

AUDENSHAW SCHOOL

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO HELP BUILD
EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG MEN.

Principal: Mrs J Saw

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Dear Year 11 Students and their Parents/Carers,

As part of the process of awarding grades in 2021, we are expecting the additional materials and, importantly, the information surrounding the internal and external Quality Assurance processes that will be in place across each examination board, for all subjects, to be released at Easter. This information will be communicated to you so that you are fully informed of the processes that will be in place here at Audenshaw School in our submission, to the boards, of your son's grades in each subject.

As we await the additional guidance on the process of awarding grades in 2021, I wanted to write to you to explain some of the common points that have been raised in schools and across the media.

How will grades be awarded this summer?

Grades for GCSEs in 2021 will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

The national process defined by the Department for Education and the exams' regulator, Ofqual is as follows:

1. Teachers will **assess students against a national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Our school results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**.
5. If students do not think their results are **accurate**, they will have the right to **appeal**.

So, do teachers award the grade?

Simply: no. The grade your son will achieve will start with his teacher's assessment of his performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual.

Does this mean grades are decided by an algorithm?

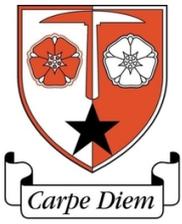
No, unlike last year, your son's grades will not be changed by a formula. The internal and external quality assurance measures will all be done by humans, not an algorithm. There is no limit on the achievement of your son, providing there is evidence that they are working at that grade.

What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?

This year, teachers will only assess your son on content he has been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means your son will not be disadvantaged if he individually, his whole class or whole year group has been unable to complete the full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of your son's

RESPECT • RESPONSIBILITY • RESILIENCE





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performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual. If your son would usually have extra time in the exams, he will benefit from the same arrangements in teacher assessment.

Will grades be different between different schools?

No, the standard against which teachers will be assessing your son is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

What evidence will be used?

Teachers are able to draw on a range of assessment evidence from across your son's study of the course, up until 28 May. This may include homework tasks, mock exams, and papers set by the exam boards. This may include evidence from before the second lockdown, as well as evidence from March – June. The exam boards are producing assessment materials that will be sent to us before Easter. Different departments may use different sources of evidence, and there is no requirement for any one type of assessment to be used – it is about a performance across a range of evidence.

The exam boards are only giving out past papers, how is this fair?

Most of the assessments provided by the exam boards will be drawn from past papers, although there will be new questions as well. There is significant research that even if students have seen assessment questions before, it does not reduce the validity of the assessment. Furthermore, exam board questions are only one of the many pieces of evidence we will use to assess your son this summer.

Can students and parents make the case for why a student should get a higher grade?

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess your son on the content that he has been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for your son unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence, they are committing exam malpractice.

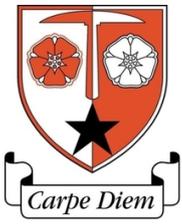
In 2020, any undue pressure by a student, or a parent, who placed undue pressure on teachers to increase grades was also considered exam malpractice. It is likely to be the same for 2021. If students or parents are found to be putting his teachers, or our school, under undue pressure to increase grades, then this matter will be referred to the exam boards and an investigation into malpractice may ensue. This may result in your son's certificate being removed entirely if malpractice is deemed to have taken place.

Can your son discuss his grades with his teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with your son, including marked or graded pieces of work. However, we are not allowed to disclose their final submitted grade we give to the exam board. Your son should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Your son must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

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**Most Importantly - What should your son do to improve his grades?
The best thing your son can do is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from his teachers, revise, and read around his subjects. His grade will be based on his performance, and so his outcomes are ultimately in his hands.**

I think this last paragraph sends a very important message.

We will keep you updated as more information becomes available.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P Murphy

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