



9th March 2021

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Dear Parents/Guardians of Year 11 & Year 13 Students

Following last week's announcements and the issuing of guidance on the awarding of grades for GCSE, Vocational qualifications and A Levels this summer, we have been working to formulate a process that will enable students the best opportunities to demonstrate the level that they are working to.

We approach this process from a standpoint of using the assessments to support us to evidence the highest quality of work that each student is capable of producing.

Whilst we are not yet in a position to discuss in detail the entire process, we wanted to write to you to make you aware of the basic principles and provisional plans that we are developing.

Our intention is to be as clear as we possibly can throughout the entire process, to ensure that a fair and transparent system is developed and implemented. The best interests of our students are at the very centre of all of our decisions. The system we are developing will provide opportunities to enable us to assess the students against national standards and submit grades to the exam boards that are the highest of which they are capable.

It is essential that the grades that we award this summer are fair and representative of each student's ability - therefore we will follow an extremely robust process. The key components of this process will be shared with you at appropriate times. We ask for your full support in us fulfilling this very important role.

What assessments will my child take?

- We are planning that each subject will select areas of the course that we know have been studied in detail during the year and that we are confident that students should have a sound understanding of.
- Each department will then **create a series of three or four assessments that will assess students' knowledge and skills in those areas.**
- It is important to understand that these are assessments and are not examinations. Our intention is to continue to gather further evidence that will enable us to award the grades that we feel reflect our students' skills and abilities.
- The assessments will take place in lessons and not in a central examination hall.
- You and our students will be given prior knowledge of what areas of the curriculum and what skills each assessment will focus on. Each assessment will have a number of lessons designated to recapping content and revising the skills to be assessed in order to ensure all students are well placed to demonstrate best understanding.

We will be issuing detailed assessment schedules and revision lists as soon as our plans have been developed and once our internal processes of standardisation and Senior Leadership approval have been given to each set of plans.



When will assessments take place?

A detailed schedule of assessments will be issued to each child indicating when their assessment lessons will take place and how the lessons prior to this will support preparation for the assessments.

In broad terms the assessments will begin in the week prior to the Easter holidays (week beginning 29th March 2021) and will continue throughout the first half term of the summer term. We anticipate that the final assessment will take place during the week beginning 24th May 2021. It is, however, important to appreciate that this is dependent on any updated Government guidance.

How will we be kept informed?

We fully appreciate that this is a very important process and it is a very important time in the lives of our Year 11 and Year 13 students. We will be writing to you with a series of communications and updates as and when we have more detail to share with you.

As part of these communications we will also be writing to you to ascertain what common questions you have. We will gather these and use these to part inform a webinar that we will host to provide as much information as we possibly can for you and your child. Details of these events will be communicated as soon as they have been agreed; we are hoping that this will take place during the week beginning 29th March 2021.

The grades students achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is measured against a nationally-defined standard. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual.

It has been a delight to have welcomed back our students today and to see them back in the classroom with their peers and their teachers.

We have also included with this letter some answers to some questions we know that you and our students will have.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Mr Warwood
Associate Headteacher

FAQ

Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

Once each department's system has been designed, quality assured and agreed by SLT, we will explain the range of evidence we are using to inform the teacher's judgement with students.

However, we will not be allowed to disclose the final submitted grade we give to the exam board.

What happens next?

The most important thing all students can do is to continue to do their best, as they have done throughout this period of remote learning; to put skills into practice, revise key knowledge and content and act on feedback from their teachers. By working together all our students will be given the opportunity to achieve their potential and go on to future success.

How will my child's grade be formulated?

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 based on a holistic judgement of each child using a range of evidence which will be quality assured. 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. Arden's results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our 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**. Information about this will be advised after the exam grades are awarded in the summer.

When will the exam results be issued?

The advertised dates for the exam results are:

- A Levels - Tuesday 10th August 2021
- GCSEs - Thursday 12th August 2021
- Vocational/BTECs - we anticipate that these will also be issued on the same dates as above.

If there are any changes to these dates, we will share this information with you.

When can my child enrol for Arden Sixth Form?

We expect to enrol for our Sixth Form immediately after the results are issued on 12th August; we will confirm this and the arrangements in future correspondence.