



3rd April 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

GCSE Information for Year 11 Parents, Carers & Students

Following the decision a few weeks ago to cancel all exams for this summer, I promised to let you have information, as it became available, about what was happening with the grades from this year's GCSE and vocational qualifications as soon.

Since then Ofqual (the government body responsible for all qualifications and assessments) has been working with the exam boards to agree a mechanism to ensure that all students receive appropriate grades for all of their qualifications in line with their abilities and the efforts invested in their various KS4 courses. Today they have made their first announcements on how they will do this. Please note that today's announcements only apply to GCSE qualifications and we are still waiting to hear what the plans are for vocational courses such as BTECs and Cambridge Nationals.

I'd like to clarify that the grades that will be awarded to students this summer will count as full GCSEs. They will not be undervalued because they have been awarded without students sitting their exams. Colleges, universities and employers will treat them as full grades, exactly the same as those awarded to students in previous or later years, and the system that has been agreed should allow students to continue into further and higher education and beyond.

The proposed system relies upon schools submitting information to the exam boards indicating what grades the school thought each student was on track to achieve in each subject. Schools are expected to look at all the evidence that is available when making these decisions and must be able to justify their grading where required by the exam boards. They are also asked to rank order the students at each grade. For example; schools would look at all the students achieving a Grade 6 in a subject and then rank those students from the most secure in that grade down to the least secure. Schools are required to use a form of an internal moderation to ensure the validity of the grades and the processes used by each subject area will have to be signed off by the Head of Centre to ensure that the systems used have been fair and robust.

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Below are some of the key points that are included in today's guidance:

- **Work completed by students since the schools closed**

Any work completed at home since the schools closed should play little or no part in the final grading as the circumstances in which it has been completed, i.e. without formal supervision; with possible access to the Internet and other resources, means that the standard of work might not be a fair reflection of the student's everyday capabilities.

- **Coursework**

The work from any tasks that have been completed or is in the process of being completed can be used as evidence towards the final grade, but students must not be asked to do further work on the tasks for the same reasons given above regarding work completed since the school closure.

- **Confidentiality**

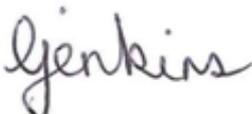
School must not, under any circumstances, share the grades submitted to the exam boards or any associated information with students, or their parents/carers or any other individuals outside the school. This is to protect the integrity of teachers' judgements, and to avoid teachers, heads of department or senior leaders being put under pressure by students and parents, to submit a grade that is not supported by the evidence.

On this last point I am aware that parents and students might have quite legitimate questions and I would not want anyone to feel that they couldn't raise these with the school. To allow this to happen in an appropriate way, that does not compromise the grading process, please could I ask that all queries relating to exam grades be directed to me ljenkins@axevalley.devon.sch.uk or to Mr Cumming kcumming@axevalley.devon.sch.uk and we will do our best to help.

I have attached a letter from Ofqual that they have written to all students and their families. Please do share this with your son / daughter.

If more information becomes available I will make sure that it is shared with you as soon as possible. In the meantime, please be assured that our commitment to your children remains as strong as it has always been and that we will continue to do all we can to support them through this final, and quite unusual, stage of their KS4 qualifications.

Yours sincerely



Laura Jenkins
Headteacher