

Tuesday 2 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you if you were able to attend our online briefing yesterday evening about the arrangements for awarding GCSEs, AS and A levels, VTQs and other qualifications in summer 2021. If you were unable to attend the briefing, you can access a recording of the presentation [here](#), and the slides alone can be accessed [here](#). I am writing today simply to share the information we shared in the briefing, and to provide you with links to a full and up-to-date set of sources. Our policy for the 'Exceptional Arrangements for the awards of GCSE, AS, A level, and Vocational and Technical Qualifications in Summer 2021' will outline in detail the process we will follow, and we will share this with you once it is complete, once we know the decisions from the consultation that is currently running on the [guidance for schools on how to generate the evidence used to determine grades this summer](#) (the [consultation](#) closes at 11:45pm on 11 March 2021 and responses can be made [here](#)), and once the further guidance we await on grading is published.

Principles underpinning the award of Teacher Assessed grades

Teachers will not 'be asked to decide the grade a student might have achieved had the pandemic not occurred,' nor 'what grade a student might have received if they had been able to take their exams'. Teachers will assess students 'on the areas of content they have covered... while ensuring sufficient breadth of content coverage so as not to limit progression'. Teacher assessed grades will reflect the standard at which students are performing now, not their potential, and will be a 'fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the student's performance across a range of evidence, on the curriculum content that they have been taught. (Note that Ofqual will not set any requirements about the minimum amount of content that should be taught or assessed.)

Internal Quality Assurance

Every school is required to have internal procedures to quality assure the process, and ensure that Teacher Assessed grades are fair, reasonable and carefully considered. Ofqual will provide guidance to schools to help them make objective assessments and to avoid conscious or unconscious bias or discrimination. Grading at the College will be subject to a rigorous process of collating, benchmarking, evaluating, reviewing, and finalising. We must and will check for bias and malpractice and consider results in previous years to help us check if our judgements are unduly harsh or lenient. Each grade for a subject will be signed off by at least two teachers in that subject, one of whom will be the head of department. The Head of Centre will confirm that grades are a true representation of student performance, that students have been taught sufficient content to allow progression to the next stage of their education, and that the requirements for internal quality assurance have been met.

External Quality Assurance

Exam boards will check our internal processes. Exam boards may visit us as one of a random sample of schools to review the evidence we will have used to arrive at Teacher Assessed Grades and investigate further if it appears that evidence is not authentic. Additional checks from exam boards could also be triggered if concerns are raised, if results are out of line with expectations based on past performance, where there have been significant changes in early entries, or where schools have previously received sanctions for malpractice.

Appeals

Any student who believes that their grade does not reflect the standard of their performance will first ask us to check whether an administrative or procedural error had been made. If an administrative or procedural error was made, we will submit and request a revised grade. If no administrative or procedural error was made a student can ask us to appeal to the exam board on their behalf. If the exam board judges the grade does not reflect a reasonable exercise of academic judgement, and is not supported by the evidence, it will change the grade. Note that grades could go up or down following an appeal. Note also that whilst VTQ students will be able to appeal on the same basis, the exact nature of the processes might be a little different to reflect the different nature of the qualification. Ofqual will provide further information to help students understand how they can raise concerns if they think they have evidence of bias or discrimination against them.

Timeline

Grades must be submitted on Friday 18 June. (Please note that results must be kept confidential by the awarding organisation and by the school and teachers.) Teachers will determine grades as late in the academic year as is practicable, to enable teaching to continue for as long as possible. (Please note that we will confirm when formal teaching ends through our 'Exceptional Arrangements' policy.) Students will receive their AS and A level results on 10 August. Students will receive their GCSE results on 12 August. Students will receive results of their VTQs 'no later' than these dates.

Evidence

Teachers can draw on existing records and available evidence from any point over the course of study, including internal tests taken by students in class, mock exams, substantial classwork or homework and work produced via remote learning (where teachers are confident that the work produced is the student's own). The standard of any Non-Examined Assessments (coursework) undertaken will also be taken into account, including any partially completed. Some sources of evidence will carry more weight than others. Specific detail across subjects will be provided through our 'Exceptional Arrangements' policy.

Assessments that are undertaken on return to school from 8 March will not be confined to a specific window of time to give teachers as much flexibility as possible. Such assessments, which take the form of individual short topic tests targeted at specific grades, will be based on:

- Materials provided by exam boards for use in all subjects after Easter, with advice for teachers about content coverage, topic selection, marking and making grading judgements.
- Tasks devised by teachers using exam board materials.

Before grades are submitted, we will make students aware of the evidence we are using to assess them, and they will be required to confirm that the evidence is their own work. Students will have the opportunity to make teachers aware of any mitigating circumstances they believe should be taken into account, e.g., where illness or other personal circumstances might have temporarily affected performance, such as in November mock exams; or where reasonable adjustments and access arrangements were not in place when evidence was generated. Teachers will record and retain the evidence on which they base their decisions, both to support the exam boards' external quality assurance and in case of any appeal.

Sources of Information

- [DfE: What you need to know about grades in 2021, guide for parents and students](#)
- [DfE & Ofqual: Consultation and outcomes on GCSE, AS and A level summer 2021](#)
- [DfE & Ofqual: Consultation and outcomes on the award of VTQs in summer 2021](#)
- [DfE: Awarding Qualifications in Summer 2021 Guidance](#)
- [Ofqual: Chief Regulator on How qualifications will be awarded in 2021](#)
- [DfE: Direction from the Secretary of State for Education to Ofqual's Chief Regulator](#)
- [Ofqual: Chief Regulator Response to Secretary of State's direction](#)
- [Ofqual: Consultation on general qualifications alternative awarding framework](#)
- [Ofqual: Draft guidance for schools on how to generate the evidence used to determine grades](#)

Thank you very much once again for your continued support.

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

Yours sincerely,



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 sniffly 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.