**What can I do if I think my grade is wrong? How do I appeal? What happens if I appeal?**

Earlier this year, the government announced that **students will not take formal external GCSE and vocational exams this summer** and will instead be awarded grades determined by their teachers based on a range of evidence such as mock exams, coursework, in class tests etc. As a school we have taken multiple steps to ensure these grades reflect students’ performance. The teachers have followed exam board and JCQ Guidance for grading and making objective decisions to enable grades to be fair.

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by us as a holistic assessment of students’ performance in a subject. We put into place a **rigorous system to ensure fairness** in place, including moderation checks in schools of grades and all departments have **moderated externally** with teachers from a range other school locally and further afield. **The evidence surrounding these grades has also been checked and approved by the exam boards in June and July.**

**Your child has also been made aware of the evidence their teachers have used to determine grades and this information was brought home in a pack on 28th May 2021.** This process has allowed students to raise any issues, errors or circumstances relating to particular evidence and their teachers have been able to modify the evidence base responding to individual issues before grades were submitted. For more information on how grades have been awarded and the process followed, please see the Centre Policy on our website. However, if a student thinks an error has been made in their grade, **an appeals system will be in place as a safety net for exceptional circumstances**, and**to fix any genuine errors** that were not identified earlier in the process.

**Q1. What do I do if I’m not happy with my / my child’s grade?**

All students have the opportunity to appeal their grade if they meet the eligibility criteria (see below). It is important to note that an appeal may result in a grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up. So, if a student puts in an appeal and their **grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.**

**There is also the option to re-sit GCSEs in the autumn, which may be preferable to some students. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a normal year.**

**What are the grounds for appeal?**

1. You think we have made an administrative error.
2. You think we have made a procedural error: this means we haven’t properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board.
3. You think the academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable.
4. You think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
5. You think the academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable.

**Q2. What does ‘unreasonable’ mean?**

‘Unreasonable’ is a technical term in this context and means that no educational professional acting reasonably could have selected the same evidence or come up with the same grade. This means that just because other forms of evidence may have been equally valid to use, the selection of evidence is not unreasonable. Because of the flexibility of the approach this year, every school will have used different forms of evidence. It also means that the independent reviewers will not remark or grade students’ evidence. They will look as to whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

**The exam boards will not be able to consider appeals that are based solely on differences of opinion.**

**Q3. What can I do if I think there has been an error with my grade?**

Your teachers have already shared with you what evidence has being used to determine your grades and you have had an opportunity to raise any issues before grades are submitted. We have also taken account and applied reasonable adjustments and access arrangements for specific individuals.

**If you think a grade is incorrect when you receive your results, speak to the Mrs Telfer, the Exam Officer or Ms Hall, Deputy Headteacher in the first instance** and request a centre review – this is an internal review so we can check for any errors. **A Student Request Form for Centre Reviews and Appeals** is on the school website.

**If you still think your grade is incorrect after we have checked it, you can ask us to appeal to the exam board**. Please consider this carefully as you should be aware that on appeal, **grades could go up, down, or stay the same** and **the exam board’s decision will be final.**

You should **consider carefully if appealing is the right course of action for you**. An appeal will only be successful if either an error is found or the grade awarded or the selection of evidence are found to be **an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement. The exam boards will not be able to consider appeals that are based solely on differences of opinion.** If you want to improve your grade you might want to consider entering to take an external exam in the autumn exam series.

**Q.4 What is looked at in an appeal to the exam board?**

Our school’s Centre Policy has already been reviewed and accepted by the exam boards.They will therefore carry out **an independent review whether the teacher has followed the process**and whether the overall grade awarded was **a reasonable exercise of academic judgement based on the evidence or if the selection of evidence used was a reasonable exercise of academic judgement.** “Reasonable” in this instance allows for a normal variation in the academic judgement of two professionals. The teacher’s judgement will only be judged as unreasonable if it is such that no teacher acting reasonably could have reached that same judgement.

Once the review is complete, the exam board will decide a final grade for you. **If the final grade is lower than the original teacher assessed grade, it will go down. If the result is higher, it will go up.** Once the final grade has been issued after the review, it will be final.

**Q.5 Can I change my mind about appealing if I don’t like the outcome?**

No, so please think carefully before you appeal. If you request a centre review or an exam board appeal, there are a range of possible outcomes:

* Your original grade is changed, so your final grade will be different than the original grade you received. **Your grade can go up or down.**
* Your original grade is confirmed, so there is no change to your grade.

Once a finding has been made **you cannot withdraw your request for a centre review or appeal. If your grade has been lowered, you will not be able to revert back to the original grade you received on results day.**

**Q6. What are the deadlines for appeals?**

You should submit a **request for a centre review by 3rd September 2021.** Once you have received the outcome of your centre review, if you wish to request an awarding organisation appeal you should do so as soon as possible. We will submit this on your behalf. **Schools submitting requests for awarding organisation appeals on behalf of students have been issued the deadline of 17th September to do this.**

**Q7. You know my / my child’s grades. Why can’t you tell us?**

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results days. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing exam malpractice.

Although students may have been given marks or grades on single pieces of evidence, we cannot disclose the final submitted TAG.