

# Our Lady's Catholic College

Learn, live, love together in a caring Catholic community



7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear parent/carer

## Re: Summer 2021 exam announcement and BTECs/Vocational exams January 2021

As you are aware it has been another turbulent week in education. On Monday we received the news that examinations for GCSE, AS and A-Level were to be cancelled for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year running. Yesterday we have found from the Secretary of State for Education that these qualification results will be based on some form of teacher assessment and are currently awaiting the details of what this will involve. As soon as we have been informed of this, we will be back in touch with you to explain exactly how this will affect your child. In the meantime all students must engage fully with their remote learning, live lessons and ensure the prompt completion of all independent work by the deadline. A failure to do so may be detrimental to the final teacher assessment we are able to give.

On Monday we were also told that the Vocational January exams would happen as planned. This has since changed and the DfE is now saying that schools may choose whether to go ahead with BTEC exams which are already underway. Having considered the situation carefully we believe that our students are well prepared to do these exams in a covid protective environment and as such exams should go ahead for the following reasons:

- Students are well prepared and ready to go; they can do well, get what they deserve and have some solid achievement in the bank, which we may later also be able to use to support other positive judgements about their achievement. It is likely that significant leniency is being built into grading judgements and so the risk of under-grading is low.
- We do not know what will replace Vocational exams in the summer, or even whether they will go ahead in some modified form. There is significant merit in having some certainty about this element. If there is a need to prepare for something very different in the summer (either for students or teachers), it may well be an advantage to have cleared this up now.
- Given the political sensitivity about the risk of students being disadvantaged as a result of the pandemic, together with the confusion surrounding these exams being compulsory then optional, it is very unlikely that students will be at a disadvantage as a result of taking them.

We do however want to make it clear as per government guidelines that it is a personal choice for the student whether they still wish to go ahead with the exam. There has been government assurance that no student will be disadvantaged if they choose not to do the exam. If after consideration of the points above

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Headteacher  
Helen Seddon BSc Hons



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your child does not wish to take part in the forthcoming exams they should complete the declaration form attached and return to school in advance of the exam/s.

If you have any further questions regarding the January Vocational exams then please get in touch with me through the school office.

Thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement of your child at this uncertain time.

Yours sincerely

Des Coyle  
Deputy Head

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## Declaration form for withdrawal from BTECs/Vocational exams January 2021

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Form Group: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read your accompanying letter and have decided that I wish to be withdrawn from the exam/s below:

Please complete as appropriate:

Exam Date and time	Exam component title

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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