



July 15th 2021

Dear parents / carers,

I hope everyone remains safe and well in these difficult times. I am writing with information about this year's examination results. Apologies for the length of this letter; there are a number of important issues that you need to be aware of.

Process to date

We were required to outline our plans for determining student grades in a [Centre Assessment Policy](#). This was submitted to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) for quality assurance and we received their endorsement on May 26th.

As you are aware, students sat Final Grade Assessments (FGAs) last half term. These assessments were used, alongside previous evidence where appropriate, to help teachers to determine a grade for each qualification. A summary of this evidence base can be found [here](#). Staff carefully considered issues of bias, any access arrangements a student is entitled to and any mitigating circumstances. A rigorous process of internal moderation of proposed grades was carried out prior to the submission of these to the exam boards on June 18th.

The exam boards then requested a sample of student work for their own process of moderation and quality assurance. We submitted that sample on June 23rd and their subject experts are now reviewing this evidence. Their guidance states:

'If we've got any questions about how your school has made grading decisions, we'll be in touch. If we have any serious concerns, we may ask for more work to be provided. And, in some cases, if the evidence doesn't support the grades submitted, schools will be asked to reconsider their grades. In extreme cases where we disagree with a grade, we can withhold results – but we won't change any grades without speaking to [the school].'

The exam board review finishes tomorrow, on July 16th. We feel confident that our procedure has been careful and thorough so are not expecting any changes. There is Ofqual and JCQ guidance about summer 2021 for students, parents and guardians in the Examinations Information section of our website, accessed via a link on the right hand side.

Year 13 Exam Results' Day: Tuesday August 10th

Despite the cancellation of the May / June exams again this year, we would like to offer students a Results' Day that is as normal as possible. We feel they deserve the chance to celebrate the outcomes of the hard work they have put into their courses by still coming into school to collect results in person, should they wish to do so. Often, as well as sharing that experience with friends and family, it is also a chance to share it with staff who have supported them over the past two years. Therefore, we would encourage students to do this if they would like to. However, we understand that this may not be possible for everyone this year. So, the plans will be as follows:

8.30 – 10.30 am:	students may come to collect results in person – no appointment is needed
10 am:	results will be emailed to all students via their school email address
8.30 am – 3 pm:	Sixth Form Team available for advice

To ensure risks are minimised and the systems work well, there are a few details we would ask you to note:

Collecting results in person

- We would encourage a Lateral Flow Test the afternoon before.
- Please ensure hands are washed or sanitised before coming on site.
- Entrance to the school will be from Bobmore Lane.
- There will be a one-way arrow system in place to follow.
- Only 1 family member may accompany each student.
- Physical distancing must be adhered to at all times.

Receiving results by email

- Please ask your son / daughter to check that they can successfully log in to their school email well before Results' Day. If not, they should contact ithelpdesk@gms.bucks.sch.uk for support. If this is not sorted in advance, it could delay receipt of results for students not collecting them in person.
- Students must forward emailed results *from their school email to a personal one* as soon as they get them, as all school emails for students leaving the school will be disabled on 31st August 2021.

Autumn Resits

I very much hope that students will be pleased with the results that they receive. In the unlikely event that they are so disappointed that they wish to sit an exam in a subject to try to improve the grade, there will be opportunity for them to do this in October. The higher result will stand. The exams will assess students in the same way as had been planned for exams in summer 2021. In all subjects except for art, non-examined components of courses will not be included in any overall grade attained in the autumn exams. Students taking art will be assessed on their performance in a task set and marked by the exam board.

The deadline for requesting a resit is **9 am on Friday September 3rd** and the form to request this can be found on the school website under Examinations Information.

Appeals

There will also be a possibility for appeal, as is usual.

It is important to note that an appeal may result in a grade being lowered, staying the same or being raised. So, if a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

JCQ sets out two possible stages for an appeal:

Stage 1: Centre Review:

priority deadline: 9 am Monday August 16th
otherwise: 9 am Friday September 3rd

Stage 2: Appeal to Awarding Organisation

priority deadline: 9 am Monday August 23rd
otherwise: 9 am Friday September 17th

Priority appeal is only for students applying to higher education who did not attain their firm choice (the offer they accepted as their first choice) and wish to appeal an A Level or other Level 3 qualification result. You should inform your intended higher education provider that you have requested a centre review and / or awarding organisation appeal.

If you decide to appeal, you must complete Stage 1 first. When you have the outcome of that, you can decide whether or not to continue with Stage 2. Forms for both stages are on the school website under Examinations Information.

Stage 1: Centre Review

The two possible grounds for a Centre Review are if you feel we have made:

- an administrative error (for example, the wrong mark was recorded against a piece of evidence)
- a procedural error (for example, access arrangements were not provided or mitigating circumstances were not considered for an eligible student)

Stage 2: Appeal to Awarding Organisation

In addition to these two grounds, there is a third possible ground at Stage 2 - if you feel there has been:

- an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in either
 - the selection of evidence used to determine the Teacher Assessed Grade
 - the determination of the Teacher Assessed Grade from the evidence

The teacher's judgement will be considered unreasonable 'only if no teacher acting reasonably could have reached the same judgement'. A grade will only be considered unreasonable if the reviewer considers 'the student's performance evidence to be clearly and unequivocally indicative of a higher or lower grade'.

I appreciate that there is much to digest here, which is why I wanted to get the information out to you before the end of term. I very much hope that students will be pleased with the results they receive.

However, if any student would like advice about, or support with, their next steps, I will be happy to help. I can be contacted on ohollyman@gms.bucks.sch.uk either this week or between 9th and 13th August and in person in school on August 10th.

For now, let's hope the sun comes out again soon and we can all enjoy the summer. I will look forward to seeing as many of your sons / daughters as possible in August.

Best wishes,

Owen Hollyman
Head of Sixth Form