

11th January 2021

Dear Parent

Year 11 and Year 13 Examinations

Government announcements are coming thick and fast at the moment and the cancellation of examinations this summer for Year 11 and Year 13 students is something that schools across the country are seeking clarification about in the coming weeks. Whilst we await further clarification from the government, I thought it would be helpful to provide a summary of the current situation and to provide some key messages to Year 11 and Year 13 students about their approach to the weeks and months ahead.

What examinations have the government actually cancelled for the summer of 2021?

The government have announced that Year 11 and Year 13 students will **not** sit formal GCSE or A-Level examinations this summer. They have also announced that students in these year groups will not need to sit formal BTEC examinations.

How will my child's grades be decided for the summer of 2021?

Initially, the government announced that teachers would be trusted to submit Centre Assessed Grades, or CAGs, which reflect student achievement in each subject for which they are entered. The school is well set up to establish CAGs as our whole school approach to assessment enables teachers to identify a child's likely end of year grade based on a wide range of information. This includes class work, written work, verbal contributions to lessons, ongoing mini-tests, trial exam papers, coursework and a range of other evidence that may be required for specific subject areas.

Since this initial announcement, there have been a number of subsequent announcements stating that Year 11 and Year 13 students may be required to produce a portfolio of work which is moderated across schools or that they will complete exam papers at home which will be marked by teachers to give an indication of their exam grade.

You will appreciate that schools are keen to establish exactly what we need to do in schools and professional associations are working hard to clarify all of this with the Department for Education. We will be in touch with parents as soon as we receive further clarity.

Should my child continue with remote learning?

Yes. Absolutely. This is more important than ever. The school will reach a decision about your child's Centre Assessed Grades based on many factors including engagement with remote learning, the quality of the work completed and how well your child responds to the feedback given by teachers. Teachers may also use exam papers or exam paper questions as part of normal lessons. Essentially, Year 11 and Year 13 students need to realise that everything could count towards their final marks and so now is definitely the time to demonstrate to teachers that you are performing in line with, or higher than, your target grades which can be found on your child's recent report.

When the country went into the first lockdown, the government said that any work completed after 20 March 2020 should not be considered when schools were awarding centre assessed grades; has the government made the same announcement this time?

No. The government have not made the same announcement this time so it is important that Year 11 and Year 13 students continue to work as though they can positively influence the grades they are awarded this summer. I am sure you will agree that, whilst there was some logic behind the announcement last year, it was particularly unhelpful for young people in many schools.

Just to reiterate, the government have made no such announcement this year so all Year 11 and Year 13 students still need to feel that they are able to positively influence the grades they will achieve this summer.

How will all of this affect my child's place at The Lakes School Sixth Form?

Don't worry! That's the first and most important message. We are so pleased to have received expressions of interest from well over 40 Year 11 students and we will be working hard to ensure that as many of our Year 11s as possible are able to make the transition to Year 12 in September. We will be in touch soon with all of the Year 11 students who have expressed an interest in joining our Sixth Form.

In the meantime, you might like to read some subject testimonials from current Sixth Form students. Lisa Morton, Head Girl, and Samuel Hodgson, Head Boy, worked with the team of Senior Prefects to harvest the testimonials which provide a valuable insight in to each of our A-Level subjects. You can access the testimonials on the Year 12 page of our website or by clicking [here](#).

As part of the transition from Year 11 to Year 12, teachers will be providing 'bridging work' later in the spring and summer. This will provide those joining us in the Sixth Form with a valuable opportunity to get ahead with their studies for September 2021.

How will this affect my child's place at College?

Just like with Sixth Form at The Lakes School, local colleges successfully managed the admissions and transition period last summer so don't worry. We would encourage Year 11 students to contact the college of their choice and to follow their application process as normal. Your child's Form Tutor will be keen to support your child with their application should they need any assistance, as will Mr Griffiths, Head of Humanities, Careers, PSHE and RE.

How will this affect my child's place at University?

Don't worry! If you are a Year 13 student hoping to secure a place at university in September, then you should continue with your UCAS application as a matter of urgency. The cancelling of A-Level exams should not cause you any difficulties as universities are well set up to respond to this situation having been through it already in the summer of 2020. However, transferring to university in September relies on Year 13 students completing their UCAS applications which need to be submitted by 29th January 2021. If they haven't already, please encourage your Year 13 child to liaise with Ms Rainey, Deputy Headteacher, regarding the completion of their online UCAS application.



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This can all sound quite complicated and overwhelming, what's the one clear message my Year 11 or Year 13 child needs to focus on at the moment?

Keep working hard! It really is that simple. Everything your child does to demonstrate their capabilities across each of their subjects will help the school identify the Centre Assessed Grades that your child deserves. We may be asked to gather together a portfolio of work for each child which provides evidence of the grades we submit to the exam boards so please impress upon your child the need for them to keep working hard, to keep engaging with remote learning and to keep submitting work which matches or exceeds their target grade.

Perhaps, more importantly, it is vital that all students recognise the long-term value of learning for the sake of learning. All students need to remember that they are preparing themselves for a future at our Sixth Form, at College or University and for a future career and a life as part of a family. Time spent learning right now sets out a path for the future – one where doors will open rather than remain shut.

Where can my child access pastoral support during this time?

We would always encourage students to talk to a trusted adult and this begins at home. We would also encourage students to contact their Form Tutor or to contact our pastoral team via the following email address pastoral@lakes.cumbria.sch.uk. As a parent, you can also contact your child's Form Tutor or the pastoral team if you would like to seek support for your child. You might also like to direct your child to the pastoral support page on our website which can be found by clicking [here](#). Our Help is at Hand poster can be found on our pastoral support page which might also help you to support your child.

Most importantly, we would always encourage students to contact their class teachers for support with the work they are completing. Feeling overwhelmed or unsure about work is often easily remedied through a conversation with the relevant class teacher.

Will my child still sit trial exams which are scheduled for the next few weeks?

No. Year 11 and Year 13 students will not now sit the planned trial exams which were scheduled to take place during January. Whilst sitting trial exams is an important part of the Key Stage 4 and 5 curriculum, we do not feel that there is anything to be gained in the short term from students sitting trial exams whilst at home. However, Year 11 and Year 13 students should keep working towards the possibility of needing to sit some exam papers, just in case schools are able to welcome students back in the weeks ahead. As mentioned above, your child's teachers may use exam papers or exam questions as part of their planned lessons in the coming weeks but this will not be part of any formal trial exams.

I hope this letter provides you with a useful update at a time when we are still seeking clarity in a number of areas with regard to the arrangements for Year 11 and Year 13 grades. We will be in touch again soon as soon as we receive further updates.

Wishing you all the best.

Kind regards



Andy Cunningham
Headteacher



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