



MIDDLEWICH HIGH SCHOOL

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What Matters and Whatever it Takes

Dearest Yr11,

Today information regarding GCSE qualifications has been released by the DfE. The link to this can be found at the bottom of the page and I have circulated it on our social media. There is still much to understand about the way in which grades will be awarded, in this letter I want outline to you the steps the school are taking to support your GCSE award. I also need to outline to you some sensible advice that I think will place you in the best possible position moving forward.

DfE Position & Process:

All examinations are cancelled for the summer 2020 exam series

Grades will be awarded through a process of teacher assessment and a range of external data

Schools will be challenged on the grades they submit, therefore it is essential that the grades we provide are an honest and accurate view of student achievement. The cohort distribution of grades across the grade range will not be significantly different to previous years. In other words this is not a 'hall-pass' for schools to award every student a Grade 4 or a Grade 9.

Prior attainment may be taken into account, target grades may be taken into account, teacher assessments & national cohort comparisons will inform the graded outcome.

Teacher assessments will be based on a range of data and not one single test/piece of work. Mock exam data, teacher assessments, completed coursework will all inform the grade awarded.

BTECS/Coursework – There is no requirement for you to continue submitting any coursework. We have the evidence we need to support the award of a grade. Also coursework etc has to be tightly controlled to meet the exams conditions so we could not now accept work that has not been completed in a supervised environment. If we do so we could risk challenge to grading. We still await further information on vocational courses but we believe it will be managed in the same way as GCSEs.

Grades will *not be shared* with students until they are officially released. Please do not ask the school to tell you what grades have been awarded. They will go through a rigorous checking process and are subject to review. As per all GCSE results the school is not allowed to share any information until the formal release date (yet to be confirmed). We would also ask you not to contact the school to try and persuade us regarding the award of a specific grade or to make any case around special circumstances. I need our time to be focused on ensuring we grade accurately and I need your trust in our professionalism to get this right for you. The bottom line is we know you well, we have

worked closely with you for some time, we will award grades with integrity, professionalism and based on solid evidence.

Appeals – there will be a process whereby schools may have a discussion with the DfE/Ofqual to check the integrity and accuracy of initial grading. This may lead to some grade alterations. Once results have been published students will be able to appeal the decision. However, the appeals process is *likely* to be that you have the opportunity to take the exam for real (Autumn & summer 2021). As yet I am not clear when this would happen, or if this will apply to all qualifications/just a few. In the guidance it appears that the grade you achieve in these exams should you choose to sit them will be the grade that stands. These details will become clearer over time and we will advise you accordingly.

Summer 2021 examinations - Ofqual have stated that all students will be able to sit their full set of GCSEs in the summer of 2021. Once again I do not know how this will work, we await further information.

Advice for Students:

Firstly let us do our job as professionals, we will do everything we can to make sure your grade accurately reflects your capability. Once grades are released nationally (dates TBC) we will support you in your transition to post-16 provision. We will also advise you regarding any appeal queries you may have.

The appeals process is going to be based on you taking the exam for real, therefore, I suggest that you keep up to date with GCSE knowledge, exam practice questions between now and July. Teachers will continue to set relevant work, please engage with this. Knowledge is power – put yourself in the strongest position should you need to challenge an awarded grade/prepare well for post-16.

Please be assured we are working very closely with post-16 providers to ensure that our students are cared for throughout the transition process. Whilst I am not yet clear how we would run a ‘results day’ (social distancing needs to be considered) I do know our commitment to you is unchanged. As with any GCSE cohort we will ensure that you are given the proper advice and support you need to make a successful transition to your post-16 destination.

It is *likely*, but *not* certain, that post-16 providers *may* have entry tests or may well use the initial weeks as a probation period (pretty much standard practice now in any case) to see if you meet the required standards. This is why it is important for you to consider your post-16 qualifications, focus on the GCSE knowledge for these subjects as this is the best preparation for A Level/Level 3. I keep saying it – ‘knowledge is power’ – get ahead of the game by engaging in the GCSE learning relevant to your *future* qualifications. I do hope that this helps you to understand things a little better, please email us if you have queries. As more information comes through from the DfE/Ofqual we will share it with you. If you have any questions email head@middlewichhigh.cheshire.sch.uk

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877842/Summer_20_20_grades_for_GCSE_AS_A_level_EPQ_AEA_in_maths_-_guidance_for_teachers_students_parents.pdf

Best wishes,

Heidi Thurland
Headteacher
Excellence in Learning – Achievement for All