



26th November 2021

Dear parents/ carers,

It is the government's firm intention that Year 11 and 13 students will take national exams in summer 2022. These are to set and marked by the exam boards, with everyone taking the same assessments at the same time, in the same way. They recognise that examinations provide the fairest method of assessing what students know, understand and can do. Together these things mean students have the best chance of getting the grades they deserve, providing them with passports to the next phase of their education and life.

To help ensure that exams and other formal assessments can go ahead, the government have confirmed changes to GCSE AS, and A Level assessments for summer 2022. See below a summary of the confirmed changes:

Adaptations for GCSE and **A level qualifications***.

1. There will be optional topics in GCSE English literature, history and geography.
2. **Art and design courses will be assessed on their coursework only.**
3. **We will receive advance information on the content that will be assessed in exams by the 7th February latest. This is to inform teaching and revision.**
4. Students will be given a formulae sheet in GCSE maths.
5. Students will be given equation sheets for GCSE physics and combined science.
6. **For Vocational and Technical Qualifications (VTQs) such as L2 BTEC First Awards/ L3 BTEC Nationals for internally assessed units exam boards have reduced the amount of content that students are required to complete. In addition, for internal units and external assessments that were due to be completed last academic year, due to significant disruption to teaching and learning (2020 – 2021), based on evidence, teachers have been able to submit a unit teacher assessed grades (UTAG) earlier this academic year.**

***Bold lettering indicates the adaptations made to A level qualifications also.**

Grading of exams taken in 2022

When grading exams in 2022, the government aim for a grading standard that reflects a midway point between 2021 and 2019. This means that exam boards will set the grade boundaries so that more students get higher grades in 2022 than before the pandemic. This will provide a safety net for those students who might otherwise just miss out on a higher grade. They have taken this decision to reflect the disruption that Year 11 and 13 students have experienced throughout their courses.

The Castle Rock School, Meadow Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4BR

Head of School - Mr D Baldwin

Deputy Headteachers – Mrs Katrina Farragher, Mrs E Booth & Mrs Nic Raphael

CEO Apollo Partnership Trust and Executive Secondary Headteacher - Mrs J Patrick

Registered Company: The Castle Rock School – Company Registration No. 08114513

Registered Office: Meadow Lane, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4BR



Contingency plans for exams in 2022

In the event that 2022 exams cannot go ahead due to further COVID disruption, student grades will be determined by teachers, using a Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG) approach. The DfE have outlined their expectations of how centres prepare for TAGs as a contingency with the aim of minimising uncertainty should exams be cancelled. They recognise that schools need flexibility to respond to their own circumstances at short notice.

The government have shared firm expectations with school leaders about the evidence that can be used and how this should be collected to inform TAGs. Rather than assess students a number of times in a short space of time (as was the case last year), the government have outlined that schools should plan to assess students in all examined subjects three times throughout the remainder of this academic year. The grades from these assessments would be used to inform the TAG. Students are to be assessed at the end of this autumn term (December mock exams), they will take another assessment in the spring term and their final assessment will be sat at the beginning of the summer term. In the spring and summer terms we will not be running these assessments like a mock exam series, but instead plan to take a staggered approach. This will reduce students being assessed heavily at the same time. All students studying a subject will sit these assessments on the same day at the same time to ensure fairness. Excellent attendance is essential.

These assessments are not intended to add to student work load, as we would typically carry out much formative assessment throughout the year to inform teaching and learning as part of the preparation for the summer exams. The main difference will be is that these assessments will be scheduled, published in advance to students and parents and will be carried out following JCQ guidelines. It of course raises the importance of these exams for all students, as these assessments will form the evidence that teachers are expected to gather if exams do not take place. With this in mind it is imperative that your child prepares for these assessments fully by revising independently at home, attending learning support sessions and following any advice given by their subject teachers.

In light of this information provided by the government, teachers at The Castle Rock School have been asked to consider if they would like to make any changes to the assessments that they were planning for students to sit in the December mock exams (Assessment 1). Please note this government guidance was released mid-November and much planning for the mock exams was already underway. Please be reassured that any changes that are made will be in the best interests of the students. Teachers will only be assessing students on content they have been taught and they feel confident that students should be prepared for. I aim to update parents early next week with any adaptations that teachers are making to the already published schedules.

You will be able to access the full government guidance at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-contingency-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-summer-2022>



You can also access a letter written to students by Ofqual's Chief Regulator, Jo Saxton, outlining the changes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/open-letters-arrangements-for-gcses-as-and-a-levels-in-2022/letter-to-students>

Should you have any further questions at this stage please feel free to contact me at school via email: dclayfield@castlerocksch.uk. I will aim to respond to any queries within 48 hours. More information will follow once the schedule is prepared.

Kindest regards,

Mrs D Clayfield

Assistant Head teacher