



15<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear students, parents and carers,

### GCSE Results Day – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020

I am writing to outline the plan and rationale behind Results Day this year. As with everything since March this year, we have been faced with difficult decisions and logistics with the planning of Results Day, which we have carefully considered before releasing the details for the day to you all. We are acutely aware of the fact that this year has been one of great disruption for yourselves and your children and would have liked for a results day to run as close to normality as possible, to allow us to congratulate you on your successes, support those who haven't achieved what they were hoping for and to provide advice on next steps. However, given the current public health crisis, it is not possible for us to run a results day in the normal fashion.

Instead, we will be adapting our model for Results Day to ensure that we can still provide support, consolation and advice for your next steps, whilst minimising the number of students and parents that are going to be on site. One option would have been to stagger attendance to the school site to collect results, with students arriving in small groups (likely without parents), but we do not think this would have been fair, especially on the students who would not have been allowed to collect their results until later in the day. We feel that the plan created will allow for us to still fulfil our role of supporting, guiding and advising you on Results Day whilst meeting the current public health requirements.

The plan for the day will be as follows:

- Results will be released **via email to students' school email addresses at 9am**. If you are unable to access your school email, you need to let us know urgently (please contact [exams@sydneyrussellschool.com](mailto:exams@sydneyrussellschool.com)) in order for us to work with you on another solution
- From 11am, where needed, we will run appointments in school for students to attend (these will be in a socially distanced manner, following the public health guidelines around sanitising, distance and cleaning). The



appointments will be a 15-30 minute slot, which you will be able to book online at the links provided in the results email.

- The appointments will be for one of two things:
  1. Appointments with a careers guidance counsellor to help with your next steps. These will be called “Careers Guidance Appointments” on the booking form.
  2. Appointments to discuss significant concerns with grades and options available to you to address these. These will be called “Grades Appointments” on the booking form.
- The only staff in school will be those running appointments and the Y11 pastoral team – unfortunately, **due to current circumstances, you will not be permitted onto site without a pre-booked appointment.** If there are any issues around booking appointments, please contact [exams@sydneyrussellschool.com](mailto:exams@sydneyrussellschool.com), or ring the front office and ask for Ms Smith or Mr Conant. The appointments will only go live on results day. Please feel free to book appointments of both types if needed, but please be aware that if required, the Grades Appointment needs to be booked as the first of any you need.

### Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) Process:

This year has been like no other in terms of the external exams and how the results have been produced. To ease concerns ahead of results day, we would like to outline our processes and those of the exam boards in the creation of the grade you have received. On the website, we have attached versions of the OFQUAL guide for students on how this process was achieved (as well as the relevant specifics and protocols around checks and appeals, which we will put on the website in the days leading up to Results Day), but below outlines our specific approach.

Our approach was based on the agreed national understanding that our teachers know our students and as a school, we are able to assess the grades that students would have achieved if they’d sat the exam with a high degree of accuracy. The grades we submitted to the exam board (called Centre Assessed Grades, or CAG for short) were agreed by us as a school, after a quality assurance process that involved three stages of review with teachers, departments, Heads of Department, members of the Senior Leadership Team with relevant responsibility and the Principal. The grades we submitted for each student were not the sole responsibility of



any individual teacher, but instead were agreed after our internal quality assurance process, to be the most accurate and appropriate grade for each student.

We submitted these grades to the exam board, after extensive checks and approvals. Each exam board then used a standardisation process, to ensure that the grades awarded nationally this year are consistent with previous years (to ensure fairness across year groups). As a result, the final grades that students receive may not reflect those submitted by the school (they could be either higher or lower than we submitted). We submitted our viewpoints on this at the time and agree that this is the fairest possible approach to the exams in what was extreme circumstances, as the process for both us and nationally has been fair and rigorous, meaning the results are valid for all who receive them on results day. We are confident that this approach should allow all pupils to progress on to the next stage of their lives in the normal way.

Whilst we are supportive of the process and are happy that it has allowed for the best and fairest outcomes for our students, we recognise that some students grades may have changed between what we submitted and their final exam grade and that this may cause some anxiety if it affects future education or employment. Due to this, we are happy to release the Centre Assessed Grades (those submitted to the exam board by the school) to any student who should request it. This could be either at the appointment on the 20<sup>th</sup> August if you have significant concerns about how your grades are affecting future education, or we will be happy to do this over email from the week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> August. If you should wish for this to happen, please email [exams@sydneyrussellschool.com](mailto:exams@sydneyrussellschool.com) – under the regulations, such a request must come from the student, not the parent. A reminder that in all of this, communication about exams needs to come through the exams officer at the above email address – subject and pastoral staff have been instructed to re-direct this across to the exams team, so only the exams email address will be able to answer any concerns or discuss information with you. Our 16+ team will be holding interviews on the week beginning the 24<sup>th</sup> August and will be in contact with you, where relevant, to arrange these in due course.

Our intention with all of this is to do right by you, our students. It has been a term and exam season like no other and whilst there are clear public health limitations on what we can do to make the results day as normal as possible, we hope that our being up front with you on everything that has been done helps to answer any



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questions that may be causing anxiety ahead of results day, especially with the significance that these results will have on the progression of our students to their next steps. We may not be able to have you all in and celebrate, console and advise in the way that we normally do, but we hope that it is clear from the details outlined in this letter that we are not washing our hands of you and instead are here more than ever to answer questions, provide guidance, work with you to sort out future education pathways and to provide the advice and support that we do on every results day.

Whilst nothing can be discussed in terms of grades or appointments until results day itself, please feel free to email us at [exams@sydneyrussellschool.com](mailto:exams@sydneyrussellschool.com) if you have any questions in the meantime.

Kind regards,

Janis Davies

**Principal**