



22 March 2021

Dear parent/carers,

Re. Year 11 assessment arrangements 2021

We are writing to outline the assessment arrangements for year 11 students over the next term as they move towards the end of their KS4 education.

Firstly, thank you for your ongoing support. It has been wonderful to welcome your children back into school this week; we are aware this is an anxious time for students and parents in year 11, and will do everything we can to make the next few weeks as smooth as possible.

As you will be aware, the government require schools to provide centre assessed grades for students based on a variety of pieces of evidence. The required evidence varies from subject to subject, but can include controlled assessment/NEAs, mock examinations, end of year assessments and in class assessments. We are still waiting for some bits of guidance from the examinations boards, and have been told to expect these by Easter, so please expect further information then.

How will my Child's grades be awarded this summer?

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.

The national process defined by the Department for Education is as follows:

1. Teachers will assess students against a national standard, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will look at a variety of pieces of evidence for each student, and will submit grades which will be quality assured by the school. The school quality assurance process will be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. The school grades will be moderated by other members of our multi-academy trust then will be quality assured externally by the exam boards which will include random sampling of our school's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, then the exam boards will award students their final grades.
5. If students do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to appeal.

What evidence will be used to generate my child's centre assessed grades:

The exam board guidance has asked schools to collate a portfolio of evidence for each student using the following conditions:

- The evidence should be representative of the majority of the course; although exam boards have agreed some topics can be left out to accommodate the



parts of the course students have not covered. Each department will contact students telling them which parts this is. (NB. We are still awaiting some information from the examination boards so you may not get the full picture until just before Easter).

- Teachers must be confident all evidence used is the students own work. (NB. Please be aware, this means work done at home/with private tutors/during lockdown cannot be used – the government guidance has explicitly banned it).
- Any students entitled to access arrangements (eg. extra time) must have been offered them when the pieces of work used were completed.

At Finham park school we will use a variety of pieces of evidence from across the student's study of the course, up until May half-term. Different departments may use different sources of evidence – it is about a performance across a range of pieces. Some of the types of evidence we will be using are as follows:

1. End of year assessments

We will be running an assessment window for year 11 from Monday 19th to Friday 30th April. This will involve formal assessments held in examination venues, in nearly every subject. **Please understand this will only provide part of the evidence used to produce grades.**

We recommend students prepare carefully for these assessments, as they have much to gain from demonstrating their ability at this point. We will spend time in lessons and mentor periods preparing students for these assessments, both through revision lessons and study skills sessions.

In some subjects, students will not have completed the whole course due to time missed. In these subjects, some aspects of the content will be omitted from the end of year assessments. Your child can find out more details from their teacher.

2. In class assessments

In addition to formal end of year assessments, some subjects will hold in class assessments to supplement the evidence they have. This will provide students with the opportunity to make improvements where appropriate.

Please be aware the government guidance insists that any assessments sat by an individual must be made available to all students. We are unable to provide individuals with additional opportunities to be assessed beyond those either scheduled by the school in the assessment window or planned by departments.

3. Controlled assessment/NEAs

In relevant subjects, students will continue with their NEAs, which will provide further evidence for centre assessed grading. This will be done in class under the guidance of your child's teacher.



4. Mock examinations

In some subjects, where they fit the examination board criteria, the mock examinations could be used as part of the evidence used.

NB. These pieces of evidence will not each make up a certain percentage of the grade. Rather, the grade will reflect the overall picture, taking into account each of them.

So, do teachers award the grade?

No. The grade students achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external quality assurance before the final grade is awarded by the exam board as usual.

Why is my child being assessed earlier than in other years?

The examination boards have given the school earlier deadlines meaning it is impossible to assess them any later, and have time for marking, grading and internal moderation before they need to be submitted.

Does this mean grades are decided by an algorithm?

No, unlike last year, students' grades will not be changed by a formula. The internal and external quality assurance measures will all be done by humans, not an algorithm. There is no limit on the achievement of students, providing they have evidence that they are working at that grade.

What about loss of learning/impact of Covid?

This year, teachers will only assess students on content they have been taught – because of the disruption to their learning. This means students will not be disadvantaged if they individually, their whole class, or whole year group have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have.

Will grades vary between different schools and colleges?

No. The standard against which teachers will be assessing students is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

Can parents make the case for a higher grade?

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess students on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence they are committing exam malpractice.



Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students including marked pieces of work.

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

What should students do to improve their grades?

The best thing students can do is continue to attend classes, learning, act on feedback from their teachers, revise, and prepare carefully for assessments. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.

When will students finish in the summer?

The official leaving date for students in year 11 and year 13 has not yet been confirmed by the Department for Education. We will inform students and parents as soon as we know.

What will you be told?

Students will receive a letter in May outlining their performance in the end of year assessments/NEAs/in class assessments/other evidence which were used to determine their centre assessed grade.

Students will find out their final centre assessed grades on results day (12th August 2021). More information about this to follow.

Please be reassured that we will support students to get the best grades possible to them whilst working within the examination board's guidance.

We will be in touch with more information as we have it. If you have any questions please contact s.green@finhampark.co.uk.

Best wishes

Finham Park school