



**Meadowhead School**

**Academy Trust**

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**Headteacher**

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*Steve Bacon*

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CHE/SGI

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

Dear Year 13 students,

We hope that you found the information we shared with you and your families last week helpful in addressing some of the questions that you may have had relating to the award of your A level and L3 BTEC qualifications this summer.

We have given you as much information as we have at this stage, but we are still waiting for examination boards to provide support materials aimed at ensuring that standards across the country are fair and maintained for all students.

This week, we have issued you with several key documents.

- A timetable of internal examinations designed to give you the opportunity to show us what you know in your subjects.
- A timetable of revision and support sessions available to you to help you plan your time beyond 2:45pm and during the Easter period.
- Support and preparation materials to help you organise your time in the remaining weeks before the end of the year, as well as offering you advice on how to manage for mental health.

The majority of the evidence for many of your subjects will come from the internal assessments due to take place between Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> May and Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Your teachers are working hard to ensure that you have the very best opportunity to provide us with strong evidence of what you know. They are working with various examination boards to ensure that a fair and robust system is in place.

Due to the specific impact that the coronavirus has had on each school, it is not possible for all schools to use the same assessments and forms of evidence to measure student understanding.

Your teachers have reviewed the curriculum that they have taught you, removing topics that you have not been taught and looking carefully at the work that was covered through live lessons.

Your subject teachers will provide specific information relating to how you will be assessed and what content will be considered.

You will only be assessed on content or skills you have been taught during the course. During your lesson time, your teachers will be recapping and revisiting earlier taught content to support you ahead of the internal assessments.

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## **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. 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 or college results will be quality assured externally by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school's 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 to school for a check clerical or to the exam board for an appeal on the process and evidence used to arrive at an assessed grade.

## **Do teachers award the grade?**

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 people. There is no limit on the achievement of students, providing they have evidence that they are 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



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usually have extra time in the exams will benefit from the same arrangements in centre 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 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021. This may include homework tasks, trial exams, and our internal assessments. This may include evidence from before the second lockdown, as well as evidence over the next few weeks. The exam boards are producing assessment materials that will be sent to us before the end of March. Different subjects 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. Each subject area will share the assessments they are using to support this process.

### **Can students and parents make the case for why a student should get a higher grade?**

No. 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?**

No. Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students, including previously 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.

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### **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.

Please remember that we are here to guide you. We want you to be proud of your grades this year with the knowledge that you have worked hard and done your very best.

If you need our support, come and talk to us.

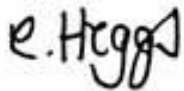
Click here for a link to our presentation to families that took place last week:

<https://mhsch.uk/assessmentsy11y13>

Click here for a link to the Y13 Internal Assessment timetable:

<https://mhsch.uk/y13assessmenttimetable>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "e. Heggs". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'e' and a stylized 'Heggs'.

Mr. C. Heggs  
Assistant Headteacher