



21st April 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

## **Awarding Grades and Ranking for GCSE and A Level Summer 2020**

After receiving information from OFQUAL and from our examination boards throughout the Easter break, we have put in place our system for collating the grades and rankings for those students who would have been taking examinations this summer.

I appreciate that this letter is lengthy, but we feel that it is important for you to be fully informed of how we will be conducting this important process.

Our process has been created following all of the advice we have been given and using our own professional experience and embedded systems. This is to ensure our part in this process will be completed diligently, in an appropriate time frame and with every level being quality assured. It is important to note that the grades and rankings we submit make up only one part of this important process. Once we pass our data onto the exam boards, they and OFQUAL will be responsible for the final grades following statistical analysis.

Although we have used all of the documentation available to us when making these decisions, the main document which I refer to throughout this letter and which underpins everything, can be seen in full by following the link below.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/878848/Summer\\_2020\\_grades\\_for\\_GCSE\\_AS\\_A\\_level\\_EPQ\\_AEA\\_in\\_maths\\_-\\_guidance\\_for\\_heads\\_of\\_centres.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878848/Summer_2020_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_heads_of_centres.pdf)

We regularly complete data captures for all year groups and when we conduct one of our PRP (Progress Review Points) we also already complete moderation of teacher judgements to ensure this is a fair and accurate prediction. In order to ensure the gradings and rankings process is now even more rigorous, we have added additional layers of quality assurance to allow for careful and thorough consideration before we submit our grades and rankings to the exam boards.

As teachers we have been asked to collate 'centre assessment grades' which must be 'submitted to exam boards which 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'.

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The evidence we have been asked to consider is:

- teachers should draw on existing records and available evidence (as far as possible in the context of current public health advice). It is important that the judgements are objective, and they should only take account of evidence about student performance. This will include the following, where it is available;
- records of each student's performance over the course of study, including for example progress review data, classwork, bookwork, and/or participation in performances in subjects such as music, drama and PE;
- performance on any non-exam assessment (NEA), even if this has not been fully completed. You should not ask students to complete their NEA work and you do not need to submit marks for any completed NEA. But you will need to bear in mind that many students achieve a higher grade on their NEA than in their exams, so you should not base your judgment on NEA alone. You should balance it with your judgement about their likely performance in the written paper(s), where appropriate. In case students decide that they want to enter in a subsequent exam series, you should retain any NEA work completed to date;
- performance on any class or homework assessments and mock exams taken over the course of study • tier of entry in tiered subjects – centre assessment grades must reflect the tier of entry (9 to 3 for higher tier; 5 to 1 for foundation, as well as U);
- for re-sitting students, any information about previous grades achieved or NEA marks that would, under normal circumstances, have been carried forward • for A level students who took AS in 2019, their AS results in that subject;
- and any other relevant information

We will be making judgements on all the evidence that is available to us bearing in mind the following two pieces of advice:

- There is no requirement to set additional mock exams or homework tasks for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade and no student should be disadvantaged if they are unable to complete any work set after schools were closed.
- Where additional work has been completed after schools and colleges were closed on 20 March, Heads of Centre should exercise caution where that evidence suggests a change in performance. In many cases this is likely to reflect the circumstances and context in which the work is done.

We have been told that we will not be expected to pass our grade and rankings on before the 29th May. However, dates and expectations are changing rapidly and daily. Because of this and the length of completing the process diligently, we will begin the process on Tuesday 28th April. The following actions will take place:

- Senior Leaders will advise all staff on the process and expectations, this will include

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advice on our usual moderation processes to incorporate all students' work across the whole course, cross class moderation to ensure parity and accurate grading across all teaching staff in one subject.

- Teaching staff will be given time to complete an evaluation of each student's work taking into consideration everything I have set out above in line with OFQUAL's recommendations. We have created matrices based on the advice from ASCL and OFQUAL which allow us to monitor how this year's predictions measure against last year's results both in school and nationally as well as students' prior attainment grades. Please note that we do not expect them to match identically to 2019 as the cohorts are completely different. However, this is an important part of the process, as these make up part of the strategies the exam board will be using for all schools nationally.
- Each class teacher will then enter their predicted grade and ranking.
- Faculties will only have access to their own subjects and not the whole cohort. OFQUAL will consider any discussion of grades with parents/carers or students as 'maladministration' which could have repercussions for the whole cohort, but certainly for the student in question. To prevent risk of any disclosure only a key team of six staff will have access to all of the data.
- Each Head of Department and Faculty will then attend a virtual meeting with myself for KS4 and with myself and Mr Weedy, Head of Sixth Form for KS5. The purpose of those meetings is to ensure that all procedures for ranking have been adhered to, all evidence we have requested has been considered and that any anomalies across subjects and/or specific students are highlighted and addressed.
- Four of the key team will then conduct a final moderation process where we will also consider any students with 'special consideration'.

Our final judgements for 'special consideration' will take into account the following as recommended by OFQUAL:

- Where disabled students have an agreed reasonable adjustment (for example a reader or scribe), or other students have an agreed access arrangement, the judgement should take account of likely achievement with the reasonable adjustment/access arrangement in place.
- Special consideration requests, in the event that a student is unable to take an assessment or suffers a traumatic event that might affect their performance, will not apply this summer. Instead judgements should reflect how the students would have performed under ordinary circumstances.
- Where illness or other personal circumstances might have affected performance in mock exams, centres should bear that in mind when making their judgements.

OFQUAL have acknowledged that 'given the timing of the announcement, we recognise that centres will have incomplete evidence, and that the range and amount of evidence will vary

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between different subjects'. We will be using all evidence available to us without disadvantaging those students who have been unable to complete work following the closure. We will consider 'with caution' any work that has been completed since the closure.

As I am sure you can appreciate, this process will take time. Our five week schedule will be completed by the 29th May.

We have been advised there will be a two week window for us to enter our data and we have put the following process in place for submission if we are expected to complete and transfer our results:

- Two members of our data team who are part of our key team of six will input the data together to check each entry as it is completed. This will then be checked for the final time by myself and Mrs Millett, before Mrs Millett signs off the data as Head of Centre.

After we have followed all of these processes and submitted our data the exam boards will be asked to consider the following which we will have already analysed as part of our process:

- previous results in your centre in this subject – these will vary according to a number of factors, including prior attainment of the students, but our data shows that for most centres any year-on-year variation in results for a given subject is normally quite small
- the performance of this year's students compared to those in previous years

Exam boards will then rank students nationally amongst other statistical analysis before grades are awarded to individuals.

Throughout this whole process we will be supporting Mrs Millett in following OFQUAL's advice that:

'Heads of Centre should emphasise the need for judgements to be objective and fair. In the interests of fairness to students, judgements made by centres across the country should be consistent. However, it is not feasible in the current circumstances for exam boards to standardise the judgements of all teachers across all subject areas before grades are





submitted. So that the final grades awarded are as fair as possible, exam boards will standardise the judgements across different centres once they have been submitted, using a statistical methodology developed in conjunction with Ofqual.'

We will be following the same procedure for any Y9, Y10 or Y12 students who have been entered for any examinations this year. At present whether these grades will be granted is still under consultation alongside a number of other points. When we know the outcome of this consultation we will update those students and parents accordingly.

Our process and our aim throughout this will be giving accurate and honest judgements based on all of the information we have. Our students are at the heart of this process, our staff have worked alongside your children and we care for every single one of our students' futures. We will endeavour to complete this process with their best interests in the forefront of our minds, whilst being objective and fair to all students at all times.

Because 'there is no requirement to set additional mock exams or homework tasks for the purposes of determining a centre assessment grade' we have taken the decision to change our teaching and learning expectations for Y11. Mr Weedy has written to you with details of how to sign up for our bridging classrooms. Please refer to these two letters to assist you and your child in doing so. It is imperative that the current Y10 and Y12 continue to access our online provision. This is being created specifically to minimise impact on learning in preparation for their examinations next year. In September, students who will be in Y11, Y12 and Y13 will be tested on the work which has been set. This is to see how much information students have retained and identify gaps in their knowledge, to inform planning for intervention and allow teachers to plan for delivery in the classroom across the next year of their studies. We do not know if OFQUAL or the exam boards will make allowances for time missed at present and we have to plan for the fact that they won't.

Should you have any queries, please contact me via email at [j.darbyshire@stokesleyschool.org](mailto:j.darbyshire@stokesleyschool.org).

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Jane Darbyshire

Deputy Headteacher

