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Dear Year 11 and 13 Students and Families

info@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk
www.highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk

UPDATE ON PROCESSES FOR AWARDING TEACHER ASSESSED GRADES IN SUMMER 2021

We are now well into our period of additional class-based assessments. These have been designed to give students the opportunities they need to show their teachers what they know, understand and can do in each of their courses. These assessments will play a very substantial role in helping teachers determine objective, fair and reasonable final grades, so we are delighted with the excellent approach that most students are taking towards them.

What evidence will be used to determine objective, fair and reasonable final grades?

Each subject will be providing students with a written summary of the evidence they will be using to make final grade judgements. In building their evidence bases each subject has worked within a common framework designed by the school, based on the guidance we have received from the exams regulator Ofqual and the Joint Council on Qualifications (JCQ). This means that each subject will be following a consistent set of principles, with the ability to tailor this in some ways to meet their particular requirements. The table below summarises this framework. It outlines three broad 'evidence' groups, each with a different level of weighting in reaching judgements. In selecting evidence, we have asked ourselves what the evidence is, when it was produced and how.

Evidence Group	Weight attached to this evidence	Examples of types of evidence	Further information and rationale for the weighting given to this kind of evidence
Principal Evidence	High	Assessments completed March–May 2021	These are carefully designed assessments which should enable up to date judgements about what students know, understand and can do across the breadth of taught content and assessment objectives. They will be completed in controlled conditions with access arrangements. They will be carefully moderated. They will have high weight as the assessments are completed towards the end of the course.
		All subjects will include these (<i>except art where a portfolio of work created over a longer time period will be used</i>)	
		Non-Exam Assessment (where applicable)	Non-Exam Assessment (often referred to as coursework) exists for some qualifications. In most subjects where NEA exists it would contribute significantly to final grades in normal years. As exam board required (and often designed) pieces of assessment these have a very high degree of validity. We have been asked to enable students to complete as much NEA as possible. It is therefore logical to place a high weight on these.
		Practical / performance work completed during course (where applicable)	This kind of work applies in subjects such as PE, music, drama and dance. The rationale for including such work where relevant and giving it a high weighting in our 'principal evidence group' is similar to that of NEA above.

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Evidence Group Cont/...	Weight attached to this evidence	Examples of types of evidence	Further information and rationale for the weighting given to this kind of evidence
Core Supporting Evidence	Low / medium	November / December 2020 Mock exams All subjects will consider these	These exams were completed in high control exam conditions and assessed a wide range of content and assessment objectives – in most cases Y10 / 12 material. Full access arrangements were in place. As such these are very valid assessments, but were taken six months ago. It is likely that much of the content and assessment objectives will have been more recently assessed through March-May assessments, so this is not the most up to date picture but provides a useful benchmark. We would expect most students to make some improvement in most subjects between mock exams and final assessment in the summer. However, this is often not as great as assumed. Experience shows us that while many students might make 1 grade of improvement in most subjects, and some can make more, others do not make any improvement, and some do worse.
Optional Additional Evidence	Low	Internal tests	These can be used, with a low level of weighting, if they assessed content or skills that are not assessed in final March-May assessment or the November mock exams. There will have been a fairly high level of control for these.
		Substantial class and homework	This kind of work can be included with low weighting if they assess material not assessed elsewhere. They are likely have been produced in low control conditions and therefore, for TAG purposes, have lower validity and weighting. Where substantial homework is being used students will be required to sign a declaration that the work is their own and has been produced without help.

What should students do when they receive their subject evidence bases?

When students are given their evidence base documents for each subject they will be asked to check them carefully. They will then be asked sign to say they have seen the evidence base, and understand what evidence will be used to inform grade judgements. If a student believes there were mitigating circumstances that should be taken into consideration for a piece of assessed evidence please inform us by emailing exams@highfields.derbyshire.sch.uk.

The main circumstances that could lead to adjustments include bereavement close to the time of the assessment, domestic crisis at the time of the assessment, temporary illness, accident or injury at the time of assessment, failure to provide agreed access arrangements. In some cases it may be appropriate to substitute another piece of work. If this is not possible a student may be eligible for consideration of a modest uplift of marks on affected assessments – up to a maximum of 5% in the most serious of circumstances. Loss of learning for any reason is not eligible, but teachers can address this through the flexibilities that we have in managing the range of evidence used to determine grades.

How will Teacher Assessed Grades differ from other kinds of grades we have seen in the past?

Teacher Assessed Grades ‘must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the student’s performance across a range of evidence on the curriculum content that they have been taught’ (Ofqual Guidance to Heads of Centre, Heads of Department and Teachers’, March 2021). Grade descriptors will be

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considered against students' work to determine grades rather than numerical measure such as a percentage or score. A TAG may end up being a different value to a range of other grades that have been communicated previously. TAGs are a final grade arrived at through careful consideration of a range of evidence. They should not be confused with:

- **'Most likely grades':** These reflected teachers' judgements of most likely final outcomes at earlier points in courses, when we expected exams to take place as planned. They do not reflect most recent assessment evidence. In any year there will be students who achieve above their earlier 'most likely grades', students that achieve the same grade, and students who do not achieve as highly as earlier 'most likely' predictions. In the same way it is likely that some TAGs will be above most likely grades, some will be the same and others will be below.
- **UCAS predicted grades:** These are grades provided for Y13 students to support university applications. UCAS and the universities expect these predictions to be more optimistic than the grades teachers realistically expect students to achieve. This is in order to give students a chance to aim for a more ambitious course, whilst still having an insurance choice available. They may be more ambitious than 'most likely grades'.
- **Mock exam and 'working at' grades:** These reflect the grade achieved in a particular exam, or which a teacher judges a student to be typically working at during a particular period of study. Mock exams have a role to play as supporting evidence in TAGs, but with lower weighting than more recent assessments. As explained above, in normal exam years many students make improvements from mock exam results. However, large improvements tend to be rare. Some students make no progress from mocks and in some cases do not perform as well.
- **Benchmark grades:** These are indications of the grade that would represent good progress for each student in each subject. They are not a prediction or a target. They are based on prior attainment at Key Stage 2 (for Y11) and Key Stage 4 (for Y13) and are not based on any work done during the course. In any normal exam year some students exceed their benchmark, some meet it and others do not reach it.

One final point about TAGs is that we cannot discuss our judgements with any student or parent/carer. To do so could constitute malpractice. We have taken the decision not to share marks from the current assessments either; as with exams in any normal year students need to keep focused on what is ahead. We remain very grateful to students, parents and carers for not asking us for such information.

We hope this document helps to understand the evidence we will be using to form our Teacher Assessed Grades, what to do if you feel we need to know about significant mitigating circumstances, and the relationship Teacher Assessed Grades may have to other forms of grade communicated over time.

As ever, the crucial challenge for all of our wonderful students is to stick at their learning, and to take the current opportunities to show us what they know, understand and can do. They are nearly there!

With warm regards and thanks to all families for their support.

Yours sincerely



P R Cole
Deputy Headteacher

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