

# All Hallows Catholic College

A Voluntary Academy | National Teaching School

*Aspire not to have more but to be more*

Brooklands Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 8LB | Telephone: 01625 426138 | Fax: 01625 468126 | admin@allhallows.org.uk | www.allhallows.org.uk

Principal - Mr T Beesley

6<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Student and Parent / Carer,

## RE: BTEC & VOCATIONAL EXAMS

I hope you are well. I am writing to try and clarify the situation regarding the BTEC & Vocational exams, due to be sat this week and next.

On Monday evening, following the Prime Minister's announcement, the DfE confirmed that January exams would still go ahead, despite the national lockdown. Shortly afterwards the exam board, Pearson, stated that they were working urgently with the DfE and Ofqual to confirm if the Prime Minister's announcement impacted on the exams scheduled this week. On Tuesday, it was again reported in the national media that these BTEC and Vocational exams would still go ahead. I wrote a letter to parents and carers yesterday afternoon, in which I confirmed this, as we had our first exam scheduled for this morning. The DfE's position was then updated, yesterday evening, to *'Schools and colleges can continue with the vocational and technical exams that are due to take place in January, where they judge it right to do so'*. I then received the following email from Pearson, late last night:

*'Following the Prime Minister's 4 January announcement of a new lockdown and the news that schools, colleges and training providers will close to the majority of learners, we have been working with the Department of Education (DfE) to understand what this means for BTEC exams scheduled for January. Our aim has been to bring you the clarity we know you need and deserve, as soon as possible.*

*The DfE confirmed on January 4 that they expected scheduled vocational exams to go ahead and it has updated that guidance today (5 January) to give schools, colleges and training providers the choice to offer students vocational exams, should schools and colleges judge it right to do so.*

*We want to ensure that you are supported by us regardless of the choice that is made by your school or college on whether exams take place. If your college or school decides to offer exams, you will be able to run your external assessments as planned and if your school or college decides not to offer vocational exams, we have agreed the following with Ofqual and the DfE to ensure that no learner is disadvantaged.*

- We will certificate any learner who is unable to take their exams and has enough evidence to receive a certificate that they need for progression.*
- Learners unable to take their assessment this January may be able to take their assessment at a later date. If that is not possible, we will put in place arrangements to ensure no learner is disadvantaged.'*



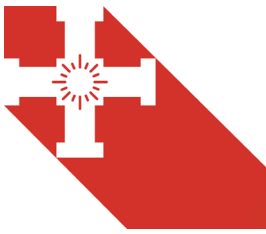
*Honourable Purpose*

*Respect*

*Compassion*

*Co-operation*

*Stewardship*



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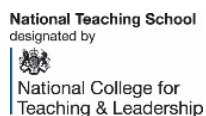
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As I am sure you understand, this puts schools and colleges in a very difficult position. We have measures in place to minimise the risk of contracting COVID-19 in College. What we don't know, however, is what the 'risks' are for our students, if we choose not to offer these exams. In consultation with your teachers, therefore, who know their students the best, we have decided to continue to run the exams this week and next, with socially distanced desks and hand sanitisers. Students can wear face-coverings if they choose to, and as rooms need to be ventilated, we would recommend that all students wear warm layers, including a coat. If anyone is uncomfortable with this arrangement, however, and if a student decides not to attend their particular exam because of concerns, we will fully support them with this decision. Do, however, contact Mrs Smith, our Exams Officer, at [examsofficer@allhallows.org.uk](mailto:examsofficer@allhallows.org.uk), to let us know.

Thank you for your continued patience and support, and if you have any questions about the information above, please contact Mr Howells, Head of Sixth Form, at [d.howells@allhallows.org.uk](mailto:d.howells@allhallows.org.uk) or the relevant subject teacher.

God Bless

Tim Beesley



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