



**GUISELEY
SCHOOL**

7 January 2021

Vocational Examinations

Dear Parent / Carer

As you will be aware from media coverage, the Government made an announcement late on Tuesday evening about vocational qualifications. This put the decision on whether to continue to run vocational examinations due this term into the hands of individual schools.

Having weighed up the situation and considered Public Health concerns and the best interests of students in terms of their exam results and progression with their education, **I have taken the decision to cancel the Year 10 and 11 examinations that would have taken place next week although the smaller Key Stage 5 examinations will continue.**

I know that this news will be met with relief by many students and parents whilst others will be hugely disappointed by the decision.

The announcement by the Government on Tuesday left schools and colleges in a difficult position. Any school choosing to cancel the examinations would need to enter their students for the summer examination series not knowing how this would be assessed. Whilst the Secretary of State for Education, Mr Williamson, stated in Parliament that GCSE and A-Level examinations would be replaced by some sort of Centre Assessed Grade system similar to last year, he did not say how vocational subjects would be affected.

I have been particularly keen to seek assurances on how grades might be awarded for vocational examinations and that our students will not be disadvantaged. We have communicated with exam boards and they cannot yet state how grades will be awarded in the summer as they have not received any guidance yet. They do not know if the students will receive some sort of Centre Assessed Grade for this exam or if it would be a calculated grade based on their controlled assessments. Students may even be asked to take some sort of assessment in the summer. The exam boards have been clear that they will be working to ensure that students who do not sit the examinations will not be disadvantaged.

I am satisfied therefore, that the correct decision would be for the Year 10 and 11 examinations not to take place from Monday 11 January as they involve larger cohorts of up to 113 students.

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I am also satisfied, that the Key Stage 5 examinations, which involve much smaller cohorts, can go ahead. We have looked carefully at how we as a school can reduce the risk to students sitting examinations in the January series. We have set out the examination hall with a minimum distance of 2 metres between all the desks rather than the minimum recommended distance of 1.25 metres. Once students sitting examinations have been identified we would allow them to wear a face mask for the examination. We can keep the doors to the examination hall open during the session to ensure that we have a constant flow of air although this will unfortunately mean that the examination hall may be a little colder than we would like.

We know that you will understand the difficult position we have found ourselves in with regular changes to guidance and very limited information available to us. I have taken on the responsibility passed to me by the Government and made what was a very difficult, but I believe correct decision.

I would nonetheless want to apologise to all those students affected by the cancellation and who had worked so hard in preparation for these examinations. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by these circumstances.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Clayton', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Paul Clayton
Headteacher