



THE WESTLEIGH SCHOOL

Aspiring & Achieving Together

HEADTEACHER: MR CARLTON BRAMWELL *BEd (Hons), MSc, NPQH*

22 July 2020

Dear Parents/Carer,

I hope that you and our Year 11 pupils are safe and well, I am writing to you to outline not only the arrangements for results day but also our plans to honour the commitment we made to the pupils that they would not be forgotten and that there will be a prom at which to celebrate the 5 years of hard work they have put in whilst a member of The Westleigh School.

The calculation of GCSE and A-level grades Summer 2020

Schools were asked to send exam boards two pieces of information for each student's subject, based on what they know about their work and achievements:

- the grade they believe students were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned, this is called the Centre Assessed Grade, (CAG)
- Within each subject, the order of students achieving each grade at the school. This is called 'Ranking' by performance.

Schools were asked to make their best assessment of what grade the student would have most likely achieved had they sat the exam and to place candidates in rank order.

The purpose of ranking was to allow adjustments to take place to ensure the distribution of grades at a **national level** was similar to previous years.

What did we do to make sure our school grades were fair and accurate?

The grades schools submitted to the exam boards are agreed through a robust internal quality assurance process and are not the sole responsibility of any individual teacher.

The following approaches were taken across the school:

- ✓ The professional experience of teaching staff was deployed to make a fair and objective judgement of the grade they believe a student would most likely to have achieved had they sat their exams this year.
- ✓ Judgements were objective, and based upon student performance.
- ✓ Grading and ranking decisions for each student were based upon a holistic professional judgement which balanced different sources of evidence and data which were agreed between all teachers of a subject to ensure consistency
- ✓ Heads of Department and Senior Leaders in the school were involved in rigorous quality assurance to ensure ranking across a year group was an accurate reflection of each student's ability.
- ✓ Grades and ranking were decided on an objective basis and not on any characteristics protected under equalities legislation such as a student's gender, race, religion/belief, disability status, gender reassignment, or sexual orientation.
- ✓ The internal quality assurance process ensured that judgements on grades were not affected by a student's behaviour (both good and poor), character, ethnicity, appearance, social background, or the performance of their siblings.
- ✓ Finally, school judgements were quality assured by Trust leaders to ensure the best possible accuracy on teacher judgement with grades and ranking.

What happens outside of the school?

To make sure that grades are fair between schools and colleges, exam boards decided to put all centre assessed grades through a process of standardisation using a model developed with Ofqual.

The standardisation model will draw upon on the following sources of evidence:

- Historical outcomes for each school;
- The prior attainment (Key Stage 2 or GCSE) of this year's students and those in previous years within each school;
- The expected national grade distribution for the subject given the prior attainment of the national entry.

So why could there be a difference between CAGs and grades awarded?

Where there is a difference, it is helpful to understand the process which has taken place. The grades that we submitted were our best assessment of what you would have achieved if a student had taken examinations.

However, the exam boards then applied a 'standardisation model' so that the distribution of grades awarded this year is consistent with those awarded in other years at a national level, and this process inevitably results in some centre-assessed grades being adjusted.

This process is aimed at ensuring fairness and consistency between students in different years and in different schools and colleges so that, for example, it does not result in more students nationally being awarded higher grades this year when compared to cohorts in previous years. It is done to ensure that this year's grades are as valid as in any other year.

However, I understand it may feel confusing and unfair to you where there is a difference between a centre-assessed grade and the final grade awarded by the exam board. I can reassure you that your teachers approached the task of assessing grades with the utmost diligence, and that they felt the grades submitted were a fair and accurate reflection. The final grades awarded by the exam boards are the product of a nationally applied process, aimed at ensuring that your grades are consistent with those of students in other years, and therefore have equal value.

I am also conscious that this has been a difficult and anxious time for you as a result of the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. If you would like any further support or information, please do get in touch, so that we can arrange an appointment for you to see a member of staff.

The National Careers Service has also set an exam results helpline during August 2020. Young people or their parents can contact the helpline on 0800 100 900 to speak to a professionally qualified careers adviser if they need advice on their next steps. The helpline will be open from 8am to 10pm from Thursday 13 August until Friday 28 August. After these dates, young people will be able to access ongoing support from the National Careers Service at any time by calling 0800 100 900, visiting nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/contact-us or searching for the National Careers Service on Facebook and Twitter.

Results Day

The results day will still be going ahead as planned on Thursday 20 August 2020. Our aim for the day is to be able to provide the pupils with their examination results as well as guidance on their next steps whilst also ensuring that the process is as safe as possible for staff and pupils. The school will open between 9.30am and 12.00pm and pupils will be able to attend throughout this time period in order to collect their results. We have designated three separate entrances/exits and allocated the pupils to these depending on their Year 11 form group.

Cassiopeia, Cygnus and Orion:

- Enter through the Science gate.
- Proceed to the Fox Robin Foyer to collect their results.
- Exit through the fire exit of the Fox Robin Building.

Pegasus and Perseus:

- Enter through the J Block gate.
- Proceed into J Block using the Conference Room entrance and collect their results from J4.
- Exit through the front J Block entrance.

Taurus and Ursa Major

- Enter through the Main Office entrance to school.
- Proceed to the drama studio to collect their results.
- Exit through the side entrance to school out onto Westleigh Lane.

Unfortunately due to the current situation, parents must remain offsite while their child collects their results. Whilst waiting parents must social distance. Onsite there will be clear markings on the floor to ensure students keep a 2 metre distance at all times. Staff will be on each entrance and exit to supervise the process.

Your child should have already been contacted by their college provider/apprenticeship to give them the details regarding enrolment but there will be further information available on the day if there are any queries, including support from our Careers Advisor, Joan Courtney.

Prom

As you will be aware the prom was originally scheduled for 19 June 2020, we have been working with Haydock Park to rearrange for a suitable date where we would be able to safely have as many of the Year Group as possible together to celebrate their time at The Westleigh School.

We are aiming to reschedule the prom for Friday 20 November 2020, to make the occasion even more special for this wonderful group of students we are hoping to host the GCSE Certificate Presentation in the morning in school which will give staff, parents and students a chance to celebrate their success together. In the evening the prom will then go ahead at Haydock Park Racecourse, following the same schedule as was originally intended.

If you wish to reserve a place for the Prom we ask that you complete the survey that will be sent out to parents over the coming days. This survey will allow us to gauge interest. We will only proceed with the Prom if we have sufficient interest to make the event viable. Following from the survey we will then contact you individually with regards the steps required for payment.

The price for this will remain £39.50 deadline for this to be paid is Thursday 8 September 2020. Any questions regarding prom please direct your emails through to richardfinney@westleigh.wigan.sch.uk

Yours faithfully,



C BRAMWELL
Headteacher