

19 April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

As you know, we have confirmation from the Department for Education and the exam regulator, Ofqual, regarding the arrangements for your child's GCSE, vocational, and A level results. It has been confirmed that students will receive grades awarded and determined by teachers, with students only assessed on what they have been taught. No algorithms will be used.

The exam boards will be asking teachers to draw on a range of evidence when determining grades. We will use questions provided or developed by exam boards, as well as mock exams, coursework, or other work completed as part of a student's course, such as essays, in-class tests and homework. To support teachers in making their judgements, exam boards will provide detailed guidance before the end of the spring term.

Prior to submitting grades, we will implement clear quality assurance procedures meaning that your child's result is fair and accurate. As Head of Centre, I will be required to provide a formal declaration about the accuracy and integrity of the grades submitted and the processes supporting them.

The following paragraph from the guidance is particularly important:

The exam boards provide an additional layer of scrutiny to ensure centres adhere to the exam boards requirements. These quality assurance arrangements should focus on making sure the process and evidence used by centres to award grades are reasonable. The exam boards should be required to undertake checks of all centres' internal quality assurance processes before grades are submitted to them. It is the government's view that the exam boards' quality assurance should also include checks of samples of the evidence to support students' proposed grades.

These checks of evidence will help ensure centres have undertaken an appropriate and robust process for determining grades and reviewing their judgements to promote fairness in the awarding of grades. Where robust investigation indicates that a centre's grades might not be justified, the exam board should ask the centre to investigate. If the exam board is not satisfied with the outcome of this investigation or malpractice is found, exam boards should reserve the right to adjust or withhold grades. Changes to the grades submitted should only be made in the quality assurance process where grades cannot be justified based on the evidence provided, rather than as a result of marginal differences of opinion.

Therefore, it is vital that we have robust evidence to support your child's grades. This is a time when our exam year students need to be totally focused on their work. Without robust evidence, we cannot award a student a grade that reflects their ability. This is, in many ways, a unique opportunity for every student to achieve their full potential. I have every faith they will rise to the challenge!

Timeline of Key Events:

Monday 19 April - Friday 28 May: GCSE's, AS & A Levels & vocational qualification assessments will take place in lessons.

Monday 7 June - Wednesday 16 June: Quality Assurance Procedures

Friday 18 June: Deadline for submission of Teacher Assessed Grades to Exam Boards

Every student will have the right to appeal their grade. However, I stress again that there will be robust internal and external procedures to ensure the correct grades are submitted. An exam board will only revise a student's grade at appeal where it finds the evidence on which the grade was determined cannot reasonably support that grade, rather than as a result of differences of opinion. Students should be aware that their grade can go up or down as the result of an appeal.

Please note that teacher grades are not necessarily the same as:

- Working at grades (the grade a student is currently working at). This is because we need to consider the holistic performance of a student rather than performances on individual pieces of work
- Target grades (set to challenge and motivate students)
- Predicted grades provided to UCAS in support of university applications

We will share our common approach with students on their return:

- 'We are all in this together'
- 'We are not going to let you down, we are not going to deliberately catch you out. We are going to do everything we can to support you in demonstrating to us what you can do based on what you have been taught'
- 'Monday 19th April presents a reset button for those of you who may need it, and a chance for the rest of you to really prove what you are capable of. For those of you who chose or were able to fully engage in lockdown work, your efforts will not be wasted nor ignored. For those of you who chose were unable to engage with lockdown work, then you will be given every reasonable opportunity to make up that time, but you will have to engage to make the most of the opportunities presented to you'
- 'We cannot protect you entirely from assessment and any anxiety that may accompany it, but we will be there to guide and advise you and help you to achieve the very best grades you deserve'
- 'You need to be prepared to do your bit, but we absolutely understand that you have been through a situation that was not of your making, that you could not have prepared for, and that you must not be disadvantaged by'
- 'You need not be scared that there will be any bias or unfairness directed at you when your teachers are deciding your grades. We have worked with you for many years, and we want the very best for each one of you. A range of assessments will be marked blind' in order to remove any possibility of unconscious bias.
- 'We will give you every opportunity to prove what you can do, sometimes via very short tasks, sometimes by timed assessments done in class. We will model, scaffold, demonstrate and explain all the way through before you carry out as assessed task. You will never be in the dark with regard to what will be expected of you'

- 'We will not be able to tell you what your Teacher Assessed Grade will be, BUT will be giving you very clear guidance on how you are currently performing and what you can do to either consolidate or improve'

Students will be provided with detailed information regarding the planned assessments by 23rd April.

Results days for GCSE, A level and our vocational qualifications will take place in the week commencing Monday 9 August:

A levels and Level 3 vocational qualifications: 10 August 2021

GCSE and Level 2 vocational qualification : 12 August 2021

We understand that most students will be very excited about coming back. Some of them will feel a bit anxious about it too. Both of these feelings are perfectly normal. We are here to look out for all students and help them settle back down very quickly.

Yours faithfully

Mrs T Peters
Headteacher