

COCKBURN SCHOOL

Specialist status in the Performing Arts



Executive Headteacher Mr D Gurney BA (Hons) / NPQH / NLE
Head of School Mr R Dixon BSc (Hons) / NPQH

21st April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Re: GCSE and Vocational qualifications 2021

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government and Ofqual released guidance in February directing schools to award a 'Teacher Assessed Grade' (TAG) for each subject that a student was due to certificate in this summer, in place of external examinations. Schools must submit these TAGs to the examination boards by Friday 18th June 2021. The TAGs will be reviewed by the examination boards and will be subject, where necessary, to moderation and potential alteration.

Students will then receive their results for the GCSE and vocational qualifications on **Thursday 12 August 2021.**

It is the responsibility of schools to determine the process they wish to follow for the awarding of the Teacher Assessed Grades in line with the guidance issued; schools have been given 'considerable flexibility' in the gathering and weighing up of evidence.

Guidance from the Government and Ofqual:

- Teachers' judgements should only **be made on the content areas that have been taught.** Teachers should assess as much course content as possible to ensure sufficient coverage of the curriculum for progression.
- Centres (schools) are able to use evidence of students' work from throughout the course of study.
- Evidence should be used to determine what a student knows, understands and can do.
- When determining the grade, teachers should reflect **the standard at which the student is performing now**, not their potential – this represents an important distinction between the TAG process and the process of Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) implemented by the Government in summer 2020.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate. Where this has not been possible in relation to evidence already collected, or where a student is confirmed as unwell at the time of a forthcoming assessment, teachers will substitute this evidence where possible, but if necessary, will either take account of the impact of the absence of the reasonable adjustment in the judgement they make, or disregard that evidence so as not to prejudice the overall judgement.
- Non-Examination Assessment (NEA): teachers will use these assessments in accordance with examination board mark schemes and depending on the content they have been able to cover, the contribution they make to students' overall grade should, in the government's view, remain broadly similar to a normal year. Examination boards' guidance will support teachers to take account of partially completed coursework where completion is not possible
- For GCSE English Language and GCSE French or Spanish a separate grade/result for the spoken language is to be submitted, based on the work completed.

TAG Evidence for each subject:

Each of our departments will be outlining to Year 11 students the evidence that they will be using to determine grades. This will be shared with parents and carers at the Progress Review on Thursday 22nd April.

For most subjects the greatest weighting will be given to unseen assessments that will be completed in the classroom under controlled conditions. In addition, a range of evidence of students' work will be used such as previous exam assessments, ongoing classwork, practice papers and coursework. For GCSE Art and Design, TAGs will be based solely on a student's portfolio evidence. In practical and vocational subjects, departments will ensure that subject specific evidence is based on the qualification's assessment plans.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND):

Appropriate support is in place for all SEND students. Reasonable adjustments and access arrangements should have been in place when evidence was generated. Where they were not, the subject teacher will take this into account when coming to their judgement. To support students in providing evidence, reasonable adjustments - access arrangements will be in place.

Further information:

On 26th March JCQ released a document with guidance and information for students, parents and carers. This document can be accessed via the following link: <http://www.cockburnschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf>

Sharing of grades:

Please note, in line with the guidance from Ofqual, **members of staff are not permitted to share details of students' Teacher Assessed Grades with students**, parents and carers.

Student absence:

We continue to work within a global pandemic and we would like to reassure you that we will continue to follow Health and Safety protocols in order to make our school as safe as possible. We understand, in line with government guidance, that students will need to self-isolate where necessary. Please do not be concerned if a self-isolation period coincides with assessments. Our staff will communicate alternative arrangements with you. Students will not be disadvantaged as a result of any self-isolation period or absence due to illness. It is important that students are present in school every day unless they are unable to attend for a medical reason or due to self-isolation or another mitigating circumstance. Please ensure that our attendance team is made aware of any reason for absence as soon as possible on the day of absence. If a student has an unauthorised absence and alternative arrangements have not been possible, this may negatively affect a student's Teacher Assessed Grades.

Key dates:

On Monday 7th June the school will be closed for a Professional Development Day and this day will be allocated for teaching staff to moderate all evidence that is available.

Students will be expected to follow their normal time table until Friday 28th May. During this time students may be also required to attend additional after school sessions to support their evidence completion.

Between 8th June and 17th June some students will still be required to attend school for bespoke sessions to complete all evidence requirements. We will inform students when and why they are required to attend school.

I am sure that if your child works hard over the coming weeks they will be successful. To reassure you, the government document that has been issued to schools states that "Overall, it will be no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year compared to previous years."

Yours sincerely,



Mr R Dixon
Head of School

Parkside, Gipsy Lane, Leeds LS11 5TT
Tel 0113 2719962

info@cockburnschool.org
www.cockburnschool.org