



Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

In our communication on Friday 3rd April, we advised you of the publication of the awaited guidance from OFQUAL, regarding the awarding of GCSE and A Level grades this summer and provided you with a copy of the letter they issued to all students. We know that following cancellation of the summer exam series by the government that this has been a source of much anxiety for our students, and you as their parents/carers. Given this, over the weekend, we have been digesting the guidance issued, to enable us to try and provide some much needed clarity and hopefully reassurance, around the process for everyone involved.

Firstly, it is important to stress that this guidance only covers GCSE, A Level and EPQ courses. We are expecting to have further guidance for other courses in the coming weeks.

What is the process for awarding grades?

In essence, schools are being asked to submit assessment grades to the exam boards that reflect the grade we, as professionals, believe students would have received if they had sat the exam. The exact wording from OFQUAL is:

“Assessment grades submitted to exam boards must 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.”

In addition to this, we are required to rank order students within each grade for every subject. This will allow OFQUAL to use a statistical process to standardise the grades between Centres. Details of this process have not been shared with schools however this standardisation process may result in the grade your child is given being different from the one we recommend.

What evidence will be taken into account in arriving at a grade for students?

In deciding what grades to give students, OFQUAL have said that “it should be a holistic professional judgement”, which means we can take a range of factors into account including:

- Classwork/bookwork
- Homework
- Tests and assessments
- Mock Exam results
- Any practical elements of the course e.g. Drama, Music, GCSE PE
- Any NEA coursework component e.g. Art, Photography, Technology – even if this is not fully completed
- Agreed access arrangements.

Headteacher: Miss D Martin

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The teachers at Benton Park are highly skilled in providing accurate predictions, as this forms part of our everyday work around the assessment of our students. This means that staff have the necessary professional competencies to be able to decide upon a grade based on their knowledge of all of our students for whom they teach and the work they have submitted to date. It is important to stress that for the vast majority of students we already have all of the evidence we need to make these judgements. Where this is not the case, we have already made direct contact with the relevant students.

Timescales

As with any exam process there will be a desire for students to know what grade they're going to achieve and we fully understand that with this process in particular, students will be keen to know the grade we are submitting as a recommendation for them. However, OFQUAL have made it very clear that "Centres must not, under any circumstances, share the centre assessment grades nor the rank order of students with students, or their parents/carers or any other individuals outside the centre, before final results have been issued." As you would expect we will be following this guidance in all cases, without exceptions.

We are expecting to submit our recommendations around the start of June. Meaning that it is likely that results will be communicated to students in line with the usual results day in August, however this may change depending on the speed that OFQUAL can collect, and standardise, the information from Centres across the country.

What can students do if they aren't happy with the grade they are awarded?

As the guidance stands, OFQUAL are currently considering what arrangements might be put in place for an effective appeals process. However, they have been clear that any grounds for appeal will be relatively narrow and will be based around the application of the process.

Students will have the opportunity to take the exams in a later exam sitting if they chose to do so and both grades achieved will be valid.

Expectations for Year 11 and 13 students.

Whilst no further work will be required for this awarding process, we believe it is incredibly beneficial for our students to continue to study at home, as it will undoubtedly help with their future studies or career path. This is particularly important for those subjects where there is still content to be covered.

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BENTON PARK SCHOOL

'Creating a climate for great learning, success and opportunity'

To facilitate completion of all the courses, staff will be forwarding any remaining course content to relevant students week beginning 20th April 2020, along with instructions for completion.

This will support next steps, particularly where this involves further study in related subjects for both Year 11 and 13 students.

In addition, we are working on transition plans to ensure that those students in Year 11 who are joining us in the Sixth Form in September, are fully prepared and ready for A Level study. Teachers, along with our Sixth Form team will be in touch over the course of the next half term to support with this.

Also, our Sixth Form team will be contacting all of our Year 13 students to offer support in ensuring that they have a clear plan for onward destinations.

Require further advice?

We fully understand that this is an unbelievably difficult situation for families with children who were expecting to sit exams this year. I would like to reassure you that we will make every effort to ensure that students receive grades which they truly deserve, representing all of their hard work and achievements, in order to support them in making their next step, be that employment, apprenticeship or further study.

If you have any further questions, or need additional support please do not hesitate to contact the following staff:

Year 11: Keith Briggs, Deputy Headteacher. Keith.briggs@bentonpark.net

Year 13: Oliver Wharton, Assistant Headteacher Sixth Form.

Oliver.wharton@bentonpark.net

Thank you for your ongoing support at this incredibly challenging time. I do hope you and you families are managing to stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely

Delia Martin
Headteacher

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