



Letter No: 119/2021

22nd April 2021

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Dear Students, Parents and Carers

I write to you with a further update to the grading process for the awarding of GCSE, A Level and Vocational qualifications this year.

Internal Assessments

Students have approached Internal Assessment 1 impressively; they have been prepared, punctual and tried their best. We are now at the end of the second week of this assessment period which is due to conclude tomorrow, Friday 23rd April.

By tomorrow, we will be emailing all students and families revision lists for Internal Assessment 2. We will also be emailing students their timetables for the assessment period which is due to take place from Monday 17th May for two weeks. Largely, these assessments will be approximately 1 hour for GCSE/Vocational qualifications and 1 hour 30 mins for A level / Vocational qualifications but there may be some small subject differences. As a reminder to all students, attendance at internal assessments is essential.

In lessons for three weeks between 26th April and 17th May, teachers will be supporting students to revise for their new topics in preparation for the final assessments. As you will know, exam boards are publishing assessment materials to their websites, comprised of past paper questions, and students should use these also to help them with their revision.

For information, teachers will not be sharing marks or grades with students from Internal Assessments. Marking of internal assessments is being done 'blind' and is going through a rigorous moderation process over a number of weeks. However, when marking assessments, where there are lessons to learn for Internal Assessment 2, teachers will be feeding these back to students in lessons to give them every opportunity to succeed.

Assessment evidence

As set out in my previous letter, and also during our virtual parents information evening about the awarding of grades this year, we will be drawing on a range of assessment evidence to decide on grades for students this year.



The range of evidence we will be using for each qualification is available for you to view via the hyperlinks below. For most qualifications, the evidence falls into the following categories:

- Trial exam (Year 11) or Threshold exam (Year 13)
- 'Other' assessment evidence from the course which includes end of topic assessments or other substantive pieces of work
- Internal Assessment 1
- Internal Assessment 2
- Non Examined Assessment (NEA) which is the coursework element of a qualification where relevant.

For some qualifications, the range of evidence will vary. For example, for Art, Photography and Textiles qualifications, evidence will be based solely on the student's portfolio. In relation to vocational qualifications such as BTECs, we will be drawing on a range of evidence but this has been organised per unit of the qualification.

Link to GCSE and Vocational Qualification Assessment Evidence:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kngiJZ7fV5kazz3Q64u2af6bjyjdjaQu/view?usp=sharing>

Link to A level and Vocational Qualification Assessment Evidence:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sd4ECLc5NHDDPXpoCVuSeVzfwOirgGHa/view?usp=sharing>

Our Directors of Learning have carefully considered the selection of assessment evidence and have done so in line with national guidance, school and exam board Quality Assurance processes. ***We are obliged to inform students and parents/carers that the range of assessment evidence used to determine a grade is not negotiable.***

Regarding the relative weighting of evidence for each qualification, it is unlikely that the sources of evidence will carry an equal weight. As per national guidance, Directors of Learning will be considering the confidence they have in each piece of assessment evidence. Directors of Learning and teachers will be making a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence to arrive at a grade that is both fair and valid. The decision about a student's grade for each qualification will be determined by the professional judgement of the Directors of Learning and teachers in each subject and it will be subject to school and exam board Quality Assurance processes.

Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

As you will know, we have a robust system for assessing and ensuring access arrangements are catered for at Sandringham. In any formal assessment period such as Trial Exams and Internal Assessments, these are catered for. We are also confident that these have been provided for in the range of assessment evidence being included in the awarding of final grades.

In a normal year, where formal examinations take place, there is a national system of Special Consideration. This accounts for when a student experiences a temporary illness, injury or significant event outside of their control at the time of the assessment which has a material impact on their ability to take the assessment. The threshold for what counts as special consideration is high and you can read more detail in the JCQ document here (pages 6-7): <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-guide-to-the-spec-con-process-202021-Website-version.pdf> Should any student meet these criteria during Internal Assessment 1 and 2, please contact the school for the attention of the Exams Office.

For assessments **already** carried out, if any student is concerned that Access Arrangements were agreed but not catered for, or where the school was unaware of a circumstance that met the criteria for Special Consideration, they should submit their concerns here via the Google Form below. This must be done **no later than Friday 30th April 2021**: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfX2-p-rfQH0qcbRVfuQltYMj0pQ8eTtBaAont7uEcwyCs0tA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Key dates and information

Please find below a reminder about forthcoming key dates in relation to this process:

- Monday 17th May – Internal Assessment 2 period begins
- Thursday 27th May – Final Day for Year 13
- Friday 28th May – Final Day for Year 11
- Friday 18th June – Final deadline for grades submitted to exam boards.
Students should be available to be contacted or come into school up to this date.
- Tuesday 10th August – A Level and Vocational Results Day
- Thursday 12th August – GCSE and Vocational Results Day

Should you wish to read more about the process for awarding grades this year, the Joint Council for Qualifications has put together a paper which you can access here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/JCQ-Guidance-for-Students-and-Parents-on-Summer-2021.pdf>

Finally, I want to wish all students the very best wishes for the completion of their Internal Assessments; I know they have all been working very hard. I also wish to extend my thanks to teachers and parents/carers who have been supporting our students so well in their preparation.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Gray
Headteacher