

Message to parents and students from Elizabeth Kitcatt

I hope you and your families are well. We have reports of a small number of colleagues who have been unwell, but who are now improving; fortunately no member of school staff has been in hospital.

As I am sure you are aware, we have no news about when schools will fully re-open, so we are assuming that the school will be open only to the children of eligible parents for the next few weeks, and we are making plans on that basis. The school staff are working together (but remotely!) on increasing our understanding of the Ofqual requirements for centre-assessed GCSEs, AS and A levels. If your child is in Year 11 or Year 13 you will have read the information on our website, I'm sure, in the Information About Examinations section.

I'm very confident that the school and its teachers will be able to generate fair and objective centre assessments for all our students. I realise that this is causing some anxiety, but please be assured that we are working hard to put the right measures and processes in place to produce fair and accurate marks.

I won't go through all the details in the Ofqual documents, but I will draw your attention to a few points that I hope will be reassuring by answering some of the questions you have been asking teachers.

My child didn't do as well as expected in the mock examinations. What effect will this have on the centre assessment?

Ofqual has stated that the centre assessment must be 'holistic'. This means that we will take into account a range of evidence.

The Ofqual statement is as follows:

Centre assessment grades

This should be a holistic professional judgement, balancing the different sources of evidence. Teachers and heads of department will have a good understanding of their students' performance and how they compare to other students within the department/subject this year, and in previous years.

What is the range of evidence the centre will use?

This is Ofqual's list:

Teachers should draw on existing records and available evidence (as far as possible in the context of current public health advice). It is important that the judgements are objective, and they should only take account of evidence about student performance.

This will include the following, where it is available.

- records of each student's performance over the course of study, including for example progress review data, classwork, bookwork, and/or participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama and PE
- performance on any non-exam assessment (NEA), even if this has not been fully completed.
- for re-sitting students, any information about previous grades achieved or NEA marks that would, under normal circumstances, have been carried forward
- for A level students who took AS in 2019, their AS results in that subject
- performance on any class or homework assessments and mock exams taken over the course of study
- tier of entry in tiered subjects
- previous results in your centre in this subject
- the performance of this year's students compared to those in previous years
- any other relevant information

So you will see that the centre will look at a wide range of evidence, not just the mock examination marks. And Ofqual notes the following:

Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in mock exams, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements.

Who will assess my child's work?

This professional judgement is derived from evidence held within the centre and which has been reviewed by subject teachers and relevant heads of department.

My child has access arrangements in place - how will this be taken into account?

Ofqual has clarified this as follows:

Where disabled students have an agreed reasonable adjustment (for example a reader or scribe), or other students have an agreed access arrangement, the judgement should take account of likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment/access arrangement in place.

So, to sum up:

The centre assessment grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.

I understand that this is a worrying time for Year 11 and Year 13 students. They were expecting an intense period of teaching and learning through the end of March, April and early May, and this has been taken away from them. They were mentally preparing themselves for examinations that will

not take place. They may be worried that they have not done themselves justice in their schoolwork and will not receive the grades for which they hoped.

As parents, I hope you will reassure your child that the school will do everything possible to make sure the centre assessment will reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement, and that students will receive grades that enable them to move forward to the next stage of their education.

I do hope that you and your family will be able to relax over the next few days, and that you all remain well.

With best wishes to you all

Elizabeth Kitcatt