At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

Top Tips for Parents and Educators

WELLBEING AROUND RESULTS DAY

Exam results day can be a highly emotional experience for young people, with many reporting feelings of anxiety or overwhelm. Beyond the grades themselves, results can stir up fear, disappointment, confusion, or even identity crises – especially when young people feel pressure to meet certain expectations from their families, teachers, or peers. For those students facing unexpected outcomes, the fast pace of clearing and other next steps can add further stress, while intense emotional reactions – including joy – can be difficult to process. This guide offers compassionate, practical strategies to support students before, during, and after results day – helping them feel seen, supported, and equipped to navigate it, whatever the outcome.

BEFORE RESULTS DAY

SET THE TONE EARLY

Start conversations ahead of time about how you'll respond positively, no matter the outcome. Let students know they're appreciated and valued for who they are, not what they achieve.

NORMALISE VARIOUS OUTCOMES

Talk about how success can look different for everyone. Reassure young people that not meeting predicted grades doesn't mean the end – just a different path.

PREPARE FOR POSSIBILITIES

Help students understand practical next steps like clearing, applications, appeals, or exploring alternatives. Knowing their options in advance reduces panic if things don't go as planned.

DURING RESULTS DAY

STAY GROUNDED AND PRESENT

Model calmness. Whether emotions are high or low, offer presence and reassurance before offering solutions. Let the young people in your care feel whatever they need to feel. Think about where and when results are opened – sometimes space and time are needed.

RESPOND WITH REASSURANCE

Avoid reacting too quickly or comparing their results to others'. Focus on how proud you are of their effort, integrity, or perseverance – not just the outcome.

EXPLORE OPTIONS TOGETHER

If plans need to change, work alongside the young people in your care to help them navigate clearing or new choices – without pressure. Let them take the lead, offering them your calm and measured support.

AFTER RESULTS DAY

CELEBRATE MORE THAN GRADES

Recognise young people's other qualities, like kindness, resilience, and determination. Praise who they are, not just what they achieve – this can help build their self-worth.

SHARE REAL JOURNEYS

Talk about people who succeeded via both conventional and unconventional paths. Remind them that exams are just one moment, not a life sentence.

REFLECT, DON'T RUMINATE

Encourage reflection, such as "What did I learn?" or "What's next?" rather than "What went wrong?" Support them to look forward with clarity and hope.

Meet Our Expert

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