



Longbenton HIGH SCHOOL

6th January 2021

Dear Parents and Students

Year 11 and 13: 2021 Summer Exams

You will have heard in the Prime Minister's statement about national lockdown on Monday that the summer 2021 exams will not be going ahead as planned. The Department for Education statement to schools says: "in these circumstances, we do not think it is possible or fair for all exams this summer to go ahead as planned. The Secretary of State for Education will therefore work with Ofqual to put in place alternative arrangements after consultation with the sector." Gavin Williamson confirmed in his statement to the House of Commons today (you can watch his full statement [here](#)) that this is the case and that teacher's estimated grades will be used in place of exams.

As headteacher, I have not had any formal instructions or details from the DfE regarding this yet. I find myself in the same position as you: watching the news to see what is said next. I understand how frustrated, anxious and potentially angry you will be at hearing this news and will of course be wondering what happens next. All I can say for now, is that you need to continue to attend online lessons and engage in learning if you are in Year 11 and 13, as the work and assessment you undertake this term will help add to the evidence base your teachers already have in determining how well you are doing.

Year 12 and 13 'mock' assessments will be going ahead as planned over the next two weeks, but of course students will now be completing these at home. Teachers will be explaining to students how these will look and work over forthcoming days; we have left it up to subject leaders to decide how best to deliver and mark these assessments. So to clarify: students in these year groups should continue to prepare for these. It is also worth noting that the UCAS deadline has been extended to 29th January for those in Year 13 yet to complete their applications.

Year 10, 11 and 13: Vocational Qualifications

- BTEC L3 Extended Certificate in Children's Play, Learning and Development
- Level 3 Health and Social Care (Cambridge Technical)
- Construction and Hospitality & Catering at KS4 (WJEC Vocational Awards)
- Creative iMedia and Sport Studies at KS4 (OCR Cambridge National Certificates)

You may have also seen that the Department for Education issued a tweet after 6pm last night stating that: *"Schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams that are due to take place in January, where they judge it is right to do so. We understand that this is a difficult time, but we want to support schools and colleges whose students have worked hard to prepare for their assessments and exams."*

Our priority is to ensure students are not disadvantaged. We know students and teachers have been working hard towards the January exams and many will want to take the opportunity to sit them. However, there will also be many students due to sit exams for these vocational qualifications over the next few weeks who will be understandably anxious, and I understand that you will have the right to withdraw.

If you do not sit the exams this January, the options presented to us so far **from the exam boards** are as follows:

1. Exam boards will certificate any learner who is unable to take their exams and has enough evidence to receive a certificate that they need for progression.



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2. Learners unable to take their assessment this January may be able to take their assessment at a later date. If that is not possible, arrangements will be put in place to ensure no learner is disadvantaged.
3. If students were going to certificate in January, exam boards will award a grade to a student if there is enough evidence, to help them progress.

Teachers will be telephoning BTEC students in Years 10, 11 and 13 and parents over the forthcoming days to discuss how students are feeling about coming in for their exams scheduled this Friday and next week. We are still discussing as a staff with very limited information how best to proceed, therefore my advice for now would be to prepare for these exams going ahead.

I will be in touch again with students in exam year groups when I know more about teacher / centre assessed grade plans for Year 11 and 13.

Yours faithfully

Kelly Holbrook

Headteacher