

# PENAIR SCHOOL

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**21 April 2021**

Dear year 11 students and parents,

As you will be aware, due to the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic on students' education, the Government made the decision early this year to cancel summer 2021 exams. On 15 January, Ofqual and the Department for Education (DfE) published a joint consultation seeking views on how grades should be awarded. We wrote to you to make you aware of this consultation and asked for you to share your views.

At the time that the consultation closed (29 January), over 100,000 responses had been submitted. A full summary and analysis of responses can be found at:

[Consultation on how GCSE, AS and A level grades should be awarded in summer 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-summer-2021)

Below, we have tried to summarise how summer 2021 grades will be decided and what this means for our students at Penair:

- **Teachers must assess their students' performance, only on what content has been delivered to them by their teachers, to determine the grade each student should receive.**

While some subjects have completed all taught elements of the course and have transitioned to pure revision lessons, many subjects still have a good amount of the syllabus still to teach over the next few months to complete the GCSE course. We want our students to receive the breadth of study, combined with the knowledge and skills, that will enable them to transition effectively into post-16 learning. To this end, we will endeavour to teach our students the content of a full GCSE course in every subject.

- **Teachers can use evidence of a student's performance from throughout the course to inform their judgement.**

This means that teachers will be able to use a range of assessment methods from across years 10 and 11 to arrive at their grade, to include- but not limited to: class work, homework, presentations, end of unit assessments and trial exams.

- **Teachers should determine the grades as late in the academic year as is practicable, and not confined to a defined window, to enable teaching to continue for as long as possible.**

We want our students to do their very best. Each subject has mapped out their scheme of learning and assessment plan for the coming months. There will be no final exams, although students should expect regular testing to take place, some of which may take place in a formal exam hall setting.

- **Schools and colleges should use a broad range of evidence across the taught content to determine the grades before submitting the grades to the exam boards.**

As mentioned previously, there will be no final exams. Instead, a range of assessment methods will be used to arrive at a final grade. Assessment plans will vary between subjects to best support student assessment in that course.

- **Students should continue to work on their non-exam assessment (NEA). NEA will be marked by teachers and will contribute to the overall grade.**

NEAs are an important contribution to the final grade of many GCSE subjects. Where we consider that a student could benefit from an immersion day with their teacher to complete their NEA to a higher standard, we will contact you to arrange this.

- **In GCSE Art, the student's grade will be based on the portfolio only, whether or not it has been completed.**

This means that there is no final exam in Art. All art lessons and homework will now focus solely on completing the portfolio to the highest standard; this may include immersion days to enable students to focus on completing their portfolios.

- **In GCSE English language and GCSE modern foreign languages, teachers will determine and submit a separate grade or result for the endorsement.**

The endorsement is the spoken element of the course. The grade given for the endorsement is separate from the final GCSE grade for each subject.

- **Overall, it will be no easier or harder for a student to achieve a particular grade this year compared to previous years.**

Strict moderation processes are in place in each department, where many of our staff also have the experience of marking for exam boards.

You will be aware that a second trial exam season had been scheduled to take place in February; these have started on our return to school this term and will run until April 30<sup>th</sup>. Not all subjects are holding trial exams as part of their assessment - where they are, these may be used to form part of the judgement for final teacher assessment and to guide departments in areas where further teaching maybe required to support subject assessment and transition to post 16 study. Subject staff will regularly update students on the assessment activities they are expected to undertake. Trial exams are not replacing students GCSE Exams; as always, we expect all children to do their very best in trial exams, but parents and students should be aware that trial exams provide some of the evidence to inform judgments.

We attach the trial exam timetable and students have been issued with their personal timetable in advance of the end of last term. Please make sure these documents continue to be discussed at home and that students take the time to prepare for these assessments.

You will be aware that some students have already undertaken supporting assessments for their courses. We would like to congratulate year 11 on the mature and positive attitude they have taken towards these and to remind all students that their continued efforts in all their subjects will support their final assessment.

Should you have any queries with regards to the exam and assessment arrangements these should be sent via email to [results2021@penair.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:results2021@penair.cornwall.sch.uk) and these will be responded to by the exams and assessment team.

We have been in close communication with other secondary schools in Cornwall and have now agreed that our last day for year 11 will be **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May**.

Historically, the last day in school includes a leavers' assembly, a pasty lunch with the tutor team and an opportunity for students to sign old school shirts and leavers books. Although the arrangements are not finalised, we will certainly make sure year 11 get a celebratory send-off and how this is organised will be communicated to students in due course.

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



**Mrs Miller**  
**KS4 Academic Lead**



**Mrs Eastburn-Cutts**  
**Deputy Headteacher – Curriculum**