



11th June 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Summer grading June 2021

On Monday 7th June, our teachers, in subject teams, reviewed the evidence from each student across all qualifications to make decisions about what grade to award. Using how students performed in the assessments (with any extenuating circumstances and access arrangements accounted for) a holistic judgement was made. Every grade that we submit to the examination board will have been discussed, checked and confirmed by a group of teaching professionals and as such is the grade, we as a centre, judge to be correct.

Every student's grade in every subject was agreed through discussion between at least two professionals: the class teacher and a subject specialist and/or a subject/senior leader. In these professional conversations the full range of evidence was weighed up to reach a professional judgement about the standard achieved. Every grade was then signed off by the subject leader.

Further high level data checks will be undertaken by subject and pastoral leaders, Mrs McCullagh (as Head of Centre) and our Trust secondary executive lead, Sam Williamson. There is no limit on what students can achieve, no algorithm to tether results to previous years – where the evidence shows students have reached a standard they will be awarded this grade irrespective of how many other students achieved that grade this (or in previous) years.

As a school we feel the weight of responsibility for ensuring that every student's grade in every subject is fair and evidence based.

How has my child been graded this year?

Grades for GCSEs, A-levels, and most other qualifications will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards, internal quality assurance, and external quality assurance by the exam boards.

In our school, we have used a range of evidence to reach a holistic judgement for each student. This includes formal assessments sat under exam conditions, a selection of class and homework and non-exam assessment (coursework) and practical performance in some subjects. You can read our Centre Policy, which has been approved by the exam boards [here](#). This details the approach we have taken as a school or college.

Can we know the grade submitted?

No, we are legally obliged not to let students or parents/carers know their submitted grade before results day. In some subjects, students may receive grades or marks for certain assessments that may count towards their grades; but this is at the department's discretion. Students do not have an automatic right to know their grades or marks in a subject's assessment, just because they've been told marks in another assessment.

The assessments at CGS are different from other schools. How is this fair?

Schools have been given a lot of flexibility in how they decide a holistic teacher assessed grade this summer. This means that it's likely the assessments will look different in different schools, even ones in the same area. Because students should only be assessed on what they have been taught, to account for variations in lost learning due to the pandemic, the range of evidence will differ between schools, and even between subjects and in extenuating circumstances between students within our school.

Our approach has been approved by the exam boards; but many different approaches have also been approved. This does not mean one approach is better than the other.

I'm worried that my child may not be judged fairly

All of staff have undergone objectivity and bias training. This is detailed in our Centre Policy, which has been approved by the exam boards. You can see the training that was provided [here](#).

All of the grades will be signed off by two members of staff, including the head of department. All grades will be signed off by the head of centre.

We will also have to send a sample of work into the exam boards, ensuring that grades are fair and accurate. If you have a concern about bias please contact Ms Cooper kate.cooper@colstonsgirls.org urgently.

My child needs a particular grade for university / college; what can I do to make sure they get it?

It is important that neither students nor the parents or carers put undue pressure on classroom teachers or heads of department to submit a certain grade before 18 June. If a member of staff feels that pressure is being applied, we will first raise this with you directly.

If the pressure continues, we have been instructed to report this (whether from parents or students) to the exam boards as potential malpractice.

What is exam malpractice?

Exam malpractice this year includes students fabricating evidence (e.g. claiming plagiarised work is their own), they or their parents placing undue pressure on teachers to submit a certain grade, as well as teachers fabricating evidence.

If malpractice is proven, the exam boards may decide to withhold the qualification altogether.

Our approach to authenticating evidence is set out in our Centre Policy.

How can I appeal?

If your child is unhappy with their grade this summer, they will have the opportunity to resit all GCSEs and A-levels in the autumn. Students should contact our examinations officer cgs-examofficer@colstonsgirls.org about entering the autumn series.

There is also the option to appeal a grade on the following grounds:

- Administrative error – you think we have submitted the wrong grade for you
- Procedural error- you think we did not follow our process correctly
- Error of academic judgement – you do not think the grade submitted reflects a reasonable judgement on either the evidence that was used, or the grade arrived at.

All appeals will first be processed as a centre review. Following the outcome of centre review, students can choose to take forward an appeal to the exam board(s), which we will do on their behalf. Details of how to request a centre review will be sent to all students and their parents/carers before results days and placed on our website. The JCQ on guidance on appeals has been delayed and we are expecting this to be published in June.

Please note that at any stage of the appeals process a student's grade(s) could go up or down. If the appeal process decides that the submitted grade was too high, students will **not** be able to keep the higher grade. We will require students to sign a declaration saying that understand this before they submit an appeal.

My child has work at a higher grade than the work used as evidence. Can they appeal?

Students have already been told what evidence is being used. Just having a higher-graded work is not, in itself, grounds for appeal.

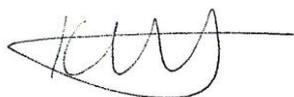
When it comes to appeals, exam boards will be considering whether any teacher acting reasonably could have used the same evidence and reached the same judgement. This is different to whether other alternatives would have been equally as valid.

If students have a genuine concern about the evidence being used, they should raise this with the school or college before 18 June, so that teachers can consider it.

Over the next two weeks we will complete our high level data checks and then submit the grades to the examinations boards ahead of their 18th June deadline. Our amazing students have done all that they can to showcase their achievements. They can now use the summer to look forward to their next stage in education.

We will write to all students and parents/carers with full details of both Results Days (A Level Tuesday 10th August and GCSE Thursday 12 August 2021) in due course as well as the Appeals Process.

Kind regards,



Mrs K McCullagh
Principal