



# Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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## EXAMINATION APPEALS AND THE 'AUTUMN SERIES'

Dear parents, carers and examination students,

I am writing to you after a week of intense media reporting about schools and examination results. I am mindful that students in Year 11 and Year 13, as well as some students in Year 12, have had limited contact with their teachers in the last four months and that reading the information provided by on-line platforms and in newspapers, last week, might have been unsettling. There are three new documents on the 'Examinations' page of the school website, which enable parents and students to read for themselves the information produced by Ofqual about this summer's examination results.

### Centre assessed grades

When schools closed on 20th March 2020, school leaders were directed to put in place a process for awarding centre assessed grades. Teachers used their professional knowledge and understanding of their students' work, as well as a wide range of evidence, to estimate students' performance, had they been able to finish their courses and sit examinations, as normal. Teachers did not generate students' final grades because this part of the process is completed by the examination boards.

The examination boards are now standardising teacher estimates, based on the results the school is most likely to achieve given its previous national results in each subject; the prior attainment of its students this year, compared to previous years; and its overall results in recent years. This means that teachers don't know students' final grades and do not control how they are produced. The examination boards operate a standardisation process every year, which takes place after examination papers have been marked, so this is not a new feature.

*There are two 'Infographics' on the 'Examinations' page of the school website, which describe the standardisation process being followed for GCSE, A-Level, BTEC and Technical qualifications.* Following completion of the standardisation process, the examination boards will issue students' final grades.

### Examination appeals

The vast majority of final grades issued to Blackfen students in August are within the scope of the school's expectation. Since August 2016, it has been the case that examination boards do not change final grades unless the marking scheme has been applied incorrectly. Students cannot appeal their final grade, in order to improve their grade, if the marking scheme has been applied correctly.



Last week, Ofqual, the government department which regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England, issued a consultation document about the appeals process for this summer. It is being proposed that students will be able to appeal – through their school or college – if they believe the process this summer was not followed correctly in their case. Schools can appeal if they believe that the examination board has made a mistake when calculating, assigning or communicating a grade. The consultation closes on 14.7.20 and then schools, parents and students will be informed about how the appeals process will operate.

### **The ‘autumn series’**

Ofqual has confirmed that students “who would like to improve their grades, will have an opportunity to take the full suite of GCSE, AS and A level exams in the autumn” and these examinations are called ‘the autumn series’. *The document called “CONSULTATION DECISIONS. An additional GCSE, AS and A level exam series in autumn 2020” is available on the ‘Examinations’ page of the school website.*

Dates of examinations in the autumn series have not yet been sent to schools but it is likely that A-level examinations will be scheduled in October and GCSE examinations will follow, in November. The usual opportunity for students to re-sit GCSE English and mathematics, only, will go ahead.

I appreciate that this is a significant amount of information for parents and students to take on board. However, it is important that you have an accurate understanding about examination issues. You should read this letter and the documents on the school website and contact me, via email or telephone, if you have any queries or concerns about examinations. I am working in school every day and able to meet you, in person, if that is convenient.

Let me assure you that Blackfen School leaders and teachers are working on your behalf, to ensure that we do the very best job for our examination students. We share their feelings of disappointment and frustration about the manner in which their courses ended. In August, our students need to know that their parents, carers and teachers are working closely together to support their decisions regarding the next steps into future education and training. Please do not hesitate to contact me now, if I can help you.

Yours sincerely,



Miss F Minnis  
Deputy Headteacher

