

7 January 2021

Dear parent/carers

Vocational exams: January 2021

I am writing to provide an update on the vocational examinations planned for January 2021.

The guidance provided to schools, following the Prime Minister's announcement on 4 January 2021, stated, *'Public exams and vocational assessments scheduled to take place in January will go ahead as planned'*.

In his speech to the House of Commons, on 6 January 2021, the Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, provided further details:

'I know students and staff have worked hard to prepare for the January exams and assessments of vocational and technical qualifications, and we want to allow schools and colleges to continue with these assessments where they judge it is right to do so. No college should feel pressured to offer these and we will ensure all students are able to progress fairly.'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-statement-to-parliament-on-national-lockdown>

Finally, Pearson, the Exam Board who administer BTEC qualifications also provided the following information:

'We want to ensure that you and all those working in schools and colleges are supported by us regardless of the choice that is made by your school or college on whether exams take place. Where a college or school decides to offer exams, you will be able to sit your external assessments as planned and if your school or college decides not to offer vocational exams, we have agreed the following with Ofqual and the DfE to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged.'

<https://www.pearson.com/uk/about-us/news-and-policy/news/2021/01/btec-learner-update-on-examinations-going-ahead-5jan-2021.html>

Following discussions with colleagues at the Academy and at Academy Transformation Trust, I can confirm that we will be proceeding with examinations, as planned, in Year 11 and in Sixth Form.

We are confident that the protective measures we currently have in place will ensure that all examinations can take place safely. I can confirm that Year 12 and 13 students have already safely completed examinations, on the Academy site, on Wednesday 6 January 2021.

In addition, we believe it is important that all students have the opportunity to sit the examinations that they have prepared for and achieve the grades that their commitment and hard work most certainly deserves.

I do understand that some families may believe the risk of attending the Academy, for any reason, is too great. If you choose not to send your child to the Academy to sit an examination or your child is unable to sit an examination for any other reason, I can assure you that my team will work with Pearson to ensure that students are not disadvantaged in any way.

I remind you that students should not attend the Academy site if they show COVID symptoms, have tested positive for COVID or are self-isolating for any other reason.

Students sitting examinations should arrive on site, in full uniform (or professional dress for Sixth Form), at 8.40am. School transport is continuing to operate. Year 11 should enter the site by their normal gate, where they will be met by staff. Year 12 and 13 should report to the Sixth Form Centre. Following the examination students can leave the Academy site to return home. Provision will be made, within the Academy, for students who are required to wait for school transport. Please ensure that students have a face mask to wear when in communal areas and when travelling on school or public transport.

I have attached a detailed plan for the examination period to support students' attendance at examinations.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of this letter in greater detail, please contact us via email and a member of staff will call you to discuss your query:

- Year 11: Contact Miss Maycock, i.maycock@dukeries.attrust.org.uk
- Sixth Form: Contact Ms Hackett, m.hackett@dukeries.attrust.org.uk

These are exceptional times and I appreciate your ongoing support.

Kind regards



Mr Ged Rae
Principal

