

2nd September 2020

Dear Parents,

This year has been turbulent for students globally and in particular for those preparing for GCSE examinations. Students moving into year 11 will be conscious that Ofqual have been planning some changes. As a school we will make sure that students are well prepared for examinations in whatever from they take. Given the experience of 2020 it is even more important that students attend school every day. A range of evidence was taken into consideration to calculate Centre Assessed Grades including: work over time in books and Mock Examinations. It is vital that students present their best selves every lesson every day and produce work that represents their ability. Mock examinations are planned for the Autumn Term. These provide vital evidence and it is important that students are aware of this mile stone and are working towards them with dedication and determination.

The media has focused on some key headlines for the next examination series I have summarised below the key points. If you wish to see the full Ofqual documentation, it is found on their website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/exams-and-assessments-in-2021> (their summary) and <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-changes-to-the-assessment-of-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2021> (full publications).

One critical headline is that Ofqual has not yet confirmed when the 2021 summer examinations will take place and so **the proposal for a later examination timetable** (i.e. June-July instead of the usual May-June) is, as yet, undecided. They state they "...will work with DfE, the exam boards, colleagues in Wales and Northern Ireland, and higher education to undertake further analysis of the options, the risks and the mitigations, before taking a decision" (p.9). Therefore, we recommend that you keep July free until further confirmation. Ofqual has acknowledged the consultation responses which detailed the arguments against the later timetable but is clearly still considering this proposal.

It is also worth noting that they have made very brief reference to plans in **the event of additional public health restrictions and/or lockdowns**. However, information relating to these is, as yet, not available.

The relevant decisions for Bournville students are:

- **No changes to the length, format or number of examination papers** for subjects, except where specified for particular subjects.
- **English and history** GCSEs will have more examination question choice which enables schools to reduce some areas of content.
- **Geography** will not require centres to declare numbers of days undertaking fieldwork.

- Subjects which require **performance NEA components (e.g. music, drama, PE) have been adjusted** to allow for public health restrictions (e.g. solo vs group performances).
- Subjects which require **practical components (e.g. science, Food, art, and DT) have been adjusted** to allow for public health restrictions (e.g. observing science demonstrations is permitted as a way of covering practical skills elements of the course; art will be portfolio only; etc.).
- **Modern foreign languages** GCSE orals will be replaced by a teacher assessed endorsement (distinction, merit, pass)

Please be assured of two things:

- i. teachers will go through all the subject-specific details with students in September to ensure they are absolutely clear of where the changes impact examinations and this information will be shared with parents;
- ii. remote teaching has enabled students to not only keep up with expected progression through their courses but, in some cases, to get ahead of the delivery programme for the course.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming students back next term. We are, of course, planning for all eventualities - we have enormous faith in students ability to work with us successfully, no matter what is happening in the wider world, as they progress through Year 11. We are also very aware that covering the content is not the same as having it embedded into your memory and we will ensure that we continue working on that, building on from the work done when students came into school in the summer term.

I hope this gives you helpful information than. We hope to have further confirmation from Ofqual details of this will be shared with you when it is available.

I do hope you had an enjoyable summer break.

Yours faithfully



Miss M Green
Head of Academy