

29th November 2017

Dear Parent / Carer,

You may have read or heard in the news yesterday, that Ofqual (the body who regulate all examination qualifications and assessments in England) have opened a consultation into the Non-Examined Assessment (NEA) for the Computer Science GCSE. The NEA is an extended programming project that must be completed in 20 hours under strict exam type conditions. Our students are currently in their 15th hour of the assessment.

I would like to reassure you that as a centre we have adhered to the NEA rules and carried out the assessment under the highest level of control. However Ofqual are concerned that some centres may not have been as stringent and that pupils have been openly discussing solutions to the live tasks in on-line forums, which is forbidden under the rules of the NEA.

As such Ofqual are proposing that the NEA will **not** count towards the final GCSE grade and that marks currently allocated to the NEA (20% of the total award) will be distributed between the two written exams. The consultation further proposes that pupils will need to complete the 20 hours assessment, although it is unclear at this stage whether this will have to be under the same high-level control. The consultation closes on 22nd December and the results will be published during the week beginning 8th January.

In response to the consultation we have made the decision to stop work on the NEA and focus on preparing for mock exams. Students have completed the majority of the time allowed for the NEA and we feel that until a final decision is reached, students should be preparing for their examinations.

If you have any queries regarding this, or anything else to do with the GCSE Computer Science, please do not hesitate to contact me via the following email – heleyt@vandyke.cbeds.co.uk.

If you would like to view the full consultation document, it can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-assessment-arrangements-for-gcse-computer-science>

Yours sincerely,

Toby Heley
Head of ICT & Computing