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Acting Principal Mr Paul Berne | BA Hons | PGCE

22nd April 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As always I hope this letter finds you and your family well. As you will be aware, on 6 January 2021, the Minister of Education, Peter Weir MLA, cancelled all CCEA GCSE, AS and A2 examinations scheduled for January, February, May, and June 2021. Instead, by Formal Direction of the Minister dated 2nd March 2021, the approach to awarding grades in Summer 2021 will be based on teacher professional judgements, with moderation. This policy decision, which applies to GCSE, AS and A level qualifications offered by CCEA and all other awarding organisations, is intended to support teachers and school leaders in submitting appropriate Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) for each student.

To date in Edmund Rice College students have been eased back in to school and have re-engaged with face to face teaching extremely well. Advice and guidance has been offered to students at individual subject level as to the nature and timing of any additional assessments that will be conducted over the next few weeks. We have consistently informed students that the amount of additional assessment required is limited by the fact that in all subject areas a significant amount of the evidence required to assist in determining grades has already been completed and is on our system. Many subject areas have a “mock” result from Christmas that was carried out under a high level of control. Other subjects such as Science have modular results already awarded by CCEA. CCEA, and the other examining bodies, have released materials to assist schools in producing additional evidence **under high levels of control**. Most of the upcoming assessments will make use of these materials and, as they will be conducted under high level control conditions, outcomes will be considered a robust reflection of student ability. These assessments, combined with outcomes we already have, will ensure that all students have the best possible opportunity to attain the highest grade that they are capable of.

The scheduled programme for subject specific assessment opportunities is available on the school website and accompanies this letter. Parents and students are advised to familiarise themselves with the dates and times of each assessment opportunity. Students should engage **fully** with teachers in all classroom and homework activities to ensure the best possible preparation. Full attendance, if at all possible, should be maintained. Please be advised that completion & submission of work on time is essential and all deadlines should be adhered to. After all work is submitted/completed there are a number of in-house processes that must be carried out before submission of grades to exam boards.

ENSURING FAIRNESS TO ALL PUPILS

In the context of fairness and in order to ensure an objective, unbiased assessment of evidence is made, the school staff will follow processes outlined in the Centre Determined Grades Policy supported by guidance and training from CCEA and any other awarding body. It is recognised that

some pupils have experienced disruption to teaching and learning due to the pandemic. Any evidence submitted will reflect this, within the confines of CCEA & other exam board guidelines.

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments have been agreed prior to the assessment opportunity periods. The school will follow the Joint Council for Qualifications regulations and guidance as per our normal protocols.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to a pupil's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, injury, or trauma at the time of the assessment. Special consideration in the usual manner will not apply this summer as public examinations have been cancelled. However, the school will follow the JCQ special consideration process as set out on their website:

www.jcq.org.uk

All aspects regarding the school's approach to CDGs is covered in the college policy document "Edmund Rice College Centre Determined Grades Policy". This is due to be submitted to CCEA for ratification on 23rd April and will be available on the college website as soon as possible thereafter. Our website has been updated to include a section "Alternative Arrangements 2021" where you can find all necessary information regarding our approach to CDGs.

At Edmund Rice College, we want to ensure that all grades awarded will be fair, reliable and based on objective evidence. CCEA and Ofqual have clearly stated that in 2021, centres are asked to use a range of evidence to arrive at a professional and academic judgement of the standard at which each pupil is performing in the context of the specification for which they are entered and from this provide a grade to the Awarding body. This is a difficult time for all involved and I can assure you of our very best endeavours in ensuring that students get the results that they deserve and which accurately reflect the standard of work they have completed. I request, and I am grateful for, your continued support throughout the entire process. Pupils always perform admirably at GCSE, AS and A' Level in Edmund Rice College and we expect this year to be no different.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P Berne', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

P Berne
Acting Principal