



BEVERLEY HIGH SCHOOL



Headteacher: Ms Sharon Japp, BA, MEd, NPQH

Norwood, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 9EX
Tel: (01482) 881658

Email: office@beverleyhigh.net
Website: www.beverleyhigh.net

24th March 2021

Dear Student and Parent/Carer,

For all members of the school community, the last year has been unprecedented. The uncertainty and colossal changes to our normal schooling has created challenges and undoubtedly caused anxiety for many. For those in exam years this is even more pertinent and you have managed yourselves magnificently well. I am writing to set out your plan for the remaining time in Year 11 and the GCSE process. As you can imagine this will not be a short letter. I do apologise but I wish you to be as well informed as is possible.

As you will all be aware, the GCSE examinations will be replaced by 'Teacher Assessed Grades' (or TAGs). In reality these are centre assessed grades and are arrived at by the collaboration of specialist staff, the standards set out for each subject by Ofqual and a process of moderation throughout the school. The evidence to support these grades will be drawn from a wide range of sources which I will set out shortly.

The school deadline for the submission of grades to the exam boards is Friday 18th June. The **GCSE results day** has been brought forward to **Thursday 12th August**. Details for the collection of grades will be finalised nearer the time and depend on the success of the lifting of lockdown restrictions.

On receiving their grades, a student may raise an appeal with the school. Appeals must be made within two weeks of the results day. The school will then make checks that the process of assessment has been correctly followed and ensure that there are no clerical errors. Appeals may be progressed to the exam board who will verify whether the school procedures are deemed satisfactory.

The details of the national process and school's specific approach are described through the following:

- ASCL guidance for students and parents on summer gradings.
- A guide to timings and types of assessment for each department

The following guidance has been set out by ASCL (the Association of School and College Leaders) to help explain grading this summer:



How will grades be awarded this summer?

Grades for GCSEs 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 or college'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 students achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their 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, students' 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 students, providing they have evidence that they are securely working at that grade.

What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?

This year, teachers will only assess students on content they have been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means students will not be disadvantaged if they individually, their whole class or whole year group have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of students' performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual. Students who would usually have extra time in the exams will benefit from the same arrangements in teacher assessment.

Will grades be different between different schools and colleges?

No, the standard against which teachers will be assessing students 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 a student's study of the course, up until 28 May. This may include classwork, homework tasks, coursework, interaction with teachers in lesson, low-stakes tests and more formal assessments including materials 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's 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 assessments 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 students 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 students on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students 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 student or 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 teachers or leaders 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 the student's certificate being removed entirely if malpractice is deemed to have taken place.

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.

What should students do to improve their grades?

The best thing students can do is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and read around their subject. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.

As a school we do understand that all parents and students wish for the best grades that students can achieve. However, please note the section above relating to malpractice. We are in an unusual situation, as we were last year, in that there is the potential to intentionally or unintentionally influence grading. In fairness to staff please only try to influence them through working hard and do not be tempted to seek to gain information on the final awarded grade from staff in advance. Thank you.

Year 11 GCSE assessment at Beverley High School

Teacher Assessed Grades (TAG) will be based on a holistic view of a student's achievement. A substantial base for the evidence will be through assessments towards the end of the course and in the period after Easter. Evidence from earlier in the course will also be used if departments feel that this provides positive evidence towards the TAG. Where work has been completed earlier in the course, staff mark-books and department tracking can be used as evidence if the piece has been returned to students and is no longer available. Some courses have substantial coursework elements,



and this will be used in the evidence. Coursework does not need to be fully completed if circumstances have prevented completion but can be used to provide positive evidence.

Assessment after the Easter holiday will be a combination of blended assessments and a significantly reduced number of more formal tests. All assessments will take place in classrooms as opposed to an exam hall. Blended assessments involve developing an aspect of the course in lessons and then completing a written task or a small number of assessment questions on that topic. These are likely to be around 15- 20 minutes in duration. The more formal tests will be no longer than 40 minutes and will address a wider range of skills. Students that have extra time as part of their access arrangements will be able to complete this within the one hour of lesson time.

Blended assessments will be used throughout the full seven-week period for all subjects. Teachers will provide lessons to consolidate previous learning and a combination of low stakes testing and assessment that have been clearly signposted as key sources of evidence. The low stakes testing provides additional information to complete the picture of a student's abilities and allow teachers to further secure their grading decisions.

The longer tests might be favoured by subjects like maths in which a broad range of questions are needed to provide suitable evidence. These will be kept to a minimum and combined with blended assessments to provide evidence. The schedule of tests will follow below. Students are being given this information to allow them to prepare for the wider range of questions involved. The blended tasks will be discussed in lessons and the topic and timing of assessments will be shared during lessons with suitable notice. We aim to reduce the anxiety of an examination period and also produce sound evidence to support TAGs.

Assessment Schedule from Easter till 28th May

	<u>Test (40 min max)</u>	<u>Notable blended assessments</u>
Week 1: wb 12 th April		
Week 2: wb 19 th April	Biology, Child Dev	English Literature
Week 3: wb 26 th April	Maths, MFL	English Language, Media, Drama
Week 4: wb 3 rd May	Chemistry	PE practical
Week 5: wb 10 th May	Maths, Computing	English Language
Week 6: wb 17 th May	Physics, Music	English Literature
Week 7: wb 24 th May	PE, Further Maths, MFL	

All assessments will be completed by lunchtime on Friday 28th May. The Year 11 leavers' tutor time and celebration will take place during the afternoon. It is the intention of local schools that this will be the final day of school for Year 11 students. We are still awaiting official government guidance and we will make you aware should there need to be any changes to the above.

The PE department will hold a practical assessment morning on Thursday 6th May. The Design Technology department may run a single 30-minute assessment in some of their subjects which sits somewhere between the blended approach and a test.



Due to subject classes having lessons on different lessons and days, only the week is specified. Students will need to continue to work right through to the last day of school as blended assessment evidence will be considered for the full period.

In the circumstances that a student, or group of students have to self-isolate or for other valid reasons have significant absences we will take steps to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by the process. The holistic approach allows for staff to use professional judgement combined with the available evidence.

Please be advised that in setting out the assessment process the information gives as accurate a picture as is possible. This is subject to change if the circumstances dictate it. When the exam board materials are released an individual blended assessment may have to be slightly longer than suggested (but would still be on a specific focus). Not all the tests will necessarily be 40 minutes.

Where possible we will follow the plan and if small changes are necessary teachers will inform their classes of the details. Please bear with us if there are unavoidable changes in circumstances. We will work hard to ensure that the process is effective and manageable for all our students.

Yours sincerely

P Cork

Mr Peter Cork
Assistant Headteacher

