

## GCSE AND A LEVEL EXAMINATIONS

20<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear parents and pupils,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well and have had some time to relax over the Easter period.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> April 2020, CCEA, following instruction from the Minister of Education, made an announcement on how GCSE, AS and A Level grades will be awarded.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be **no examinations in May or June 2020**. I know and appreciate how difficult this has been for both pupils and parents, given the level of planning, hard work and preparation required prior to all examinations. I am also aware that there has been considerable additional anxiety associated with the lack of information on how grades will be calculated.

The school has been given instructions from CCEA and Ofqual as to how grades will be awarded. This work will begin in term three. I want to reassure you that grades awarded will be fair and reliable, based on objective evidence. CCEA and Ofqual have clearly stated that their goal is to give grades that best reflect what pupils would have achieved had they sat the examination in normal circumstances and completed all coursework. We fully support this goal at Sperrin College.

All teaching staff, with the Heads of Department, will now engage in the process of submitting a centre assessment grade for every pupil within GCSE, AS and A Level. We will then rank order the pupils within each grade. CCEA and Ofqual, using this data, will then apply statistical standardisation to award the final grade. Please be aware that the examining boards have the right to amend teacher grades (up or down) and the school will have no control over this.

### **STUDENT, TEACHER AND PARENT INFORMATION GUIDE - AWARDING GCSE, AS AND A LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS**

I have attached three important documents, which I urge all parents and pupils to read carefully.

#### **DOCUMENT 1 - CCEA GUIDANCE**

The document provides details as to how CCEA will award grades. Most of our GCSE and AS and A Level qualification are taken with CCEA.

**YEAR 11 GCSE UNITS:** At Sperrin, most pupils normally take a significant number of modular examination units per subject, at the end of Year 11. However, as there will be no unit (modular) examinations for pupils in the summer 2020, **no grades will be issued for these units**. There are two options offered by CCEA outlined on page 2 of the CCEA guidance. Each Head of Department, in consultation with pupils

and subject teachers, will determine whichever option is most suitable for their pupils. An overall grade will be awarded in Summer 2021.

**YEAR 12 GCSE QUALIFICATIONS:** These grades will be issued using a combination of average centre performance, centre assessed grades and rank ordering. All available academic evidence will be used to objectively determine this grade.

**YEAR 13 AS QUALIFICATIONS:** AS qualifications are normally not stand-alone qualifications but contribute to A2 level qualifications. These grades are also used to support UCAS applications and help teachers determine pupil progress. This year, a grade will be awarded using centre assessed grades and rank ordering. However, this grade will not contribute to A level results in 2021. In summer 2021, pupils will have two options offered by CCEA, outlined on page two of the guidance. Each Head of Department, in consultation with pupils and subject teachers, will determine whichever option is most suitable for their pupils. An overall grade will be awarded in Summer 2021.

**YEAR 14 A LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS:** These grades will be issued using a combination of average centre performance, centre assessed grades and rank ordering. All available evidence will be used to objectively determine this grade.

## **DOCUMENT 2 - OFQUAL LETTER TO PUPILS**

The document provides details as to how the English Examination Boards will award grades. A small number of Level 2 qualifications and some A Level qualification are taken with these Boards.

These Examination Boards will determine grades in the same way as CCEA.

## **DOCUMENT 3 - ACADEMIC EVIDENCE FOR CENTRE ASSESSED GRADES**

This document is a summary of the academic evidence used by Sperrin College teachers to calculate the centre assessed grades which will be submitted to CCEA.

## **WHAT NEXT?**

**YEAR 11 AND YEAR 13:** These year groups are asked to continue with their work as instructed by their subject teacher. It is important that all pupils complete the course for two reasons. Firstly, pupils still have the option to do these modules in the following school year, should this be the agreed best course of action. Secondly, it is vital that courses are completed in readiness for the next stage in learning.

For GCSE pupils, there will be no additional examinations timetable above the already agreed November 2020, January 2021, March 2021 and Summer 2021 timetables provided by CCEA. Sperrin pupils will be able to sit some of these examinations (Mathematics All Units 1-8, English Language Unit 1 and 4 and Single and Double Award Science units) at these specified dates throughout the school year. This will in some way help with workload and examination planning.

**YEAR 12 AND YEAR 14:** Many of you will now have completed your course. Therefore, you should not continue with any more work. However, if you intend to take a particular subject for A Level or University degree, you are **strongly advised** to complete the course for these subjects under your

teacher guidance. In the case of those pupils hoping to return to us for A level, we want to ensure that you have all the foundational knowledge from GCSE that you require to start your A Level studies.

**YEAR 14 - UCAS:** Mrs Martin has already created a Google Classroom forum for UCAS updates and career advice. All Year 14 pupils should log in and check their emails on a regular basis.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AND MALPRACTICE:** Parents and pupils **must not** ask any member of staff to tell them the grades or the rank order data the school will be sending to CCEA for any subject. This information is confidential and as such, the request may be considered as malpractice and will be reported to CCEA.

**ADDITIONAL EXAMINATION OPPORTUNITIES:** Pupils who feel that their grades from summer 2020 do not reflect their performance will be able to sit examinations at the next available opportunity. If a pupil chooses to do this, the higher-grade stands.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** CCEA have stated that 'If a student is unable to take an assessment or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, **will not apply this summer**. Instead, judgements should reflect how students would have performed under ordinary circumstances.'

**APPEALS PROCESS:** Under the circumstances, CCEA have informed us that the normal arrangements for reviews of marking and appeals will not apply. However, they are in the process of developing an effective appeals process. I will inform you of this when the information becomes available.

**COMMUNICATION:** School staff are operating under Public Health Agency Guidance and the school building remains closed. Therefore, all enquiries should be done via email to: [info@sperrin.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@sperrin.magherafelt.ni.sch.uk) Please be advised that we endeavour to reply within 24 hours, however, this may take longer.

Once again, I hope you are keeping safe and well. Remember to adhere to all the Public Health Safety advice, stay at home and stay safe.

**B A Heron**

**Principal**