

Bryanston's response to today's announcement by Ofqual

Friday, 3 April 2020 at 19:20

Dear parents of B and A2,

Firstly, I hope that you and your families are safe and well.

Today Ofqual, the regulator of qualifications, examinations and assessments, clarified their guidance for schools, pupils and parents on the awarding of grades this Summer. A link to the key documents, including important advice to pupils, is provided at the end of this letter.

Ofqual will require two pieces of information from Bryanston in order to grade GCSE and A level pupils. Firstly, we will submit the grade that, based on prior achievement, we think a pupil would have achieved had the examinations gone ahead. This will be a holistic assessment which will take in a number of factors, including recent mock examination results. Secondly, we will have to submit a rank order of pupils for each grade for every subject. We are not allowed to share these grades and rankings with parents or pupils. We do not need to submit this information to Ofqual before May 29th.

As a school, Bryanston has always put the interests of its pupils at the centre of every decision we have taken during this difficult time. Our position has always been that, until we have clear guidance from the government on how our pupils will be assessed, the best advice was for those in B and A2 to complete the work being set by their teachers through Teams, and keep focused on making progress in every subject. Working, and learning, have their own external and intrinsic rewards. But I have always said that when things change we will adapt accordingly.

Today's announcement clearly requires schools to think carefully about what they should be teaching their examination classes next term. I hope that after reading the attached documents you are clearer about the process involved in collecting and submitting data on our pupils to Ofqual. How that applies in Bryanston requires further clarification.

What does this mean for next term?

In summary, Ofqual do not need supporting evidence from schools to support a predicted grade; nor do they require additional work to be set by schools. We will not, therefore, be setting any further work for pupils in B and A2 which will require future assessment. That said, we do want to ensure that the grades we submit are fair, accurate, and as fully informed as they can be. We also want our pupils to be fully prepared for the next stage of their academic careers. Lastly, some pupils will, for various reasons, wish to

sit the new examinations being offered in the Autumn, and we would strongly suggest that this is seriously considered by parents and pupils.

The end of last term was unplanned, with pupils leaving at different times during the final weeks. Some GCSE and A level courses remain unfinished. We want to be able to confirm that the grades we submit are as reliable and fair as possible. GCSE and A level courses should be completed by the end of Week 3 of next term. During those three weeks we want to agree on the level of knowledge and understanding of our pupils as we move towards finalising our grades.

We also feel that in order to prepare our pupils for the next stage of their academic careers certain key parts of these courses have to be taught, and that to end them before they were expected to be completed would disadvantage our pupils in A3 and at university.

In Week 4 we plan to move our B pupils to a new timetable which will prepare them for their A level and IB studies. I have said to Heads of Departments that these courses should be rooted in the taught curricula, but not confined to them. We want to offer our Bs a rich and exciting programme which will make them fully prepared for the start of the next academic year in September. Our A2s will be offered a pre-university and a Life Skills programme from Week 4. More details of these courses will be published soon.

Full details of the new examinations being offered in the Autumn term have yet to be confirmed. However, pupils who are disappointed with the calculated grades awarded in the Summer will probably want to take them because although 'both grades stand' the higher grade will be taken into account in future university applications and, no doubt, by employers. We would also recommend, as a minimum, that our pupils take these new examinations in the A level and Higher Level subjects they are studying in the Sixth Form. Lastly, I know that there are many pupils who feel that real 'closure' to this disrupted period can only come if they walk into an examination hall, just like their predecessors, and take the examinations they have been working so hard towards over two years. Whatever the decision, Bryanston will support them.

I hope this helps clarify our position at this difficult and unsettling time. Ofqual have emphasised throughout that no pupil will be disadvantaged during this time of assessment, and you have our promise that we will do everything we can to ensure that the information we submit is fair and accurate.

Lastly, I should add that our Bs and A2s should take the next two weeks off from their studies. The time now is to be with their families, to rest, exercise when possible, and recharge themselves for next term.

With best wishes,
Dr David James

Deputy Head Academic

Link to key Ofqual documents:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gcses-as-and-a-level-awarding-summer-2020>

Reply

Subject

RE: Bryanston's response to today's announcement by Ofqual

Message

SEND