

## Exam Entries at Hinchingsbrooke

At Hinchingsbrooke School we expect that all students are entered for the subjects they have studied at GCSE, A Level or BTEC/other vocational courses since Year 9/Year 12. The only exceptions will be:

- If the school feels that they are going to fail the course as advised by the student's teaching staff **after** the mock exams period in Year 11 or Year 13;
- There is a medical reason for needing to withdraw and medical evidence has been provided to support this need.

The school's position on exam entries is made because of the following:

- We believe it is important that students finish what they start, as this is an important life lesson;
- We believe all qualifications are valuable, regardless of the grade achieved and they could make a difference to a student qualifying for their next steps;
- Research tells us that young people who take exams now often go on to have several careers, and as such although they may feel they will not need a particular qualification now, it could still prove to be useful in the future;
- Although as a school, we are judged by the government on all the results achieved by our students, both in terms of the grades they achieve and the number of results each student achieves, both in Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, we take the decisions we think are right for our students.

We are happy to hear from parents who feel there are circumstances we need to be made aware of regarding their child's exam entries, but the final decision on entries has to be made by the school; this is the norm in schools across the country.

Following the Autumn term mock exams, we held a disapplication meeting, where we considered the students who are at risk of failing or who have medical needs that may affect their ability to take all the exams in all of their subjects - we aim to make decisions at that point, considering the whole picture. For those students who the school decided will not be sitting an exam in a specific subject (so where a disapplication has been agreed) we notified parents/carers.

Once the decisions have been made, where a student has not been disapplied from a subject, we expect them to continue and do their best in that subject. During the school year there are a wide range of interventions on offer, both in lessons and outside, including tutoring, Easter School and Masterclasses - engagement in such interventions often results in improved performance, so even if a student feels they are struggling now, experience tells us that many students can still improve.

The school also reserves the right to make decisions regarding the entry level to exams. Based on information departments have on individual student performance, experience and knowledge of the examinations, teachers/departments will decide whether students are entered for the Foundation or Higher-level papers. Parents/Carers are of course free to inform us of circumstances they feel we are unaware of which may influence this decision, but ultimately the decision must fall to the school.

Exam entries are made in January/February for the summer season, and the school pays for each paper a student is entered for at that point. Exam entries cost the school around £50 per paper, so we reserve the right to pass this cost on to parents/carers if a student chooses not to attend an exam for which they have been entered. Of course, where there is a good reason for a student not attending an exam, and we are told about this in advance, we would then not expect parent/carers to pay.