



18 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

Summer 2021 examinations consultation

On Friday afternoon, the Department for Education and Ofqual (the government body responsible for overseeing the examinations and qualification system) published a consultation document relating to the plans that should be put in place to award qualifications to students who were due to take public examinations in the summer.

The first link relates to GCSE courses (along with A level):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>

The second link relates to vocational and technical courses (in our school that is Creative I-media and BTEC Health and Social Care):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-alternative-arrangements-for-the-award-of-vtqs-and-other-general-qualifications-in-2021>

These are long and, in some places, quite technical documents. But it is important that you have your say.

The centrepiece of the proposals is that rather than students being awarded a grade based on externally set and marked public examinations or assessment, grades this year will be awarded by their schools based on a range of evidence. To assist schools in this work, the consultation includes proposals that students should sit some kind of externally set short paper or test that might then support school level judgements. In a change to the approach for 2020, it is proposed that grades awarded are based on the attainment of students, supported by evidence, rather than a professionally judged prediction of what students are likely to have achieved in an exam, had they run.

We will continue to understand and consider the ramifications and implications of these proposals and share them with you as our understanding becomes clearer. What is clear is that the consultation does not address all of the questions and concerns that schools have. Further questions will be asked and further information will, I am sure, be forthcoming.

Once the consultation period has ended, Ofqual/DfE will publish their final plans. At which point, we will review our own planning and communicate clearly with you and, if relevant, your child, what our approach will be to ensure that they are given appropriate support and guidance and so that the process is as fair as it could be. We will also continue to offer strong pastoral support; we recognise the significant additional anxiety that this process has given to affected students.

What is crystal clear is that affected students **MUST** continue to work as hard as they can and should **NOT** assume that as the formal GCSE examinations have been cancelled, that they can now stop working. Whatever the final detail, it is clear that schools will be assessing students into the summer term and students therefore need to ensure that they are continuing to improve their attainment across their subjects through attending online lessons and independently.

Finally, it would be prudent for parents of year 11 students to note that the process of awarding grades looks as though it will run until the end of July (with a potential period of appeal into August), you may wish to consider this when making plans for the summer holiday period. Usually, year 11 students have finished their examinations by late June and then take an extended summer break. Unfortunately, this year, things will be different.

I will continue to write to you with further information as I receive it.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Johnson', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr A Johnson
Headteacher