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Success with Care

Headteacher: Mr M. J. Cooper



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Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I am writing to you to update you on the cancellation of summer 2021 AS and A Level examinations. I am all too aware of the stress and anxiety that this may be causing. Please be aware that our Success with Care ethos has never been more important and there are places in the priority school for Year 12 and 13 students, if trying to study at home on your own is becoming too much or you do not have access to the IT resources required. Alternatively, please contact the Sixth Form team or House teams with specific concerns, they are working tirelessly on supporting the well-being of students.

At the time of writing this letter, we have no final decisions regarding what will happen this summer but the Department for Education and Ofqual have put out a consultation document to gather views from all stakeholders on how examination grades should be awarded now that summer 2021 examinations have been cancelled. Please see the link below and feel free to contribute to this discussion.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953000/6743-1_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf

They state:

'Government decided that schools and colleges must close to most, to limit the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Through this joint consultation, Ofqual and the Department for Education want to hear the views of students who were due to take their exams, their parents and carers, their teachers, school and college leaders and others who have an interest, including further and higher education providers, and employers. The consultation covers general and vocational qualifications, with this document focusing on the former.

Students need grades to continue to the next stage of their education or training, or into employment. Grades must reflect what a student knows, understands and can do, and they must be widely understood and respected. In place of exams in summer 2021 we propose that a student's grade in a subject will be based on their teacher's assessment of the standard at which they are performing.'

This is your opportunity to have an input into this process.

You may have also seen articles in the press about possible directions of travel including mini examinations (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-55641364>). Again, we await the outcome of the consultation which closes on 29/1/2021.



In the meantime, we have made the decision to run Online Assessments for Y12 during the week beginning 1/2/2021 and Mrs Gill (Examinations Officer) will be shortly sending out the instructions to students on how to access the assessments. Please make sure that you have read this email. Year 13 students have already sat trial examinations in school in November/December.

Any student unable to access the assessments from home or is entitled to a scribe, will be offered a place in school and the majority of subjects will be assessed. Please contact Mrs S Gill (sgill@dronfield.derbyshire.sch.uk) if you need to sit the online assessments in school. Mrs S Gill can also organise 'extra time' remotely for the Online Assessments. During this week there will not be any Y12 lessons or homework set to offset the work that this entails for students.

The rationale behind the decision to run Y12 Online Assessments is that the process will provide

- 1) an opportunity for students to demonstrate to us what they can do
- 2) an opportunity for students to demonstrate to themselves what they can do
- 3) an opportunity to gain more evidence to inform the Centre Assessed Grades (the online assessments will only be one part of evidence used)
- 4) an opportunity for students to practice completing a task under timed conditions.

We realise that there will be questions around how we will ensure that students do not 'cheat' during these assessments.

- 1) Mrs Gill will write to parents outlining the expectation that they will ensure that their child does not contravene examination rules whilst they carry out the assessments. Parents and carers will be asked to sign an agreement to this effect.
- 2) The rules will be made very clear to students and any evidence that they have been contravened could lead to disqualification.
- 3) Curriculum Leaders will choose assessment tasks which focus on understanding rather than simple factual recall.
- 4) Work that is submitted which is 'out of character' will be questioned. Our staff know their students very well and as such know of what they are capable.

Please be assured that the grades from these online assessments will only be one piece of evidence that staff use to judge the AS grades awarded this summer. We are hoping to have students back in school as soon after February Half Term as possible and we will try to organise traditional Trial Examinations in the hall as we had planned, if possible. Please be reassured that everything does not hinge on one piece of work.

We want student to see this as an opportunity to show what they can do. I know many of you are working hard and trying your best and I have had positive feedback in terms of your engagement with lessons.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I send my best wishes to you and your family.



Mr M Howell
Director of Sixth Form