

Dear Parent / Carer

I am writing to update you on the grading process for GCSEs and A Levels this summer. I am also writing to outline expectations regarding the forthcoming Year 11 and Year 13 Parents' Evenings. The grading information has been shared with students on their return to school.

Please note that the Examination Boards will not be releasing all the relevant grading guidance until the end of March so this is an unfolding picture towards which we will keep parents / carers and students informed as further information is released.

Parents' Evenings - key expectations

Year 13 have their Parents' Evening on Thursday, March 11th and Year 11 on Thursday, March 25th. These evenings fall at an ideal time prior to formal school based assessments which will be held in each subject during Term 5 (please see information on grading below).

As grades this year will be formulated from teacher assessments rather than public exams, teachers have been given clear direction as to what is permitted to be discussed during discussions with parents / carers. We would very much appreciate parents / carers limiting their questions to the areas that have been highlighted as suitable for discussion.

Teachers will discuss and comment on:

- work ethic
- performance over lockdown and any identified gaps
- behaviour
- academic strengths
- academic areas of development
- coursework performance subject to moderation
- the grade range that the student is capable of if their performance in the Term 5 formal assessments matches their ability in the subject
- subject related careers information

Teachers will not enter discussion on:

- predictions of a final specific grade that the teacher thinks that the student will achieve
- confirmation of End of Term assessment grades to date (as these will be subject now to further moderation)
- details of the tasks which will be used for Term 5 assessments (please see information on grading below)
- the accuracy / relevance of UCAS predictions to the final grade (please see information on grading below)

Grading - key points

- **Grading Process** - This year's process is different to last year's process. Last year teachers had to predict what they thought a student would achieve in the public exams, this year the grade awarded must be backed up by evidence that the student is achieving that grade in assessed work. So, this year's final grade can be seen as a working at grade whereas last year the grade was a prediction.
- **Term 4** - There will be no formal End of Term 4 assessments / reports for Y11 / 13. Teachers will use the rest of this term to check understanding of key topics and to close any gaps that have formed over the lockdown period.
- **Term 5** - There will be formal assessments scheduled for each subject with question papers based only on topics that students have studied. The question papers will not be set by the Examination Boards - they will be put together by NSB teachers with support from Examination Board material and will be marked by NSB teachers. These formal assessments will only be a part of the grading process - teachers can also draw upon student work completed over the whole course to determine final teacher assessment grades – the details of the type of work that can be drawn upon over the whole course is still to be confirmed by the Examination Boards – we expect this detail by the end of March.
- **Fairness and Accuracy** - All evidence that is used towards grades will undergo rigorous internal moderation and will be subject to potential external moderation checks by Examination Boards. The nature of the moderation process will be set out by the Examination Boards by the end of March.
- **UCAS Predictions** - These predicted grades have no relevance to the A Level grading procedure for this summer. UCAS predictions are estimations of the highest grade that the student is likely to achieve in a future public examination. A Level 2021 grades are working at grades derived from the actual grades achieved by a student in a series of set assessments.
- **Coursework** - Will count towards final grades at the normal percentage contribution for the subject. Coursework will be marked and moderated only by NSB teachers and will not go through external moderation by the Examination Board.
- **GCSE English Language, GCSE Modern Foreign Languages and A Level Sciences** - These subjects will still have an endorsement grade for speaking at GCSE and for practical for the Science A Levels - teachers will base this grade on any evidence gained to date – additional evidence is not required.
- **GCSE and A Level Art and Photography** - Will be based only on portfolio work, there will be no separate assessment.

- **Final Grading** - Students and parents / carers will be informed of the assessments / work that will be counting towards the final grade. The teachers will make a holistic academic judgement based on all the relevant evidence of the grade that best demonstrates a student's knowledge, understanding and skills. This grade will be submitted to the Examination Boards by June 18th following rigorous internal moderation procedures.
- **Results Days** - These have been confirmed as August 10th for A Level and August 12th for GCSEs - further details of these days will be issued later in the academic year.
- **Next Steps** – We will write to all parents / carers again shortly to set out further detail regarding the dates of the Term 5 Formal Assessments in each subject. Once the Examination Boards release further guidance at the end of March regarding the range of work that can be counted as evidence towards the final grade and the parameters for internal school moderation, then we will write again to parents / carers and we will also hold an information webinar for all parents / carers at the beginning of Term 5 - date to be confirmed.

If you have any questions please contact, in the first instance, Mr Kneeshaw at the school for Year 11: mkneeshaw@nsb.northants.sch.uk or Mrs Bradley-Brophy for Year 13: sbradley-brophy@nsb.northants.sch.uk

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. Bernard". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Richard Bernard
Headmaster
Northampton School *for Boys*