



from Tom Lawson MA (Oxon), Headmaster

15 May 2020

## A-Level, EPQ and GCSE Centre Assessment Grades

Encs: Eastbourne College policy *Awarding Centre Assessment Grades 2020*

Dear Parents,

I write on the topic of public exam grades so this letter is mostly relevant to parents of Year 13 and Year 11 pupils. One or two others will have early exams and, in any case, you may simply be interested, so I have included all parents in this distribution.

It is necessarily a rather dry and technical letter owing to the subject matter. I am hugely grateful to the work of Jonny Gilbert, the Deputy Head Academic, Philip Canning, Head of Curriculum and all the Heads of Department and teachers who have worked to ensure we are on track to give your children the best possible service with their public exam grades.

On 18 March the Secretary of State announced that the summer 2020 public exam series would be cancelled in order to help fight the spread of COVID-19 and that pupils due to sit the exams would be awarded a grade based on an assessment of the grade they would have been most likely to achieve had exams gone ahead. In early April, Ofqual (the exams regulator) published initial guidance on how schools would be expected to award those grades and there has since been a sector-wide consultation to provide further detail.

In summary, for every GCSE and A-level subject, the exam boards will require the school to submit the following information:

- A centre assessment grade
- The rank order of pupils within each grade

It is a requirement that the centre assessment grades submitted by the school must reflect a fair, reasonable and carefully considered judgement of the most likely grade a pupil would have achieved if they had sat their exams this summer. We are not permitted to share individual grade decisions with pupils and parents, not least because they may be moderated by the boards prior to the final grade award. The grades will be published to us and come out to you on the normal August results days:

- A-level Thursday 13 August 2020
- GCSE Thursday 20 August 2020

The government has promised a chance to appeal the process of awarding grades and the opportunity to resit A-levels or GCSEs. Details of both of these things are not yet known.

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Underwriting our process we have developed the attached policy which I hope provides explanation of the College's approach. At the time of writing, the policy takes account of the most recent changes to the Ofqual guidance, though may still be subject to change according to on-going consultation and review by the DfE.

We hope that by sharing the policy with you ahead of time we can achieve two things. Firstly, we want to provide transparency regarding the school's process and explain how **we will ensure consistent, objective use of appropriate evidence** across the curriculum when determining our centre assessment grades. Secondly, we hope to provide reassurance to pupils and their families that we take into account the improvement they would have made over the course of this term and all relevant evidence to ensure **the validity and fairness of the grades we will propose** to the examination boards.

The school is in the process of determining and standardising those grades and we expect to pass them on to the awarding organisations in early June. Thereafter, the grades we put forward will be subject to statistical standardisation by the exam boards and DfE, including analysis against grade distributions nationally.

Your children have worked incredibly hard in preparation for their exams. It is a great pity that they are being denied the opportunity to demonstrate their developed skills to the examination boards and be given the sense of closure that would provide. We have no choice but to follow the guidance handed down to us by the government but, by having a clear and consistent policy with which to propose our grades to the exam boards, we hope that we can best serve our pupils and do justice to the efforts they have made.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Lawson  
Headmaster