

To Parents/Carers of pupils in Year 11

26th May 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

GCSE Exams

GCSE exams are well under way and I wanted to let you know that Year 11 pupils have been brilliant in the way they have prepared and conducted themselves during what can be a very stressful time. I very much hope they will make sure that they plan in a well-earned rest amongst the revision they are completing over the half term break.

I wanted to reassure you about how these assessments are working this term, and how grading will work over the summer and what this means for you and your child.

Ofqual guidance for pupils

In May, Ofqual published some useful guidance for pupils on the 2023 summer exam series – available [here](#). Ofqual is the exams regulator, which checks the systems and processes of individual exam boards.

Exams in 2023

This is the first year since the pandemic that exams have taken place without any significant adaptations, although pupils are able to use formula and equation sheets to support them in GCSE Maths, Combined Science and Physics. This means that pupils have needed to study all content in their subjects as any topic could come up in the exam. This is the same across the country and across all exam boards.

Grading in summer 2023

As exam papers are completed, exam boards will begin to mark them using the same mark schemes as were in place in 2019 and in 2022 (the last two years in which exams took place). The marks awarded will depend on the quality of the pupil's work. Once all papers are marked, exam boards will set grade boundaries. This year, Ofqual's decision is to return to a similar pattern of grade distribution as in 2019. Ofqual has put systems in place to ensure that nationally grades will not be lower than in 2019, even if the quality of work is slightly lower. In other words, a pupil has about the same chance as achieving a Grade 4 or Grade 7 or Grade 9, etc. at GCSE as they did before the pandemic.

This is the main way in which the exam boards are attempting to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by having lived through the pandemic. Again, this approach is the same across the country, and across all exam boards.

Contingency date

Please note that Thursday 15th June (afternoon only) and Wednesday 28th June (all day) are national exam contingency days, in case any exam has to be rescheduled. These should already be on pupils' exam calendars. It is essential that pupils are available on these days and do not book holidays over this period, even if their last scheduled exam is over. These dates hopefully won't be needed, but if they are, and pupils cannot attend due to holiday, they will not receive any marks for that paper.

Pupil support

If your child needs any further support during the rest of the exam season, or you have any questions about this letter, please contact me at jowen@saintcecilias.london.

We wish all our pupils the best of luck with the rest of their exams.

Yours sincerely,

James Owen
Deputy Headteacher