

6 April 2020

Dear Parent and Student

Public Examinations Summer 2020

As promised, I now write to share the information we have received from Ofqual (the body that oversees all our public examinations) about how grades are going to be awarded this summer. I also attach a letter from Ofqual addressed to all young people who were due to sit their examinations in the summer.

As a school we are being asked to submit centre assessment grades for each student in each of the subjects they were due to take an examination in. We are also asked to rank order students in each subject. We are told quite clearly that the grades submitted 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. We are clearly being asked to ensure that the grades are objective and fair. Once we have submitted these grades we are told that exam boards will standardise the judgements across exam centres.

The assessment grades which we will submit for each student in each subject will need to be an holistic professional judgement using different sources of evidence. Teachers and Heads of Department know their students and have experience of how students this year compare with previous years. Subject teams will therefore work together to ensure that assessment grades are the most accurate, objective and fair as they possibly can be. Evidence which exists in school about student performance needs to be used to inform this judgement. Ofqual has stated that the evidence includes the following:

- 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 judgement 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;
- 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;
- 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);
- 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;
- any other relevant information.

It is also very clear from the information shared with schools that centre assessment grades are not the same as:

- target grades;
- predicted grades;
- working at grades;
- age-related grades.

Now that we have the information from Ofqual I want to assure you that members of staff will be working hard to complete these assessment grades and rank order reports for the exam boards. Members of staff here at Beechwood are, as always, absolutely determined to do their very best for our young people, ensuring that they receive the examination results they deserve in light of their track record and evidence which exists about most likely outcomes in the summer. At this stage, there is nothing more for students to do. The work that needs to be done has to be completed by subject teachers, Heads of Department and senior members of staff. Over the last number of years all our Sixth Form and Year 11 young men and women have worked alongside members of staff to secure the best possible outcomes they are capable of in light of their hard work and engagement. This has been our constant goal and this is what we will strive to achieve now. I previously stated, we will do our very best to ensure that no one is in any way disadvantaged as a consequence of this really difficult situation we are all in.

Going forward, we are now in the Easter holiday period, although school remains open for a small number of young people. Post the Easter holiday we will be back in contact about students' next steps. Although there may not be any more work to be completed for the summer examinations, there is much useful study to be undertaken. Year 11 and Year 12 students will have work to pursue in preparation for the courses they will be taking next year and there will be guidance from universities about preparation for university entrance for our Year 13 students. In addition, there is guidance that Directors of Studies have already shared about keeping usefully and positively engaged in learning and personal development activities.

If you have any questions/queries, then please do not hesitate to be in contact. We are not able to advise students of the assessment grades or subject rank ordering that we are submitting but we will happily discuss with you any other questions you may have in relation to the guidance we have received from Ofqual and the activity we are now undertaking.

Very best wishes and please be absolutely assured of our best endeavours on behalf of all of our young people who should have been sitting examinations this summer.

Yours sincerely



Kathleen Higgins
Executive Headteacher