



Nether Stowe School

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Awarding of A Level and GCSE Grades 2021

Dear member of Year 11 or Year 13, parents and carers,

I am sure you may already be familiar with some of the information provided by the government in relation to the GCSE and A Level grades, which will be awarded based on teacher assessment.

We appreciate pupils – and indeed parents - may be feeling anxious about exactly how the grades will be awarded. Below, I have provided some initial information with regards to the process at Nether Stowe and, importantly, how pupils will be carefully supported through this period.

What will happen when pupils return? March 8th to the Easter break.

As you will have seen from the covid testing schedule information distributed earlier this week, a significant portion of time in the initial return to school will be taken up by the demanding logistics of covid testing as set out in the government guidance.

Normal lessons will continue through this period, but, to reassure you, we won't be undertaking any significant assessment of pupils. The focus for Year 11 and Year 13 will be to complete any essential work and to begin the process of supporting pupils, consolidation, revision and review.

How will we arrive at grades?

As outlined in the government guidance, teachers can use a range of evidence to make a judgement of the grade a pupil is performing at. It is important to emphasise that students will only be assessed on what they have been taught, ensuring sufficient coverage of the curriculum to enable progression.

When determining the grade, teacher assessment will reflect the standard at which the student is performing now, not their potential.

Work done at home can be included as evidence to support a teacher's judgement if it cannot be produced in the school environment because of the pandemic, and where teachers are confident that it is a student's own work.

Other evidence that may be used includes:

- student work produced in response to assessment materials provided by the exam board, including groups of questions, past papers or similar materials such as practice or sample papers
- non-exam assessment (NEA) work (often referred to as coursework), even if this has not been fully completed
- student work produced in centre-devised tasks that reflect the specification, that follow the same format as exam board materials and have been marked in a way that reflects exam board mark schemes. This can include:
- substantial class or homework (including those that took place during remote learning)
- internal tests taken by pupils
- mock exams taken over the course of study
- records of a student's capability and performance over the course of study in performance-based subjects such as music, drama and PE

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- records of each student’s progress and performance over the course of study

We will provide you with a detailed overview of the assessment evidence base used in each qualification to make clear what informs the pupil grade in each subject.

Will there be any further opportunities for assessment?

We will provide two additional periods of assessment opportunities between Easter and May Half Term:

Assessment Window 1	From 19 th April (for approx. two weeks)
Assessment Window 2	From 17 th May (for approx. two weeks) In this assessment window, all subjects (with the exception of Art) will use the exam board assessment materials, which are yet to be released. The assessments will be also completed anonymously to support internal quality assurance. These assessments are not mock exams and will be completed in the classroom setting.

The assessments completed during this period will be used to provide further and additional assessment information: they will not carry a more significant weighting or be considered disproportionately to assessments already completed. They will only assess what has already been taught and will complement the overall assessment profile for a pupil.

What can I do to improve my grade?

It might be easy to think it is too late to make a difference. It is not.

Importantly, you still have plenty of time to work hard, attend lessons and put in all of the necessary work to help make a difference. You have worked really hard over all of your time in school, and we will make sure you have plenty of additional support to help you get through these important weeks.

What quality assurance measures will be in place?

To ensure fairness, all schools, nationally, will follow the same guidance. Furthermore, all schools are subject to the same external quality assurance processes by the exam board.

The assessment judgements made by teachers will always be evidence based and we will utilise very robust quality assurance standardisation and moderation processes, both internally and externally, throughout.

What other protections are in place for pupils?

As well as the substantial and robust quality assurances processes, pupils can appeal to the school to make sure an error was not made.

Pupils could then, subsequently, appeal to the exam board to review the evidence base the school and subject used. It is important to note that, under the appeals process, grades could go down as well as up.

Results Days

Students will receive their results for **A Levels on the 10th August and GCSEs on the 12th August.**

Following the release of results, there will be a window for students who believe their grade is wrong to raise an appeal.

Exam boards will support schools and colleges in prioritising appeals where their outcome will determine a student’s ability to progress to their next stage of education or training.

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We know this has been a highly challenging and anxious time for pupils at a very important stage of their education. It is still an unfolding picture and, while we wait for further information from the exam boards, we don't yet have all of the answers.

Nevertheless, our priority, as always, is to make sure our pupils are fully supported throughout this time and we are determined to make sure they are able to successfully progress to the next stage of education, training or work.

Best regards,

Mr G Langston-Jones
Headteacher

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