

Dear Year 11 Students,

I wanted to take the opportunity to explain how your results were determined this year. As you know, this year's GCSE results had to be awarded differently from usual, after exams were unable to go ahead due to Covid-19. Schools and colleges were asked to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grades they believed a student would have achieved had they sat their exams this year, and to submit these centre-assessed grades (CAGs) to the relevant exam board.

Groups of teachers and leaders in each subject worked together to discuss and agree the centre-assessed grade for each student. They took into account a wide range of available evidence, including class work, mock exams and other records of student performance.

The intention was that the exam boards would then moderate the CAGs, to check that schools and colleges had approached this task consistently, before providing students with their final calculated grades. Unfortunately, as you will no doubt be aware, the method they used to do this proved problematic, and was likely to lead to many grades being unfairly downgraded.

With the decision to use the higher of the Centre Assessed Grade or the Algorithm grade there are now very limited grounds for appeal. The following information is from Ofqual about the process. *"Schools and colleges can only appeal where there has been an administrative error with the CAG or rank order information. Rank order information was vital to support standardisation, but any change to a student's position in the rank order would not change the student's CAG. Administrative errors might include, for example, mixing up 2 students with similar names, or accidentally copying across the wrong data, but do not relate to the professional judgements of centres in assigning CAGs.*

Centres cannot appeal against the CAG that they decided was correct at the point of submitting it to the exam board, and for which the head of centre submitted a declaration to confirm that in the centre's judgement this was the grade the students were most likely to have received had the exams gone ahead.

As we have said previously, if students or others have concerns about bias, discrimination or any other factor that suggests that a centre did not behave with care or integrity when determining the centre assessment grade and/or rank order information they should normally raise these concerns with their centre, in the first instance; or they could take their concerns to the relevant exam board if this was the more appropriate route. Where there is evidence, we require exam boards to investigate such allegations as potential malpractice or maladministration. Such allegations would be very serious, and we expect them to be rare." (OfQUAL, 19th August, 2020)

If your results have prevented you from progressing onto your chosen pathway we would advise you to contact SixthFormEntry@gillingham-dorset.co.uk if you were intending to continue studying at our Sixth Form, or your chosen College / provider if you had applied elsewhere.

If you're unhappy with any of your results because you **don't agree with the centre assessment grade that I was given by my teachers**, we'd encourage you in the first instance to review the guidance from OfQUAL, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/910623/6671_Student_guide_to_post-16_qualifications_results_-_summer_2020.pdf

An extract from this guidance is copied verbatim below, *"Your school or college submitted the grades it believes you were most likely to achieve if exams had gone ahead. We know many students wanted to be able to challenge their centre assessment grades if they were unhappy with them, but we judged this could not be done consistently and fairly. Any appeal*

would have to be decided by someone better placed than your teachers to judge your likely grade if exams had taken place. Because exams were cancelled, we don't think there is such a person. This means you can't appeal your grade just because you don't agree with the centre assessment grade submitted by your school or college. Your school or college can't appeal against the centre assessment grades that they decided were correct when they submitted it to the exam board. The head of centre made a declaration to confirm that the centre assessment grades it provided were the grades its students were most likely to have received if the exams had gone ahead. If you'd like an opportunity to improve your grade, you can choose to sit exams in the autumn, or in summer 2021, instead." (OfQUAL, 19th August, 2020)

If you want to resit any of your exams, the current plan is for a full series of exams to take place in November. You can make arrangements for this by contacting Mrs Addis on examenquiries@gillingham-dorset.co.uk .

Yours faithfully,

P Nicholson
Headteacher