

26 June 2020

Dear Parent & Carer

Overview of process - Awarding of GCSE Grades 2020

The 2020 examination series was cancelled at the instruction of central government. The processes for the awarding of grades were drawn up by Ofqual (the exam's regulator) and the Department for Education. Explicit instructions were provided to schools, with grades to be awarded not by schools, by the examination boards.

We wrote to you on 26 March 2020 (*GCSE exams 26-3-20.docx*) and forwarded the 3 April 2020 letter from the exam regulator (Ofqual - *GCSE grading 2020 to students.pdf*) that explained how the exam boards would award grades in summer 2020. <http://www.pensbyhighschool.org/letters--201920/59481.html>

All schools and colleges nationally were asked to send the exam board two pieces of information for each student's subjects based on what they know about their work and achievements:

- (i) Centre Assessment Grade - in the professional judgement of the subject teachers the grade they believe each student was most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned. Guidelines and instructions were provided for this process.
- (ii) For each subject: a list of students at our school who are taking the subject, grouped by grade and ordered by performance.

In producing the two pieces of information required by the exam board, staff in the school followed a rigorous, objective and evidence based process when reaching their professional judgements. This follows the guidance set out for school's by Ofqual. Please find a link below to a short video produced by Ofqual: [Ofqual - guidance for students](#)

In reaching their professional judgement, staff have considered the full range of evidence identified by Ofqual including:

- A. Results in assignments and mock examinations
- B. Non-exam assessment and coursework that has been completed
- C. Classwork and homework
- D. Each student's general progress during the course
- E. Staff responsible for each subject have discussed each student in detail in departmental cross moderation when determining the information required by the exam board
- F. Subject information has been benchmarked against previous years subject performance within the school and the school has accounted for improvements in attainment and progress in recent years
- G. Subject leaders have recorded both the process they have followed and discussion undertaken
- H. The subject based process has been signed off by two teachers in each subject as following the rubric
- I. Senior leaders in the school have quality assured the processes followed at subject level

- J. The information submitted to the examination boards has been checked to ensure that it is accurate and is what was determined at subject level by each student's teachers by multiple members of staff
- K. The information provided by the school for each exam board has been signed off by me as having been produced following the guidance set out by Ofqual

However, I need to make sure that you are clear that the school does not determine the grade, rather it is the exam board that will determine the final grade each student is awarded. It is clear that the information provided by the school will be used by Ofqual and the exam boards to standardise grades across schools and colleges. With their aim being results that are as fair as possible. They believe that they can ensure that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged when making judgements, both within the school and nationally. This means that the final grade a student may get could be different from the one the school sent to the exam board.

Students are not allowed to see the grades their school has submitted for them, because they are confidential and I would ask again that you please don't ask anyone at the school for these. Should you be dissatisfied with your result in a subject there are specified circumstances under which you can appeal. No school has had any input into this process, nor do they manage it:

- Where the school believes that it has made an error when submitting information to the exam board (N.B. all data has been thoroughly checked when entered to prevent this happening)
- If the school believes an exam board made a mistake when calculating, assigning or communicating a grade
- If a student had **evidence** of bias or discrimination in the process by the school, then they should raise this with the school. The school could pass such evidence on to the exam board who could investigate for potential malpractice.
- **However, students cannot appeal against the awarded grade determined by the exam board, the school's centre assessment grade submitted for them or their position in the rank order. Being disappointed with the grade you have been awarded is not grounds for an appeal**
- Currently, there is no published process for the school to appeal on students behalf if they believe the results in a whole subject are lower than expected. We, like you, are bound by a process determined centrally and are subject to the centre's interpretation of the process.

Details of all matters relating to the awarding of grades in 2020 can be accessed using this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/awarding-qualifications-in-summer-2020>

I know that many of you were extremely disappointed not to have had the opportunity to do your final GCSE written papers and feel you have missed out on this experience to show what you were capable of achieving. It is my hope that every student in the school is awarded the grades they deserve and that this allows them to successfully move on to their next stage of education.

I hope this clarifies the process that the school has followed and how the exam boards will determine your final GCSE grades.

Yours sincerely



Mr K Flanagan
Headteacher