



Ref: H/KDA/CHU/Letters/GCSE2021

12th January 2021

Dear Parents/Carers and Year 11 Students

Further to my Parental Updates and my recent Year 11 online assembly, I promised that I would write to you to inform you of the current situation regarding GCSE examinations and grades for summer 2021.

On Monday 4th January, the government announced that schools will need to move to remote learning, with immediate effect, which will be reviewed on Monday 22nd February.

On Wednesday 6th January, a parliamentary statement by the Secretary of State for Education announced that:

'Another area where we have learned lessons is on exams. Last year, all four nations of the UK found their arrangements for awarding grades did not deliver what they needed, with the impact felt painfully by students and their parents. Although exams are the fairest way we have of assessing what a student knows, the impact of this pandemic now means that it is not possible to have these exams this year. I can confirm that GCSEs and A and AS Level exams will not go ahead this summer. This year we are going to put our trust in teachers rather than algorithms.'

The department and Ofqual had already worked up a range of contingency options. While the details will need to be fine-tuned in consultation with Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representatives, I can confirm now that I wish to use a form of teacher-assessed grades, with training and support provided to ensure these are awarded fairly and consistently.'

As it stands, this is the last communication and piece of information we have received. We await further details of the consultation and the plans for GCSEs 2021. I will keep you fully informed of developments.

What should Culcheth High School Year 11 students do in the mean time?

- In short, Year 11 students should carry on with all their remote learning commitments as per normal
- It is quite clear that the message is that Year 11 students will be expected to complete assessments in some/all subjects, in school, when schools are safe to reopen
- Year 11 students will be the priority group for returning to school when they are safe to reopen
- The work and engagement completed during this remote learning period will contribute to the 'Centre Assessed Grade' process for their 2021 GCSE grades
- Year 11 Progress Reports will be sent home on Friday 15th January detailing PPE grades and Learning Behaviour scores, for the autumn term
- Year 11 PPE 2 in Week 20, week beginning 8th February will be postponed with a view to hold these PPEs when Year 11 return to school later in the spring term

- Week 20, week beginning 8th February will remain an 'Assessment Week'. During this week staff will be setting QMAs and the results of these will be reported to parents/carers in the Year 11 Progress Report on Friday 19th March

This year's GCSE grading process will be different from last year. The messages given by the Secretary of State for Education makes that clear. Although teacher assessed grades will form part of the process, it will not be the single determining factor. For reference and information, please find, below, a description of last year's GCSE 'Centre Assessed Grade' process.

GCSE 2020 Centre Assessed Grade Process

1. Subject staff allocated grades to students based on a wide evidence base including, but not just limited to, PPE grades, QMAs, summative assessment tasks, formative assessment tasks, attitudes to learning, in-class work standards throughout the GCSE curriculum
2. Subject Leaders would then moderate these grades and apply a 'subject rank' according to Ofqual's regulations
3. Senior Leadership Line Managers then met with Subject Leaders to look at the grade distributions, the evidence base that grades and rankings were made on and how these compared to previous cohorts and previous subject results
4. The Senior Leadership Team then met at several different points in the process to moderate the whole school data in line with previous cohorts and previous school results
5. As Headteacher, I had to sign off and validate every Centre Assessed Grade

As you can see, it was a very complex process that was completed with honesty and integrity in line with Ofqual's regulations.

As Headteacher and a parent of a Year 11 student in 2020, last year's GCSE debacle was very worrying, stressful and frustrating. We hope that we have clarity of this year's process in the coming weeks so that students, teachers and parents can work together to ensure that every Year 11 student at Culcheth High School can fulfil their potential with their GCSE grades in the summer.

I urge all Year 11 students to continue with their remote education and fully engage in all learning over the coming weeks to ensure they are in a good position to return to school, when it is safe to do so, to resume their full preparations for the assessments in the spring and summer that will enable them to achieve their GCSE grades in summer 2021.

As always, I will keep you fully informed of all the developments as they happen.

Take care and stay safe.



C P Hunt (Mr)
Headteacher