



# West Park

*'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'*

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Dear parent/carers,

Below is information regarding this year's GCSE/BTEC grades and appeals process. The letter is arranged in a FAQ format to hopefully make the information more user-friendly.

## **How were my / my child's grades arrived at this year?**

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs – at West Park we have referred to the TAGs as Centre Assessed Grades[CAGs]). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by us as a holistic assessment of students' performances in their subjects, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance.

These grades were then approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks.

In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may have been reviewed by the exam board, who may have asked us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submitted were done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades have been changed as a result of an algorithm.

## **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 resit GCSEs in the autumn, which may be preferable for 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?**

There are four main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- You think we have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- You think we have made a **procedural error**: this means we haven't properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board.

- You think the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: you think the evidence used to grade you was not reasonable.
- You think the **academic judgement on the grade you were given was unreasonable**.

### **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 and college will have used different forms of evidence.

It also means that the independent reviewers will **not** remark or grade students' evidence. Instead, they will look to see whether any teacher acting reasonably could have arrived at the same grade.

### **What will be the outcome of an appeal?**

At either stage of the appeals process (see 'What are the two stages of an appeal?' below), a student's grade may go up, stay the same, or go down. When placing an appeal the student will have to sign a declaration saying that they accept the fact their grade may go down and they may get a lower grade than their original TAG.

### **What's a priority appeal?**

Priority appeals will be handled more quickly than other appeals, where possible before UCAS's advisory deadline of 8 September.

Priority appeals are only open to **A level students starting university this autumn, who have missed out on the conditions of their firm or insurance offer**.

If you decided not to confirm a firm conditional offer and to go through clearing instead, JCQ cannot offer you a priority appeal.

JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.

When making a priority appeal, students will have to include their UCAS number so it can be confirmed that it is a genuine priority appeal.

### **What should I do before appealing?**

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ website by results day.

We may not be able to offer as much advice and guidance on the likely success of an appeal this summer as we would in normal years, as we have already moderated and quality assured all the grades ourselves.

### **What are the two stages of an appeal?**

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **centre review**. At this stage, we will check for any administrative errors, and check that our policies and procedures were followed correctly. Our policy has already been approved by the exam boards, so we are only ensuring that we followed this properly.

The outcome of the centre review will be communicated to students when made.

At the centre review stage, if we find that a grade should go up or down, we will ask the exam board to change it. They will then consider this request.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. They must fill in an appeals form, which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – it must come from us.

The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

### **How do I make an appeal?**

Following results day, students should fill in our online form (this will be posted on the school's website) requesting an appeal. The online form needs to be completed as soon as possible and no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021. The centre review will then take place and students informed regarding the outcome. At the conclusion of the centre review, if the student would like to pursue the appeal with the awarding organisation, a member of the school's Leadership Group will talk through the process with them and send the Stage 2 appeal form. The latter form will need to be completed and returned to the school by 10<sup>th</sup> September to ensure it is processed and with the respective awarding organisation by 17<sup>th</sup> September.

### **What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?**

Non-priority appeals are any A levels, GCSEs or vocational qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending.

The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3<sup>rd</sup> September; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10<sup>th</sup> September.

Appeals received after these dates may still be considered.

### **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 day. 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.

During the external quality assurance process taking place in June or July, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

I hope that the above covers all of your questions regarding Year 11 grading and appeals. There is also a link to our Centre Policy on the school's website.

Best regards,



**Scott McGregor**



**Neil Allsop**