

15 January 2021



Holderness Academy
& Sixth Form College

Dear Year 11 Student,

Firstly, I would like to congratulate you for your commitment to your learning and high levels of participation in remote lessons during this national lockdown, so far. On average, over 80% of Year 11 students are logging into Google Classroom each day, taking part in our blending learning provision and completing work set by their teachers. In addition to providing us with up-to-date information about how well you are doing, your commitment to remote learning helps us to paint a picture of a dedicated, ambitious and determined student who wants to do well.

On Wednesday, the Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, provided some further information about how your GCSE and BTEC grades will be awarded in the summer. It is important that you read all the information in this letter, discuss it with your parents/carers and speak to your subject teachers or form tutor if you have any questions or concerns.

The Department for Education has asked the exams regulatory body, Ofqual, to consult on a range of alternative arrangements for awarding your GCSE and BTEC results this year. This means that Ofqual will be seeking the views of a wide range of stakeholders in the education sector on the key points, summarised below:

- This year, GCSEs will involve the awarding of grades based on teacher assessments.
- Teachers' assessments will need to draw on a wide range of evidence and this will be used to determine your 'deserved grade'. This is likely to include another set of CAEs.
- It is likely that you will be required to sit some externally set tasks or papers that will be used as evidence to support the final teacher assessments.
- There will be no algorithm (computer-based calculations) used to set or standardise GCSE grades. This means that your teachers' assessments and results of any externally set tests or papers will be used to determine your final grades.
- To ensure fairness and consistency for everyone, teachers will need to provide the evidence they have used to arrive at your GCSE grades, and this will be checked by the exam boards.
- The final judgement on your GCSE grades will be made by your teachers as late as possible in the year. This is so that you can be taught for as long as possible and have every opportunity to catch up on anything that you have missed due to the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This is important to help you to progress onto further education or employment.
- Where assessments have already taken place in BTEC subjects, these will be taken into account when awarding your final result. Wherever possible, school-based assessments in these subjects will continue for the remainder of the academic year.
- External written exams in BTEC subjects will not be going ahead in February or March this year. Alternative arrangements for these qualifications are being looked at to ensure that you are not disadvantaged.
- Internal assessments for BTEC will continue with the usual Standards Verification processes, with some adaptations. We will update you on these arrangements as soon as we have been provided with more details.

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I appreciate that this is a very difficult time for you and understand that the uncertainty over the awarding of your GCSE grades and BTEC awards may be causing you additional concern. However, all the points above clearly demonstrate that you must stay engaged with your learning and remain focused right the way through until the summer. Your teachers want to be able to provide the exam boards with the best possible 'deserved grade' for you, but you must understand that these grades have to be supported by strong evidence, including the results from externally set tests and papers, if these go ahead. In short, your teachers cannot and will not put forward a grade to the exam board that is not fully supported by the evidence that only you can provide by staying focused, engaged and completing all the work that is set for you.

We will be hosting an on-line parents' evening on Thursday 28 January where you will have the opportunity to discuss your progress with your subject teachers.

Last summer, Year 11 students were awarded Centre Assessed Grades because they were unable to sit their final exams. The robust assessment processes and systems that we have in place ensured that we were able to provide the exam boards with significant and secure evidence for every grade that we provided. You can be assured that if you work hard and provide us with the evidence that we require, we will be able to submit grades for you that accurately reflect the grades you deserve.

If you wish to discuss the content of this letter any further, please do not hesitate to contact us at the school. We are all here to support you and help you get the best outcomes possible but only you can make the difference by putting in the hard work and effort.

Stay safe and keep going!

Yours faithfully,

D Wobbaka

Mr D Wobbaka
Assistant Headteacher – Standards