



# THE CORBET SCHOOL

*Headteacher Dr Jane Tinker BSc MA(Ed) EdD NPQH*

16<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the initial information your child has already been informed of regarding the process of awarding GCSE and equivalent Grades this summer.

## **What has been announced?**

In January, the government announced that public examinations would not take place this year.

## **What has happened?**

On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021, the Department for Education and Ofqual (the regulating body for examinations) published a public consultation document on alternative arrangements for awarding grades this year. Over 100,000 replies were received with more than three quarters coming from parents or carers and pupils. Overall, the responses supported the proposals made by Ofqual. On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the decisions arising from the consultation were published.

## **How will the grades be awarded?**

Teacher assessments will replace examinations in summer 2021. This applies to assessments for GCSEs, AS and A-levels, as well as some vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs). Schools will submit grades to the examination boards; Following any necessary external quality assurance of schools, the examination boards will award the grades to the pupils.

## **How will the grades be assessed?**

Grades will be based on what pupils have been taught and not on the things they have missed. Teachers will be given clear guidance to support them in assessing their pupils. Examination boards will provide optional sets of questions for teachers to use to help them gather evidence. Teachers will be able to select groups of questions that reflect what their pupils have been taught.

## **What are the timings for this?**

Schools will submit grades to the examination boards by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021.  
GCSE results day will be Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

## **What processes will be in place to ensure the grades are fair?**

Before grades are submitted, pupils will be told what evidence is being used to assess them. Pupils will be able to see this evidence and talk to their teachers about any circumstances they think might affect their grade. Schools will make sure that the assessment process is fair using the guidance provided from examination boards. Schools will have their own internal quality assurance processes in place to make sure teachers' judgements aren't too harsh or lenient. Examination boards will also quality assure schools to ensure fair processes have been followed.

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## **How will the grading standards be set?**

Teachers have been asked to use their professional judgement and examination board standards/criteria to judge the grade each pupil is performing at. The grades will not be subjective or predictions of how a pupil may have performed in examinations had they not been cancelled. Rather, teachers will consider each pupil's performance using an evidence-based decision.

## **If the pupil believes that the grade they are awarded is wrong, will they have the right to appeal their grade?**

If a pupil believes their grade is wrong, they can ask their centre to check for process or administrative errors. If an error is found, schools can submit the pupil's revised grade for the examination board to consider. If the examination board is satisfied, it will issue the revised grade. If the school does not think there has been an error made, the pupil can ask the school to appeal to the examination board on their behalf. When this is done, the school will need to provide evidence on which the judgement has been made. The examination board will review the teacher judgement to see if it was reasonable. If they do not think it was, they will provide an alternative grade. The examination board will also check that the school has followed their own processes correctly.

## **Can a grade be moved down following an appeal?**

Pupils (and parents/carers) need to be clear that grades could move down as well as up through an appeal. The teacher knows the pupil, and has the evidence available in front of them; It is more likely if an appeal was made, the pupil's grade would be moved down by the examination board.

## **What will we be doing at The Corbet School?**

In the first week or so of lessons following the wider reopening of schools, teachers will spend time reviewing the remote learning and judging where the pupils' knowledge and understanding for their subject is. Following this, staff will be working together to plan a programme of assessments to gather evidence to use to award the Centre Assessed Grades. There will be three assessment windows within the period of time the pupils have left before the school is expected to submit the grades to examination boards:

Assessment window one - week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

Assessment window two - week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Assessment window three - week commencing 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Within the three assessment windows the pupils will be asked to complete some examination board style assessments to demonstrate their ability on an aspect of their subject. Departments will use similar style assessment material as the examination boards would have used in a 'normal' year. Pupils will be made aware of the evidence their teachers will use to determine their grades. The assessment material the teachers will use will be short assessments, and unlikely to be full GCSE examination papers. Teachers will only set assessments which relate to what they have been able to teach the pupils over their GCSE courses. Teachers are also permitted this year to use evidence of pupils' prior performance whilst on their GCSE courses. Some subjects will use assessments and work the pupils have completed in Year 10 and earlier in Year 11. Again, the pupils will be made aware of the evidence the teachers will be using to determine their grades.

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## **What do the pupils need to do to make sure they get the best grades they can?**

Pupils need to attend school with a positive attitude and approach to their lessons and school work. The teachers at The Corbet School are all extremely dedicated to supporting the pupils they teach in achieving their potential. Any pupils who feel they have not worked as hard as they could have done up to this point, still have time to show their teachers the standard of work they can produce. The pupils need to consider the GCSE courses over the next few months like they are all coursework based subjects. All of the teachers will be using mini-assessments to gather evidence to support the grades we submit to the examination boards. In subjects where pupils still have non-examined assessments or coursework to complete, pupils need to continue to work hard with their teachers to get their work to the best standard possible.

## **Some brief examples of how grades might be awarded**

In subjects which are 100% examination assessed courses under normal circumstances, it is likely pupils' grades will be awarded using examination board style questions.

In subjects which are partly non-examined assessment and partly examination assessed courses under normal circumstances, it is likely pupils' grades will be partly based on non-examined assessment they have completed and some examination board style questions.

In subjects which are fully non-examined assessment under normal circumstances, it is likely pupils' grades will be based on their coursework/portfolios.

## **Communication**

Pupils have been informed by their subject teachers of the timings, the style, and the topic of the assessments during the week commencing 22<sup>nd</sup> March. Heads of Departments are working with the Senior Leadership Team to design the assessments to take place in assessment windows two and three. I hope to send another letter to you before the Easter holidays with full details of the assessments. Schools are awaiting further information promised by examination boards; I will ensure relevant communications are provided. Teachers are not permitted to share the overall grade which is to be submitted to the examination boards with pupils or parents/carers.

I hope this letter has provided you with reassurance that we will be making every effort to ensure that the pupils are given the best possible opportunity to achieve grades they are capable of.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your support in encouraging your son/daughter to maintain a positive attitude and approach during the time they have remaining at The Corbet School.

Yours sincerely

Mr G Simms  
Deputy Headteacher

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