



19th January 2021

Dear families,

GCSE and A Level Consultation

I hope that you are all keeping safe during this difficult time. We have now started our third week of online learning and whilst it has been going reasonably well there is always room for improvement in attendance. The remainder of this letter will outline why lesson attendance is of critical importance.

Recently the Government announced that A level and GCSE examinations would not go ahead as normal this year. We also saw the cancellation of January assessments for students on BTEC courses at many schools and Colleges, including our own. Although they have not said exactly what system they will use instead of these exams and assessments there has now been a strong clue given in a letter that Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, has written to Ofqual outlining the outcome he would like to see following a process of consultation. So, not yet a decision but nevertheless something that looks like a significant indication of the government's intent. Mr Williamson's letter can be viewed by clicking on the link below.

[Letter from Gavin Williamson to Simon Lebus \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

My summary of the key points as well as my advice to students as to what they should do to be successful are included in the table below.

Key point in Mr Williamson's letter	My advice regarding what you should do
GCSE, AS and A levels	
There are likely to be teachers' assessments of the grade you would have achieved based on 'a breadth of evidence'	Continue to work hard, attend all lessons and complete all assignments set by your teachers – they are likely to be used as evidence for your grades
'I would like to explore the possibility of providing externally set tasks or papers'	Review your understanding on a regular basis. Continue with revision strategies and prepare for internal exams or part exams in the summer as these are also likely to be used to determine your grades

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‘the need to ensure good enough coverage of the curriculum for all students to support successful progress’	Continue to attend all on-line lessons and complete all remote learning tasks. Ask for help if you don’t understand the content you are covering at home
BTECs	
‘all students will be able to progress fairly, irrespective of whether they sat an exam in January.’	Year 13 students are unlikely to have to sit exams missed in January. But until we are certain you must ensure your work is up to date and that you review your understanding. Be prepared to continue with revision strategies if required.
‘I would expect internal assessment to continue, and to take place remotely.’	Continue to work hard and complete all assignments set by your teachers – they are likely to be used as evidence for the grades you are finally awarded
Exams in April to August – ‘need to have alternative arrangements to examined assessments’	Continue to work hard and complete all assignments set by your teachers – they are likely to be used as evidence for the grades you are finally awarded

Parents are entitled to have their voice heard in the consultation process. I will be responding on behalf of Shireland Collegiate Academy, but should you wish to find out more and give your individual response then follow the links below.

GCSE, AS and A level:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/95286/5/How GCSE AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/95286/5/How_GCSE_AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf)

Applied:

[Consultation on alternative arrangements for the award of VTQs and other general qualifications in 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The outcomes of the consultation that will give us certainty regarding the assessment process are due to be released towards the end of March. In the meantime, the most positive thing that students in Years 11 and 13 can do is to attend all lessons and complete all assessments and work for staff.

I will continue to update you as soon as we have any further information.

Kind regards,



Mr D Irish
Principal

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