



Letter No: 79/2021

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24th November 2021

Dear Students, Parents and Carers,

Examinations 2022

Ofqual, the organisation overseeing the English examination system, has released details of its contingency plans in the event of next summer's examinations being cancelled.

It is worth noting that the stated position of the government and Ofqual has not changed; they are very clear that students are highly likely to sit examinations next summer.

You will know from previous communications from me and your Performance Director that amendments have already been made to the ways in which students will be assessed in 2022 e.g. via "topic lists" to be published in February which should allow pupils to narrow their revision.

I am writing to you today with the 'plan B' in the event of exams being cancelled. It has been confirmed that Teacher Assessed Grades to be used to determine grades which is the same approach used to award grades last year. Our students received excellent grades last summer and were able to progress as normal via this system onto their chosen sixth form, college, university and apprenticeships. The school's approach to this process was approved by the authorities and no grades were adjusted following quality assurance processes, demonstrating the robust nature of our approach.

The proposed contingency arrangements do not require the school currently to make any significant amendments to our existing assessment arrangements but it is worth noting the following:

- For substantial trial exams, teachers will share topic lists that students need to revise to help narrow their revision – a measure that was already in place for the current trial exams;
- We have been asked to retain physical copies of mock examination papers;
- In the event of examinations being cancelled (as per Ofqual's guidance), we will put in an additional assessment periods for Year 11 and 13 in the Spring and Summer terms;
- If a student's performance in one or more of the assessments is affected by an event that is outside of the student's control at the time of, or immediately before, the assessment, such as illness or family bereavement, special consideration may be applied and a student's mark adjusted. I will be writing to students and families separately about this for the current trial exam period;



- Although grades for any trial exams will for the most part be shared with students, we have been asked to make clear that these grades are not Teacher Assessed Grades.

There are a number of other aspects of this contingency plan which have not yet been shared with schools (e.g. quality assurance processes) and we will only be informed of these arrangements in the event of exams being cancelled.

We continue to be enormously impressed with the maturity and resilience students in Years 11 and 13 have shown over the period of the pandemic. We very much hope that they will be able to sit the public examinations next summer and be rewarded for their hard work but the contingency plan described above, if invoked, will act as a safety net to allow students to progress as normal to the next stages of their lives.

More details of the contingency arrangements can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-contingency-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-summer-2022/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-other-exam-centres-on-contingency-arrangements-for-students-entering-gcses-as-and-a-levels-the-advanced-extension>

Jo Claxton, the Head of Ofqual, has also written an open letter to students which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-letters-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/letter-to-students>

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Creaby
Deputy Headteacher