

Secondary School FAQs

Why has my school not opened for all children in Year 10 and Year 12?

From 15 June, schools have the flexibility to implement face-to-face support for year 10 and year 12 pupils in the way that best suits their circumstances, including considerations around staff availability and workload. It is up to schools to decide how they want to use face-to-face support in the best interests of their pupils e.g. additional pastoral support, academic support, practical support, or a combination of these.

There may be some pupils who would particularly benefit from more face-to-face support, such as disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have not been engaging in remote education. These pupils may attend more frequently than others so long as schools ensure that only a quarter of the year 10 and 12 cohort are in school at any one time. This should be alongside full-time attendance of vulnerable children and children of critical workers in all year groups.

How will transport be provided for my child?

Your child's school will liaise with the transport provider in relation to children who use school transport. There may be changes to timetables and these will be shared with you by the school.

What precautions should my child take when travelling to school?

When deciding whether children wear a face covering on **school** transport, it is also important to remember:

- school transport is unlike public transport, in that it generally carries the same group of children to and from the same destination each day – this may help reduce the risk of cross infection
- children and staff won't be expected to wear face coverings in school
- it is important that those using face coverings are able to do so properly
- face coverings should not be used by children under the age of 3 or those who may find it difficult to manage them correctly

This implies that face coverings are not required on home to **school** transport.

They should try to avoid travelling on **public** transport, particularly at peak times. If they have to use **public** transport, then they should wear a face covering and follow the guidance about its use.

I'm a keyworker and my children have been attending school since March. They are not in Year 10 or 12, will they still be able to go to school after the 15th June?

Schools will still prioritise vulnerable and key worker children for school places, regardless of their year group.

Who do I contact with questions about schools being open?

There is a Shropshire Council helpline for parents. The number is 0345 678 9008.

What is the latest position on free school meals?

The current arrangements will continue for children entitled to benefits related free school meals but not attending school. This will mean that your child's school will continue to provide vouchers, hampers or lunches.

If your child is attending school then they will receive a free school meal if they are entitled to a benefits related free school meal or a universal free school meal.

If I don't send my child in, will I still get my FSM voucher?

The provision of food vouchers for those eligible under the benefits criteria will also continue to be available where needed for those not attending school. Your school will let you know if government guidance is updated.

Will free school meal vouchers be available over the Summer holidays?

Yes. If your child or children are eligible for free school meals you will be able to claim vouchers for the 6 week summer holiday period.

Will my year 10 child take GCSEs next year?

The intention is that current Y10 pupils will sit their exams in 2021. However, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) recognises that your child will have experienced disruption with their learning and therefore they are working with the DfE, the wider sector and exam boards to consider the options for next year.

What is happening with GCSE, A level and vocational course grades this year?

Since the Secretary of State for Education announced that the 2020 exam series in England would be cancelled to help fight the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) schools and colleges have been asked to provide centre assessment grades for their students for this summer's awards. These grades submitted to exam boards must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a student would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer and completed any non-exam assessment.

The evidence for the grades will be based on classwork, bookwork, the results of any assignments or mock exams and previous examination results. Each centre will then rank order the students within each grade for each subject – for example, for all those students with a centre assessment grade of 5 in GCSE maths, a rank order where 1 is the most secure/highest attaining student, and so on.

Schools and colleges have been told that they must not share their centre assessment grades with students, parents or carers, under any circumstances, until after final results are issued.

The awarding organisation offering each qualification will use the centre assessed result, combined with other relevant information, to determine the most appropriate calculated result.

When will students get their GCSE and A level results?

A and AS level results will be published on 13 August and GCSE results on 20 August, as originally planned.

How will results be published?

It is likely that many schools will be sending results out in the post/email.

What if we think the grades awarded are inaccurate?

There will be a right to appeal if a student/parent does not believe the correct process has been followed. The intention is that students could sit their exams in the autumn or next summer if they wish to try and improve their grades (dependent on the government reopening the examination process). If they choose to do this, students will be able to use the higher of the two grades for future progression.

Post 16

Will the A level grades be accepted by universities?

The grades awarded this summer will be formal grades, with the same status as grades awarded in any other year. There is no reason for the usual admissions cycle to be disrupted.

Do universities need to start making unconditional offers / should students accept an unconditional offer now that exams are cancelled?

Universities should not begin making new unconditional offers and applicants should feel no pressure to accept such offers, as they will be awarded a formal calculated grade for each exam they would have taken.

If students already have an unconditional offer, does that remain?

Yes. An unconditional offer means you have already met the entry requirements, so the place is the student's if they want it.

My child hasn't applied to college/post 16 yet, is it still possible to apply for a course?

Yes, all of the colleges are accepting applications and will conduct interviews over the phone. The college websites have online application forms. If your child wishes to apply to their school sixth form then approach the school to see if there are options available.

What if my child doesn't get the correct GCSE grades to start the post 16 course they applied for?

Once GCSE results are issued, and if there is a concern about starting the course applied for then contact the school/college and discuss the options. Post 16 providers will be able to talk you through the next steps.

My child wants to do an apprenticeship but hasn't got one yet. Is this a viable option now?

Discuss this with the school's careers adviser to see if there are any openings available locally. Alternatively, contact the local college or training provider to see if they have any apprenticeship vacancies. Apprenticeship vacancies can also be found on the national apprenticeship website. It may be advisable to consider a back up option in case an apprenticeship can't be secured.

Where can we go to get advice about post 16 options?

The careers adviser in school can help with post 16 options, and also the local colleges. For more general information look on the national careers service website. For help or questions regarding further education or training options you can also contact Shropshire youth – shropshireyouth.iag@shropshire.gov.uk (tel 01743 258850)