



**BECKET KEYS
CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

Mr A P Scott-Evans BEd MA
Headteacher

Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood,
Essex CM15 9DA
Tel: 01277 286600

6th July 2021

Dear Year 11 & Y13 Parents/Carers,

I hope that this letter finds you well and that all our students in these exam years are enjoying some well-earned rest and relaxation.

I am writing to provide further information on this summer's Teacher Assessed Grading process, including avenues of appeal. We are very aware that our Year 11 and 13 students have had a very stressful year and we are keen to do all we can to ensure that they are clear on how they will receive their results this year and how they can take forward appeals if they disagree with any of the grades they are awarded. At the outset it is important to stress that the school has approached the grading process with the utmost diligence, and that we have implemented robust processes to ensure fairness and transparency in the compiling of evidence and awarding of grades.

How will the grades be arrived at this year?

As you know from our previous communications, results this summer are based on Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs). TAGs were recently submitted to the exam boards by us as a holistic assessment of each students' performance in each of their subjects, following a rigorous process of assessment, moderation and quality assurance. These grades will then be approved by the relevant exam board, following external quality assurance checks. In some cases, the TAGs we submitted may be reviewed by the exam board, and they may ask us to submit an alternative grade. However, any changes to the grades we submit will be done by professional teachers or reviewers; this year no grades will be changed as a result of an algorithm. All Year 13 students in England will receive their results this year on Tuesday 10th August and all Year 11 students in England will receive their results this year on Thursday 12th August. I will be sending a separate letter which will outline arrangements for results' days this year.

What can students do if they are not happy with their grade in a subject?

Although we hope that students will feel that the grades awarded to them are justified by the evidence in their folders, all students will have the opportunity to appeal their grades 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.

There is also the option for students 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 four main grounds for appeal, as dictated by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ). They are:

- A student thinks we have made an **administrative error**: an example of this would be putting the wrong information into a spreadsheet.
- A student thinks we have made a **procedural error**: this means we have not properly followed our own process, as approved by the exam board. An example of this would be where a student has been told that they should have received extra time for assessments, but this was not given in a certain subject.
- A student thinks that the **academic judgement on the selection of evidence was unreasonable**: they think the evidence used to grade them was not reasonable in a subject.
- A student thinks that the **academic judgement on the grade they 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.

In other words, just because other forms of evidence may have been equally valid to use, this does not mean that the selection of evidence we have used is unreasonable.

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

It also means that 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 will be the outcome of an appeal?

At either stage of the appeals process (see 'What are the two stages of an appeal?' below), students' grades may go up, stay the same, or go down. When placing an appeal, students 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.

What is a priority appeal?

Priority appeals are only open to A level students starting university this autumn. Therefore, these will only apply to Sixth Form students. There will be no priority appeals for Year 11.

What should students do if they do not get into their first choice of Sixth Form/College?

Firstly, it is important not to panic. There will be staff available on results day who they can speak to about options, and we will support them. Many schools and colleges will be offering places in the days after August 12th and through the remaining days of the month.

What should students do before appealing?

Students must read the JCQ Student and Parent guide before appealing, which will be available on the JCQ and school website by results day. Normally, we would work with a family in helping them to decide whether to appeal. This year, since we have already moderated, and quality assured, all the grades ourselves it is highly unlikely that we would support an appeal.

What are the two stages of an appeal?

All appeals, on any of the grounds above, must be made on an 'appeals form' available on our website. Each appeal must first go through a **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.

Following the outcome of a centre review, students may still choose to pursue an **awarding organisation appeal**. To do this, they must fill in the final part of the form which we will then send on their behalf to the exam boards. Students and parents cannot send appeals directly to the exam board themselves – they must come through us. We will have staff on duty from results day through until the start of the late August Bank Holiday to manage any appeals. The outcome of the awarding organisation appeal will be communicated to students when made.

How can my child make an appeal?

Following results day, if students wish to request a centre review they should:

- Inform us so that we can provide them with:
 - Our policy (already on our website);
 - Details of the assessments used in their subjects (already on our website);
 - The marks we recorded from their assessments;
 - Details of any individual circumstances taken into account e.g. access arrangements.
- Complete part one of the Appeals form that will be available from the website.
- Submit that form to: exams@becketkeys.org.

What are the deadlines for non-priority appeals?

Non-priority appeals are any A levels, GCSEs or vocational qualifications, where a firm or insurance university place is not pending. The deadline for submitting a centre review is 3rd September 2021; and the deadline for submitting an awarding organisation appeal is 10th September 2021.

You know the grades now. Why can't you tell us?!

We are forbidden from disclosing the Teacher Assessed Grades to any third party, including students and parents, until results day. Any teacher or member of staff who does this is committing exam malpractice. Although students may have been given marks or grades on single pieces of evidence, we cannot disclose the final submitted TAG. During the external quality assurance process, which is taking place currently, our submitted TAGs may be moved up or down (although this will always be done through human agency, not by an algorithm).

I hope that the information contained in this letter is useful to you. We have also put together a webpage which contains all the information you and your child will need on the grading process this year including:

- Plans for our results day;
- The appeals process and all the logistical information for this;
- Subject Assessment Records which outline which pieces of work were included in students' folders in each subject.

The webpage will be found here when it goes live next week: <https://becketkeys.org/examinations-2021.php>

If you have any questions having read this letter and reviewed the webpage please do not hesitate to contact us via office@becketkeys.org.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A P Scott-Evans'.

Mr A P Scott-Evans
Headteacher