarding of grades based on teacher assessment'. The consultation will also consider 'propositions for these vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs)' as well, 'to ensure that students taking these qualifications are not disadvantaged in comparison to their peers taking GCSEs, AS and A levels'.

The consultation document will be issued 'later this week' and the consultation period will last for a fortnight, in order to 'reach conclusions quickly' thereafter. In his [response](#) to the Secretary of State, the Chief Regulator for Ofqual emphasises the importance for all those affected to be afforded the opportunity to comment on proposed arrangements, stating that the 'consultation should... seek the views of the students who would have sat exams this year and their parents and carers'.

To this end, I outline below the key points made in this [correspondence today](#), and in the Secretary of State's response to questions from the [Education Select Committee this morning](#), as they apply to our students and the qualifications they are working towards. I will, of course, provide you with all necessary consultation details as soon as they are published for you to respond, should you wish.

For GCSE, AS and A Levels

- Students should continue to be taught for as long as possible and teachers' final judgements on students' grades ought to be as late as possible in the academic year.
- Whilst a 'breadth of evidence should inform teachers' assessment of students' deserved grades', the possibility of providing externally set tasks or papers will be explored through the consultation, for teachers to draw on to support their assessments of students.

- The consultation will seek views on what ‘evidence should determine a teacher’s assessment of a student’s grade’ and whether the use of ‘externally set short papers’ should be ‘required or recommended’.
- The consultation will set out proposals which allow students to be assessed based on what they have learnt, rather than against content they have not had a chance to study.
- Schools should undertake quality assurance of their teachers’ assessments.
- External checks should be in place — not to ‘second-guess’ the judgement of teachers, but to confirm that the ‘process and evidence used to award a grade is reasonable’, and ‘to avoid schools and colleges proposing anomalous grades.’
 - Any changes to grades as a result of external checks should be ‘exceptional’, and only made ‘if those grades cannot be justified, rather than as a result of marginal differences of opinion’.
- No algorithm will be used to set or automatically standardise anyone’s grade.
- There should be a clear and accessible route for private candidates to be assessed and receive grades. The Chief Regulator for Ofqual has confirmed that Ofqual ‘will consider carefully the different experiences of private candidates and the opportunities available to them to make sure the approach is fair to all and that they are not disenfranchised’.
- There should be a route for any student who does not believe their grade reflects the standard of their work to request a review and appeal their grade, and that this process will ‘align with the detail of the assessment approach finally put in place’.

For Vocational and Technical Qualifications

- Qualifications, such as BTECs, Cambridge Nationals, and Cambridge Technicals need to have alternative arrangements to examined assessments, and views will be sought through the consultation regarding the detail of these arrangements.
- Assessments already completed will be taken into account when awarding a result.
- Internal assessment is expected to continue, and to take place remotely, wherever possible, with awarding organisations adapting such assessments to mitigate the impacts of disruption on teaching, learning and assessment that has occurred already or may.
- External, written exams for qualifications scheduled for February and March will ‘not go ahead’ (unless they are ‘used to signal occupational competence, or linked to occupational regulation, such as licence to practise qualifications’, which does not apply to any of our students).
- Assessments for Functional Skills qualifications planned to take place in February and March can take place online and where students are ready to take them.

As a result of these proposed arrangements, it should be noted, and as emphasised by the Chief Regulator for Ofqual, 'overall outcomes this year will likely look different from 2020 and previous years'. Post-16 and higher education sectors will be cognisant of this fact to secure orderly progression to the next stage of students' education.

We will of course keep you fully and promptly informed as and when we are provided with more detail and, indeed, as and when we are able to respond to such. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any further information.

As ever, keep safe, and keep looking after yourself and each other.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Brett', is positioned above the printed name.

Derrick Brett (Principal).



Important

Advice for schools

CORONAVIRUS SYMPTOMS IN CHILDREN

A CHILD WHO DEVELOPS ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A POTENTIAL CORONAVIRUS CASE:



NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH

This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if the child usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual)



FEVER (TEMPERATURE OF 37.8°C OR HIGHER)

The child will also feel hot to touch on their chest or back



A LOSS OR CHANGE TO SENSE OF SMELL OR TASTE

this means the child has noticed they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

MOST CHILDREN WITH CORONAVIRUS HAVE AT LEAST ONE OF THESE SYMPTOMS.



If a child is unwell with one or more of these specific symptoms they should be told not to come into school or sent home as soon as possible and advised to get a coronavirus test. **ONLY** those children with one or more of these symptoms or those advised by their clinician or Local Authority should get a test.



Children reporting other symptoms such as a headache, sore throat, runny or sniffling nose, earache, itchy eyes, lethargy or tiredness **WITHOUT** a fever should **NOT** be treated as potential coronavirus cases or advised to take a test.

If the national guidance on symptoms of coronavirus in children changes, updated information will be provided at a local level as soon as possible. This information about coronavirus symptoms in children can be shared with all school teaching and administration staff as well as parents and carers where necessary.

For further guidance on coronavirus testing for schools, please read the letter from PHE and NHS Test and Trace to school and college leaders at: bit.ly/phe-schools

ENGLAND LOCKDOWN

STAY AT HOME

**THE NEW VARIANT OF CORONAVIRUS IS SPREADING FAST.
WE ALL NEED TO PLAY OUR PART TO STOP THE SPREAD.**

▶ LEAVING HOME

You must not leave, or be outside of your home or garden, except for a very limited set of exemptions e.g. to shop for basic necessities, exercise, go to work if you cannot do so from home, or to escape risk of harm.

▶ MEETING OTHERS

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone, except with your household or support bubble (if eligible to form one). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

▶ EXERCISE

You may exercise on your own, with your household or support bubble, or with one person from another household (when on your own). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

▶ BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

Hospitality closed aside from sales by takeaway (until 11pm), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery. Alcohol cannot be purchased through takeaway or click-and-collect from hospitality venues.

▶ RETAIL

Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close and can only run click-and-collect and delivery.

▶ WORK AND BUSINESS

Everyone must work from home unless they are unable to do so.

▶ EDUCATION

Early years settings open. Primary and secondary schools and colleges move to remote provision except for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Most university students to move to remote learning.

▶ LEISURE AND SPORTING FACILITIES

Closed, with limited exceptions.

▶ ACCOMMODATION

Closed, with limited exceptions.

▶ PERSONAL CARE

Closed.

▶ ENTERTAINMENT

Closed.

▶ OVERNIGHT STAYS

You must not stay overnight away from home. Limited exceptions apply e.g. to stay with your support bubble.

▶ WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

Funerals of up to 30 people permitted. Weddings up to 6 people permitted in exceptional circumstances. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events of up to 6 permitted.

▶ PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship can remain open and communal worship is permitted, but you must not mix with those outside your household or support bubble.

▶ TRAVELLING

You must stay at home. If you do leave home for a very limited set of exemptions, you should stay local in the village, town, or part of the city where you live where possible. Do not travel abroad unless an exemption applies.

▶ CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

Shielding reintroduced across England. You should not travel to work, school, college or university and should limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

▶ CARE HOME VISITS

Visits can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak but end of life visits are permitted in all circumstances.