

# AUDENSHAW SCHOOL

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO HELP BUILD  
EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG MEN.

Principal: Mrs J Saw

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Now that the process for awarding grades in 2021 is coming to a close, please find below the answers to some of the questions that have been doing the rounds across the news media and social media. I feel that it is important to clarify the position of Audenshaw School, and indeed all schools, in the process for awarding Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs) in 2021.

We are currently in the process of submitting our grades to the boards and this will be complete by the 18th of June. Once the grades have been submitted, we will be subject to a sampling exercise by the Awarding Organisations, and this will take place from the 21st of June.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How has my child been graded this year?**

Grades for GCSEs, A-levels, and most other qualifications including applied generals will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

In our school, we have used a range of evidence to reach a holistic judgement for each student. This includes formal assessments sat under exam conditions and non-exam assessment (coursework).

You can read our Centre Policy, which has been approved by the exam boards on our website which details the approach we have taken as a school.

### **Why have there been so many assessments when exams were cancelled?**

National exams were cancelled in January, and all schools and colleges had flexibility about how to arrive at a fair and robust grade for each student.

Throughout the early summer term, we have been using past paper assessments, and assessment materials provided by exam boards, as we think this will produce the most reliable, and therefore fairest, evidence.

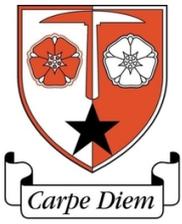
### **What evidence has been used in each subject?**

Our Centre Policy details the high-level approach we are taking as a school. Your child's subject teacher will have already let students know what evidence is being used for the year group. You can also find this information on our website. We are aware that there may be mitigating circumstances in some instances for some students, but teachers and leaders will use their professional judgements about how to respond to mitigating circumstances; and this may vary between subjects depending on the impact it had on the assessment. Teachers will record how any mitigating circumstances were responded to.

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## **My child usually has access arrangements (e.g. extra time) in exams. Have they this year?**

If a student is eligible for any sort of access arrangements as part of their SEND provision, then they have been given it in the assessments we have carried out.

## **Can we know the grade submitted?**

No, we are legally obliged not to let students or parents/carers know their submitted grade before results day.

In some subjects, students may receive grades or marks for certain assessments that may count towards their grades; but this is at the department's discretion. Students do not have an automatic right to know their grades or marks in a subject's assessment, just because they have been told marks in another assessment.

## **The assessments you are doing are different from another school. How is this fair?**

Schools and colleges have been given a lot of flexibility in how they decide a holistic teacher assessed grade this summer. This means that it is likely the assessments will look different in different schools, even ones in the same area.

Because students should only be assessed on what they have been taught, to account for variations in lost learning due to the pandemic, the range of evidence will differ between schools, and possibly even between students within our school.

Our approach has been approved by the exam boards; but many different approaches have also been approved. This does not mean one approach is better than the other.

## **I do not think my child's teacher will judge them fairly.**

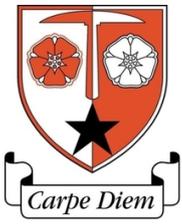
All of staff have undergone objectivity and bias training. This is detailed in our Centre Policy, which has been approved by the exam boards. All departments have kept a log of all of the training attended and this is an integral part of the overarching documentation collated by each department.

All of the grades will be signed off by two members of staff, including the Curriculum Leader. All grades will be signed off by the Head of Centre.

We will also have to send a sample of work into the exam boards, ensuring that grades are fair and accurate.

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## **My child needs a particular grade for college; what can I do to make sure they get it?**

It is important that neither students nor their parents or carers put undue pressure on classroom teachers or Curriculum Leaders to submit a certain grade before 18 June. If a member of staff feels that pressure is being applied, we will first raise this with you directly.

If the pressure continues, we have been instructed to report this (whether from parents/carers, or students) to the exam boards as potential malpractice.

If you want to raise genuine mitigating circumstances with us, then please do through the channels outlined above.

## **What is exam malpractice?**

Exam malpractice this year includes students fabricating evidence (e.g. claiming plagiarised work is their own), they or their parents placing undue pressure on teachers to submit a certain grade, as well as teachers fabricating evidence.

Where possible, the majority of the evidence used to base the TAG has been completed in school and has been completed under high control conditions. These are conditions that would be very similar to an examination.

If malpractice is proven, the exam boards may decide to withhold the qualification altogether. Our approach to authenticating evidence is set out in our Centre Policy and is detailed in our policies around the completion of NEA (Non-examined assessment).

## **How can I appeal?**

If your child is unhappy with their grade this summer, they will have the opportunity to resit all GCSEs in the autumn term. Students should speak to their college about entering the autumn series.

There is also the option to appeal a grade on the following grounds:

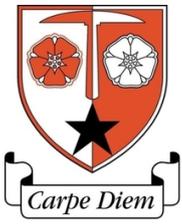
- Administrative error – you think the school has submitted the wrong grade for you.
- Procedural error - you think the school did not follow our process correctly.
- Error of academic judgement – you do not think the grade submitted reflects a reasonable judgement on either the evidence that was used, or the grade arrived at.

All appeals will first be processed as a centre review. Following the outcome of the centre review, students can choose to take forward an appeal to the exam board(s), which we will do on their behalf. Details of how to request a centre review are in the JCQ document, which is on our website.

Please note that at any stage of the appeals process, a student's grade(s) could go up or down. If the appeal process decides that the submitted grade was too high, students will not be able to keep the higher grade. We will require students to sign a declaration saying that they understand this before they submit an appeal.

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## **My child has work at a higher grade than the work used as evidence. Can they appeal?**

Students have already been told what evidence is being used. Just having a higher-graded piece of evidence is not, in itself, grounds for an appeal as a holistic grade has been awarded to students, based on the evidence base selected – although this request will be recorded.

When it comes to appeals, exam boards will be considering whether any teacher acting reasonably could have used the same evidence and reached the same judgement. This is different to whether other alternatives would have been equally as valid.

Yours faithfully,

Mr P Murphy

Vice Principal (Achievement and Standards)  
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