



The Astley Cooper School

Part of the East Dacorum Co-operative Learning Trust

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26 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

Headteacher: Edward Gaynor

I hope you are well and that the return to lessons in school has gone smoothly for your child. It is lovely to see our classrooms full once again. Further to my previous letter, I am writing to provide some more information about our plans for assessing grades for our students in Years 11 and 13 this summer.

Important dates:

- We have to submit teacher-assessed grades to the exam boards by 18 June
- A Level results will be published on 10 August
- GCSE results will be published on 12 August
- Vocational results will be published at the same time for each year group

How we will assess grades:

- We will base our assessment on the standard at which students are working
- We will only assess students on content they have been taught
- Our grades will be based on actual work which our teachers have marked, rather than an algorithm
- We will use a range of assessment evidence, in line with guidance from exam boards, but we will need to be confident that it is the student's own work
- Each department will determine its own portfolio of evidence, which provides the best overview of student attainment in the circumstances (More information on 26 April)
- The evidence can come from any point during the course of study, but recent work, and assessments still to be completed, are likely to count more significantly
- Students will be informed in advance of the assessment evidence which we intend to use, but will not be informed of the grade until the results days in August, in line with Ofqual's instructions

Assessments still in the future:

- We plan to give students further opportunities to demonstrate what they are capable of in each subject
- **We intend to hold four weeks of scheduled assessments from 26 April to 21 May in the gym**
- **When the students do not have assessments, they are expected to be in lessons**
- These assessments will typically be shorter than normal public exams
- The time table for the assessments can be found in <https://bit.ly/39dSwUw>
- Topics to revise for each subject can be found here for Year 11 <https://bit.ly/31mmxNO> and Sixth Form <https://bit.ly/3lUxBLx>
- Some subjects may choose to assess outside of these weeks, but students will be informed in advance if this is the case
- Students will always know if and when the work they are doing will count formally towards their grade. They will not be assessed without their knowledge
- We will make provision so that students eligible for exams access arrangements will be able to use them
- Leaving dates for students in Years 11 and 13 are yet to be confirmed - more information will follow





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How we will ensure that grades are fair:

- We will carry out quality assurance (including moderation) and check grades thoroughly before they are submitted
- We will consider previous results to ensure that this year's grades are not unduly harsh or lenient
- Exam boards will review our quality assurance processes before grades are submitted
- Once grades are submitted, the exam board will conduct various checks to make sure grades submitted are fair and consistent across centres. This will include sampling of evidence
- If there are concerns with the grades submitted, the exam board will work with the school to address this. Exam boards will not re-assess the work on which the grades are based

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After results days:

- Students will be entitled to appeal against their results
- Any appeal will be considered initially by the school to determine whether processes were followed correctly, without errors
- If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal, the school will appeal to the exam board on the student's behalf, and the exam board will consider whether the processes were appropriate and whether academic judgement was exercised reasonably by the school in arriving at the grade
- It is important to note that appeals could lead to grades going down as well as up
- The Department for Education has indicated that it hopes to offer an autumn series of exams for students who wish to try to improve on their teacher-assessed grades. This has yet to be confirmed

Next steps:

We are working to plan the portfolio of evidence which will be used in each qualification. This cannot be finalised until we have heard from exam boards with more precise grade descriptors and guidance. We will provide you with information about the assessment portfolios as soon as possible. I am sure you will understand that it will not be possible for us to enter into conversation with you about the grades to be awarded, and I would ask you to refrain from contacting any teachers to ask about them, because the restrictions placed on them mean that they will not be able to answer.

I can imagine how difficult this situation is for our students, and it is not the way we wanted their courses to end. However, I can reassure them that we are taking the responsibility of assessing grades with the utmost seriousness and aiming to give our students every chance to demonstrate what they can do and to gain the excellent results they deserve. The most important message is that our students should continue to work hard, because there is ample opportunity yet for them to earn success. We have every confidence in them, and we look forward to congratulating them on results day.

In the meantime, thank you for your support and I wish your child the very best of luck in all assessments they undertake.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Siu
Assistant Headteacher – Assessments and Data

