

Little Heath School

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Headteacher
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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Allocation of GCSE Grades

We hope your son/daughter is enjoying a well-earned break.

Now we have received the final Ofqual guidance for appeals in regards to GCSE, GCE and vocational qualifications, we can confirm the process, along with some other key reminders.

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

Evidence

Each student has been made aware of the evidence that departments have used to make a holistic judgement on the Teacher Assessed Grade (TAG). This was discussed with students during their lessons. There is further information on this in our [Centre Policy](#) which can also be found on our website.

Results Day

Results will be available for your son/daughter to collect from the Sixth Form Centre on Thursday 12th August 2021 from 9.00am.

If they are unable to attend and require them to be emailed or would like to nominate a person to collect them on their behalf, your son/daughter will need to email exams@littleheath.org.uk. Emailed results will be sent on Thursday but we cannot give you a time this will happen. All uncollected results will be posted at the end of the day.

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. If a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark. 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.

There is also the option to re-sit GCSEs, A levels and some AS levels in the autumn, which may be preferable to 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 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**.

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. Because of the flexibility of the approach this year, every school and college will have used different forms of evidence.

It also means 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 should I do on results day if I am not happy with my child's grades?

First, don't panic.

Speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will be able to answer any questions and talk to you about your next steps.

Students may wish to re-sit in the autumn exams to try to improve their grade or you may decide to appeal their current grade.

If you decide to appeal their grade, it is important to note that an appeal may result in a grade being lowered, staying the same, or going up. If a student puts in an appeal and their grade is lowered, they will receive the lower mark.

How do I make an appeal?

For all types of review, candidates must complete the student request form that will be available on our website from Thursday 12th August 2021 and email it to exams@littleheath.org.uk.

Please remember a form sent to any other email address may not be received and deadlines may be missed. Students must give their consent for Stage 1 reviews, without consent we are unable to proceed with the review.

What are the two stages of an appeal?

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must first go through a **Centre Review**:

Stage 1 – 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.

While Ofqual states that only A-level reviews and appeals are a priority for August, we are happy to complete Stage 1 Centre Reviews for GCSE grades. Any requests received after August will be dealt with from 3rd September 2021.

Following the outcome of a Centre Review, if students still feel they have grounds to appeal, they may choose to pursue an appeal to the appropriate awarding body.

Stage 2 – Appeals to the Awarding Bodies (exam boards)

Students must fill in the form on our website, 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.

During a Stage 2 appeal, an independent reviewer will not review any marking of work and they will not consider whether they would have given an alternative grade or whether an alternative grade could also have reasonably been given. The independent reviewer will only conclude there has been an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement if the TAG was clearly wrong-i.e. there was no basis upon which the grade could properly have been given.

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

What is a Priority Appeal?

A Priority Appeal should only be applied for if a place at University is dependent upon the outcome for which we need your son/daughter's UCAS personal ID on the form.

JCQ cannot offer priority appeals for GCSE students, unfortunately.

What are key dates for the appeals process?

- Results for GCSEs will be available from 9.00am on Thursday 12th August 2021.
- The deadline for requesting a GCSE Stage 1 Centre Review during the summer is from results day until 3rd September 2021.
- The deadline for requesting a GCSE Stage 2 Appeal to Awarding Body is **2pm Wednesday 15th September 2021** so we are able to submit your appeal to the awarding bodies on your behalf by Friday 17th September 2021. **We will not be able to accept Stage 2 appeal requests after these dates.**

To proceed with an appeal to awarding bodies, students must give their consent in writing. Students should be aware that during the Stage 2 process, grades can go up, stay the same or go down.

At both stages of the appeals process, there may be the need for specialist, expert knowledge (e.g. subject teachers, SEND knowledge). This may not be possible in August. In such cases, we may have to wait until the start of term, but priority appeals will still be treated as a priority.

Please note that a student who submits a request for Stage 1 Review or a Stage 2 Appeal but then changes their mind, can withdraw their review/appeal as long as no finding has been made.

Finally, we hope you have a lovely summer. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely