



Dear Fifth Form Parents and Guardians,

I hope this finds you well and that your son has found a happy and productive first few weeks of the Fifth Form. Our teachers have loved having the boys back in class and have been pleased by the positive academic ambition of the Fifth Form.

As we pause for the first Exeat of the year, I thought it might be helpful to look ahead to the rest of the year and the prospect of GCSE qualifications next summer.

First, you may have noticed on the [Key Academic Dates](#) that we have not yet included study leave dates for the Fifth Form. This is because there remains the strong possibility that the examinations may fall a little later next summer. Ofqual, the regulator of examinations in England, say that they are working with exam boards to agree a timetable for summer 2021 that will “maximise teaching and learning time”. As and when we know more, we will be in touch.

We do know that some examinations will be adapted for summer 2021, in light of the disruption to teaching for many students during lockdown. Thankfully, Bedford boys continued to learn during this period so any changes should give more time for consolidation and revision in the Fifth Form. The changes are outlined in the table at the end of this letter (they are rather more modest than schools had expected, I should say).

Our key academic priority for the Fifth Form over the coming weeks is to focus on identifying areas of understanding that may have been missed during the lockdown period. As such, your son may find he is completing more short diagnostic assessments in lessons and is set more prep tasks that focus on consolidation of material from the Fourth Form and Remove.

I am aware that some boys have been concerned that these assessments might be used in some form of centre assessment (the process exam boards used last year to determine grades based on teacher judgements). Whilst the consensus remains that the government and exam boards will do everything possible to ensure examinations proceed next year (to avoid the fiasco of this last summer), were we to be asked to supply academic data to contribute to grading boys should know that we would use very many pieces of evidence in this process. As such, boys should be sure to give their best effort to all pieces of learning set – i.e. all class tasks and prep tasks, as well as in any timed assessments. Finally, as adults it is important that we all (staff and parents) try to maintain perspective in all this, in order to reduce any *unhealthy* boy anxiety levels – it is good to work hard, of course, but every person has different tipping points, and we will all try to work together (and individually) to make sure that boys are in as good a place mentally (as well as academically) as they can be.

We deliberated at length over whether to move the GCSE trial exams earlier than January, but we felt that the start of the spring term remains the best time to allow boys to practice near-complete GCSE papers in their subjects before the final term of completing courses and revision. However, for this term, we will have a fortnight of internal assessment weeks between Monday 16 and Saturday 28 November for boys to practise short timed exercises in lessons so they have more experience of managing their time in controlled conditions. There will be no change to timetable during this fortnight, but prep tasks in most subjects will focus on revision and consolidation rather than new learning.

We will also be having a focus on effective study and revision skills across the Upper School at the start of November, to allow boys to experiment with different strategies ahead of the important period of revision for trial examinations in January.

Your son's teachers will be completing grade cards over the coming fortnight, which will be sent home at half term. If you have any questions, please do contact your son's Tutor, his [Academic Year Head](#) (Mr Prior) or [me](#).

With best wishes,

Sam Baldock
Deputy Head (Academic)

GCSE/IGCSE

Ancient History GCSE	Students will be assessed on three topics instead of four
Art GCSE	Assessment will be based on portfolio only, there will not be a timed examination
Biology IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Chemistry IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Computer Science GCSE	The programming project can be undertaken in unsupervised time
Design and Technology IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Drama GCSE	Students can analyse the work of others through audio-video recordings rather than live performances
English Language IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
English Literature IGCSE	Anthology Poetry will not be assessed
English as a Second Language IGCSE	Option to enter Speaking Endorsement separately
French IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Geography GCSE	Students will not be required to answer questions in the exam relating to their own fieldwork
German IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
History IGCSE	Students will be assessed on three topics instead of four
Latin GCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Mathematics GCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Music GCSE	Reduced coursework requirements
Religious Studies GCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Physics IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements
Spanish IGCSE	No change to assessment arrangements