

July 2021

RE: Year 11 GCSE Results 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

I would like to congratulate all of our Year 11 cohort on their hard work, diligence and patience over the last academic year and particularly in their preparation for the final grading of their qualifications. I am pleased to inform you that these grades have now been submitted and approved by the examination boards through their quality assurance checks.

In line with all schools nationally, students will receive their grades on Thursday 12th August by attending our Results Day at school. Your child should attend school on this day to collect their results and details are below. We cannot release any grades before this date.

Results Day

In view of the current circumstances, it is not possible to run results day as we would normally. Therefore, in order to maintain social distancing, we have allocated specific times to attend, in groups alphabetically by surname. Please can you attend school at the following times when you will receive your results:

Surname beginning	A-E	9.00 am - 9.45 am
Surname beginning	F-M	10.00 am - 10.45 am
Surname beginning	N-Z	11.00 am - 11.45 am

If you are unable to collect your results on 12th August, it is possible to receive them by email. The results can only be sent to a student's personal email address and this must be requested, in advance, by email to the Exams Officer, Mrs Fram at gfram@darwenvale.com. You can also request for them to be posted out to you. Please note that we are not able to give results over the telephone.

Obviously, depending on Government guidance surrounding COVID restrictions, these arrangements may be subject to change. Please continue to check the school website for updates until 12 August.

We understand that our students may have a number of questions about the results and next steps. The next few pages of this letter explain the key information you need around how grades have been achieved and what to do if you wish to appeal a grade. There are very strict guideline and deadlines set out by the Joint Council for Qualification (JCQ) for this summer's results and appeals so please read these thoroughly and contact the school ahead of the results if you have any further questions.

2021 Results and Appeals – Guidance for Students and Families

1. How were my / my child's grades arrived at this year?

Grades this summer were based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were submitted to the exam boards by the school as a holistic assessment of students' performance in a subject, using a range of evidence and 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.

2. What specific subject evidence was used to determine my/ my child's grade?

In line with the guidance from the Examining Boards and JCQ each subject grade was determined using a number of different pieces of evidence that assessed students across a range of skills in that qualification. This could include:

- Summer assessment outcomes
- NEA components (coursework)
- Mock exam grades
- Other pieces of work agreed at subject level which match exam board criteria

It is important to note that these pieces of evidence were considered holistically not individually. This means that getting a very high or very low grade on one particular piece of evidence does not mean that is the final outcome, instead teachers consider the overall skills demonstrated across all the evidence together.

3. 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.

There are five 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. An example of this would be where you've been told you should have received extra time for assessments but this wasn't given in a certain subject.
- 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**.

'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.

It is very 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 to some students instead of an appeal. The design, content and assessment of these papers will be the same as in a normal year.

If you decide you wish to resit please contact the Exams Officer, Mrs G Fram by **17 September 2021**.

4. 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 a new 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.

5. What will be the outcome of an appeal?

At any stage the appeals process a student's grade may go up, stay the stay, 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.

6. What should I do before appealing?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the Darwen Vale High School 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.

7. I want to make an appeal – what I need to do?

Following results day, students should contact the school by **3rd September** by email to exams@darwenvale.com to request an appeals form. This must then be completed and returned to the school either in person or by email to exams@darwenvale.com by **10th September**.

8. 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 days. 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 until results day. During the external quality assurance process taking place before August, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

9. Who do I contact at school if I have any further questions?

If you have any further questions we encourage you to contact the Exams Officer by email to exams@darwenvale.com before the end of term whilst school is still open. During the summer holidays you may also contact by email to exams@darwenvale.com but you may not receive a response until results day as the school is closed during this time.

We look forward to meeting with your child and their fellow students on result day to celebrate their individual and collective success.

Yours sincerely

R Cull
Vice Principal