



# Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential

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1st March 2021,

Dear Parents and Carers of students in Year 11, Year 12 (1-year GCSE/BTEC courses) and Year 13,

## Examinations update: Arrangements for Summer 2021

I am writing to you regarding arrangements for public examinations scheduled for Summer 2021. The amount of information released to the media last week about the reopening of schools to all pupils, as well as the process for awarding teacher assessment grades for A-level, GCSE and BTEC qualifications must have felt quite overwhelming. So, I want you to feel confident that you know what is happening and where to find the relevant information for your child.

The school will communicate with Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 students about examination information via their year group pages on Microsoft Teams. These messages will be emailed to parents and carers to inform discussions at home. Parents and carers will receive email updates about the teacher assessment process in school and will be referred to key documents from the Department for Education or from Ofqual, as posted on the 'Examinations Information' page of the school website. This week, please ensure that the school holds your correct email address and that you can access the school website (click [here](#)) or go to the tab called 'School life' and click on 'Examinations Information' in the red section on the right-hand side.

## Summary of information

On 6th January 2021, the government confirmed that in summer 2021, students taking GCSE, BTEC, AS and A levels should be awarded grades based on assessment by their teachers. A two-week consultation was held to seek views on how best to provide alternative arrangements to this year's examinations, to which over 100,000 responses were collected. It is encouraging to note that 75% of these responses came from parents and students. Last week, the government and Ofqual published the decisions taken to support students and teachers following the consultation, including the proposed arrangements for undertaking assessments in school, the quality assurance and appeals processes, and the process for awarding grades for all of the qualification courses. Teachers will submit final grades to examination boards by Friday 18th June 2021 and final results will be issued in the week of Monday 9th August: *provisionally* A level, AS and Level 3 BTEC on 10th August; GCSE and Level 2 BTEC on 12th August. This will give extra time for any appeals to be assessed. There is now a consultation period running from 25th February to 11th March 2021 to confirm these arrangements. Following the consultation, the examination boards will publish detailed information to schools about the teacher-assessment process and timeline. The school will continue to update parents, carers and students.



## Action in school

This week, School and Subject Leaders will finish planning the teaching and learning timeline for the remaining weeks of this term, before the Easter break, while Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 teaching staff will review lesson planning. It is hardly necessary to add that all teachers are eager to work with examination students in school. The teaching and learning in lessons, before Easter, will be very important. Ofqual has set the requirement that “*Overall, it will be no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year compared to previous years.*” [Ofqual, (25.2.21), “Decisions on how GCSE, AS and A level grades will be determined in summer 2021”, page 4]. Ofqual has directed teachers to generate final grades *based on evidence that will be checked* - internally, by the school and externally, by examination boards.

In their lessons, teachers will focus on delivering the final components of examination courses and supporting student achievement at the highest level, in order to prepare for assessment after the Easter holiday. Therefore, students’ attendance in school and their timely completion of lesson tasks and homework is a non-negotiable priority. They must get ready to resume classroom learning and study and will need to be supported in doing so, both at home and in school. For this reason, we ask parents and carers to have these discussions at home, during the course of the next two weeks and to consider the family routines that will help students get back into the habit of organising books and equipment for school and meeting deadlines for homework and independent study. Students need to come to school equipped with a mindset to work hard, to achieve at their best level and to take advantage of every help that is offered.

## Next steps for parents, carers and students

**Action Step 1:** To read the Ofqual letter to students, if you have not done so, already. Click on this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/how-qualifications-will-be-awarded-in-2021>

**Action Step 2:** To discuss and plan family routines that will support your daughter or son’s good attendance and work ethic at school.

**Action Step 3:** To take time to review the work that has been finished ‘remotely’ at home by your daughter or son; to be clear about deadlines that have been met or to directly support the completion of work that is not yet finished.

At Blackfen School, teachers completed the assessment process for last year’s examination students to a very high standard. I want to reassure you that we are ready and keen to undertake this year’s process for your daughter or son. We want to support you, as parents and carers, as well as our examination students. Working together, we know that we can do this job – and do it really well.

Yours sincerely,  
Miss F Minnis  
Deputy Headteacher