

Dear Year 11 and 13 Students and Parents,

I would like to update you on how the process with regards to your results this summer is developing.

The first thing I would want to say is that you need to continue to be patient. I appreciate that it is frustrating that you do not have definitive information. Your teachers are as frustrated as you, however, it is vitally important that we do not rush into creating a system of assessment that will be used to support our judgements on your ability and your final grade. Exam boards have not yet produced the material for schools; this is expected by Easter.

How will grades be awarded this summer?

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.

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. Faculties 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 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**.

I have met with faculty leaders, on several occasions since the announcement, to discuss the next steps and would like to explain what will be happening in the short term. There are five areas that I believe are important that you should be aware of.

1. What is the standard by which I will be assessed this year?

Exam boards are currently creating a new national standard for each subject. They will produce assessment material that, although not compulsory, will support teachers in making their judgements. As a school we would support using these assessments.

We have been advised that these descriptors and assessment material will be **available by Easter**. Without this, it is not possible for your teachers to assess your work accurately. Each subject will have its own set of guidance and we will share this with you when we know it.

2. What about grade inflation?

'warnings of another summer of chaos and record grade inflation.'

The Daily Telegraph 25th February.

Headlines like the one above are not helpful and are certainly not accurate. There will be a national standard and we will use this as the basis for judgements. In a normal exam period, exam boards use a statistical model so that, at a national level, the same proportion of candidates should achieve the same grade as in the previous year.

This summer is very different. Teachers are making a judgement based on the evidence that you produce. This will be done using the grade criteria that exam boards are providing.

As this assessment criteria is new to us, there will be support and training from the exam boards to make sure they are applied fairly. This is important so that you have confidence that your grade can be compared with students nationally. It will mean that students and teachers in other schools will be using similar material to assess their students.

This model of assessment is not new. Many countries use a similar assessment model. It means that you will be required to provide evidence and your teachers will assess this evidence. We will make sure that you are aware of the evidence that we will using. It also means that there is no statistical model being used. As a result, I predict that there will be higher grades this year, not because of grade inflation, but due to this different form of assessment. This does not mean that everyone will achieve a grade 9 or an A *. You are responsible for the grade we submit, as it is dependant on the quality of work that you produce.

3. Quality Assurance

I believe it is important that there is a robust quality assurance process. I am pleased that there will be external and internal quality assurance to ensure fairness for all students.

External quality assurance

There are two types of external quality assurance:

1. Random sampling.

Any school or subject area could have a random sample check. This will mean providing the evidence that we have based our judgments on. We will therefore need to collate all this evidence and have it ready by the 18th of June in case it is needed. This is the date by which the submission of grades will be completed.

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2. Risk based checks.

The following risks have been identified as possibly triggering a risk-based quality assurance check:

- a. A change in results patterns e.g. grades are much higher or lower than previous years
- b. Unusual entry patterns e.g. a significant number of year 10s or year 12s entered for exams
- c. New centres

For your information, we are not planning to have any unusual entry patterns nor are we a new centre. We will be comparing the grades submitted to previous years, but this will not have an impact on the grades this summer. We will be submitting grades based on the evidence that we have.

4. Appeals process.

I believe it is essential that there is an appeals process. You will not know the grade submitted by us until results day, but you will know the evidence that has been used. If you are unhappy with the grade that you have been given there are two stages to any appeal.

1. You can ask us to check that we have not made a clerical error when submitting the grade.
2. You can appeal to the exam board. The process by which you would do this has not been confirmed yet. It is important to realise that there is a risk that any appeal could result in a grade being adjusted down as well as up. If we do have an appeal, then the exam board will look at the evidence that we have used to calculate your grade. It is important, therefore, that teachers use the descriptors provided by the exam boards and that all the evidence is readily available.

5. Results days

A level results day will be **Tuesday 10th August**. You will also receive UCAS confirmation on this day if you have applied to go to university.

GCSE results day will be **Thursday 12th August**.

Other questions you may have:

Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students, including marked or graded pieces of work.

However, we are not allowed to disclose their final submitted grade we give to the exam board.

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

When will we finish school?

This is a question that many of you have been asking. We do not yet know the date when you officially finish your education at CCS. We would hope to be able to offer an extension programme and potentially some fun activities once we have submitted your grades. It is impossible to plan for this at the current time. **We do know that your grades must be submitted to the exam boards by the 18th June.**

I fully understand your anxiety about the next few months. The good news is that we are back to face-to-face teaching and you are in school. You should be doing the following to give you the best opportunity to achieve the grade you are hoping for:

- Attend all your lessons,
- Apply 100% effort and concentration,
- Act on feedback from your teachers,
- Listen to your teachers and prepare fully for your assessments,
- Read around your subject,
- Produce work to the best of your ability.

I want to reassure you that your grade will be based on the evidence that you produce. It is not based on your behaviour, your attendance, or any other external factors. I believe good behaviour and high attendance is essential in school, but this will not be factored into our judgment on the grade that you are assessed to be working at. Your census data and in particular your predicted grades will also not be used as they are not based on specific evidence but are a prediction by your teacher of what you could have achieved had exams been going ahead.

Please do not ask your teachers for the grade that they will be submitting for you. They are not allowed to tell you.

I will write to you again when I have more information.

Regards,



Gary Wakefield
Vice Principal