



# BISHOP CHALLONER CATHOLIC COLLEGE

June 2021

Dear Parent/Carer and Students

## Awarding Grades 2021

The purpose of this letter is to summarise the numerous steps involved throughout the process of awarding grades this summer. It does so by setting out a series of questions and how Bishop Challoner Catholic College has responded to each one.

### How will my child be graded this year?

Grades for GCSEs, A-levels, and most other qualifications, including applied generals, will be based on a process involving:

- teacher assessment against national standards
- internal quality assurance of teachers' assessment
- external quality assurance of teachers' assessment by the examination boards.

At Bishop Challoner we have used a range of evidence to reach a holistic judgement for each student. This includes:

- formal assessments sat under examination conditions
- a selection of class and homework tasks
- non-exam assessment (coursework) and practical performance in some subjects.

Our **Centre Policy** details the approach we have taken as a school and has been approved by the examination boards. You can read our Centre Policy below:

<https://bishopchalloner.org.uk/information-about-our-school/awarding-grades-2021/centre-policy>

### Why has there been the need for timed assessments when exams were cancelled?

Public examinations were cancelled in January, and as a consequence of this all schools and colleges have been asked to determine a grade for each student that reflects the standard at which they are performing. Examination boards have asked schools to be flexible in their approach and that part of this flexibility is that assessments should take place *as late as possible in the academic year*.

Throughout the first half of the summer term, we have been using examination-style assessments, drawing on the assessment materials provided by examination boards, as we believe this will produce a reliable and fair evidence base on which to determine grades.

In addition to the examination-style assessments referred to above, we have made it clear that teachers can also use evidence of a student's performance throughout the course to inform their judgements.

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## **What evidence has been used in each subject?**

Our Centre Policy details the high-level approach we are taking as a school in determining grades this summer. As mentioned earlier in this letter, at Bishop Challoner we have used a range of evidence to reach a holistic judgement for each student.

## **My child usually has access arrangements (e.g. extra time) in exams. Have they had it this year?**

If a student is eligible for any sort of access arrangements then they have been given it in the timed assessments we have carried out.

If a student who is eligible for access arrangements did not have them for a particular timed assessment that is being used to inform their grade, then they must raise this with the school by contacting Mrs Wheeler at [r.wheeler@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk](mailto:r.wheeler@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk)

A record of how this is responded to will be made. This could include using an alternative piece of evidence, or adjusting the marks for that assessment.

## **What arrangements has Bishop Challoner made for special consideration or mitigating circumstances this year?**

Examination boards have determined that the usual process of schools submitting special consideration applications will not apply this summer.

As the range of evidence used to determine a student's grade is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student according to coverage of the specification, examination boards have instructed schools that instances of special consideration should be limited. Schools are able to select work completed by a student where they were unaffected by adverse or special circumstances.

Where this is not possible and a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student's control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers are required to take this into account and document how they have done so.

Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning. This can be addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence schools may use to determine student's grades.

## **Can students or parent/carers know the grade submitted?**

No. Schools are legally obliged not to let students or parent/carers know their submitted grade before results day. In some subjects, and once assessments have been internally moderated, students may receive marks for certain assessments that may count towards their grades. However, this is at the discretion of the individual subject. It is important to note that students do not have an automatic right to know their marks in an assessment.

## **Schools may adopt different processes in completing assessments. Is this fair?**

As mentioned earlier, individual schools have been given a lot of flexibility in how they decide a holistic teacher assessed grade this summer. This means that it is likely the assessments will look different in different schools, even ones in the same area.

Because students should only be assessed on what they have been taught, to account for variations in lost learning due to the pandemic, the range of evidence will differ between schools and colleges, and even between students within Bishop Challoner.



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Our approach to determining students' grades this summer is detailed in our Centre Policy which has been approved the examination boards. Many different approaches from other schools have also been approved. This does not mean one approach is better than the other.

## **Will my child's teacher judge them fairly?**

All staff at Bishop Challoner have undergone objectivity and bias training. This is detailed in our Centre Policy, which has been approved by the examination boards. At subject level, all grades will be signed off by two members of the department, including the Head of Department.

Once this process is completed all grades will be checked by the Senior Leadership Team and then signed off by the Head of Centre, i.e. the Principal.

As part of the external quality assurance process, we will have to send a sample of work to the examination boards, ensuring that our grades are fair and accurate.

If you have a concern about bias please contact our Examinations Officer, Mrs Houldcroft, urgently at [l.houldcroft@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk](mailto:l.houldcroft@bishopchalloner.bham.sch.uk)

## **My child needs a particular grade for university / college; what can I do to make sure they get it?**

It is important that neither students nor the parent/carers put undue pressure on classroom teachers or Heads of Department to submit a certain grade before 18 June. If a member of staff feels that pressure is being applied, we will first raise this with you directly.

If the pressure continues, we have been instructed to report this (whether from parents or students) to the examination boards as potential malpractice.

## **What is exam malpractice?**

Examination malpractice this year includes:

- students fabricating evidence (e.g. claiming plagiarised work is their own)
- they or their parent/carer placing undue pressure on teachers to submit a certain grade
- teachers fabricating evidence.

If malpractice is proven, the examination boards may decide to withhold the qualification altogether. Our approach to authenticating evidence is set out in our Centre Policy.

I hope you have found this letter informative and that it answers any questions you may have.

We will write to you again shortly providing you with details and arrangements in relation to:

- Results Day – A levels and GCSE
- The Appeals Process

Thank you for your continued support.