



29th October 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I write to provide clarity to students, parents and carers with respect to the rules for sitting national GCSE and A-Level examinations in the on-going autumn series. It is important to note that all normal rules and expectations for examinations apply but there has been additional guidance provided with specific reference to the impact of Covid-19. We have summarised the key messages from this guidance below using the relevant government publication ([click here for link](#)).

Candidates who have tested positive for COVID-19

Any candidate who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) must stay at home and self-isolate for at least 10 days from when their symptoms started, or where there were no symptoms, for 10 days from the date of the test. Candidates will be unable to take exams during their period of isolation.

Candidates with symptoms of COVID-19

Any candidate with symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) must stay at home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and must not leave their homes. The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are the recent onset of either a:

- new continuous cough
- high temperature
- loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

Candidates should stay at home and [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Candidates will be unable to take exams during their period of isolation. If the candidate is not tested for coronavirus (COVID-19), they must isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

Where candidates are isolating in line with public health advice

Where a member of the candidate's household is symptomatic, the candidate must isolate for 14 days from the onset of their household member's symptoms. They cannot take exams during that period. This also applies if the candidate is asked to isolate following contact with someone with the virus for example via track and trace processes. Candidates cannot take exams during their period of isolation.

Candidates in quarantine following certain foreign travel must not attend exams during their period of quarantine. See guidance on [travel corridors](#) for an up to date list of countries where quarantine is not required in England.

Where a candidate has a negative test

Candidates should follow guidance about their [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test result](#) when they receive a negative test. The guidance sets out the circumstances where candidates do not need to self-isolate. If the guidance states that they no longer need to self-isolate (only relevant in specific circumstances) then a candidate can attend exams.

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ST MARY'S COLLEGE

As in previous years, provided candidates have taken the minimum necessary assessments for their subject in the autumn series, their school or college can apply for 'special consideration' to be awarded if they are unable to attend the remaining assessments for valid reasons which include absence due to Covid enforced self-isolation.

The minimum necessary assessments needed for special consideration to apply vary by qualification. For GCSE, AS and A levels, provided candidates have completed a minimum of 25% of the assessments in the subject, they will be awarded a grade if their application for special consideration is accepted. In order to make applications, evidence is required and candidates will be contacted where appropriate to establish the basis for their absence from any exam. The College cannot guarantee the outcome of the special consideration process.

GCSE, AS and A level exams in the autumn series cannot be rescheduled.

It is possible that some candidates will, very unfortunately, be unable to attend any of their exams. Those candidates who take less than the minimum necessary assessments and therefore cannot be awarded a grade in the autumn series will have the option to enter exams in summer 2021.

We appreciate that the impact of COVID-19 on access to exams will be concerning for candidates and their families. The hard work and commitment in preparing for them is in no way underestimated. It is of critical importance however that the national guidance is followed and that we continue to work collectively to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

If you have any specific concerns or questions that are not addressed directly in this letter or the guidance provided via the links included then please contact dec@smchull.org in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

G. Wild

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