



DJB/AB 31 March 2021

Dear Pupils, Parents and Carers

Many of you have understandably asked questions around the methods by which departments will determine the grades which we put forward to the exam boards. Below is a precis of the general guidance which the school will be following. This is in line with guidance for schools published on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March by JCQ.

For each qualification, all departments will:

- Consider what has been taught
- Collect the relevant evidence; at St Olave's this will include:
  - The Spring and Summer Term Assessments
  - Any relevant NEA material
  - Other appropriate assessment, classwork or homework data (such as IPMs)
- Evaluate the quality of the evidence (in terms of authenticity, standardisation etc)
- Establish whether the proposed range of evidence is appropriate for all students
  - Students will be told what evidence is going to be used so that they have an opportunity to record any genuine and valid concerns
  - All departments will have regard to access arrangements, special consideration and any mitigating circumstances which might have created specific disadvantage for individuals when compared with other candidates in the year group
- Assign a grade

Grades should be based on a holistic, objective judgement of the evidence of the students' performance on the subject content they have been taught. The school will consider the quality of the work in relation to the assessment materials used, as well as the grade descriptors and grading exemplification available to help reach a final grade. Decisions about potential must not be a factor in determining students' grades; they are to be determined on the basis of available evidence.

The grading process this year is not intended to be a formulaic calculation; grades must represent a holistic judgment. Grade descriptors and grading exemplification circulated by JCQ must be used to make objective judgements about student performance.

The above is a summary of relevant aspects of the newly available guidance on grading for teachers. This guidance is part of a larger document available in the public domain and can be found at this [link](#). The section from which this information has been taken can be found on pages 20-26 if you should wish for further details of the process which the school must follow. The school is also currently formulating a Centre Policy in line with guidance and this will be circulated by the end of April.



Whilst the above speaks to general processes which all schools must follow, some specific reassurance for Olavian pupils and parents: all departments will be closely following the available national guidance, and marks will be awarded according to a national standard, not an internal one. I know that pupils and parents sometimes express concerns around harsh marking and grading at St Olave's. Everyone knows these grades need to be accurate, realistic and true to the nationally available marking and grading standards. We share a common interest in recommending grades this year which are at the same high standard as those in any usual exam year at St Olave's, and anticipate that the Spring and Summer Term assessments will give us the firm, objective evidence base which enables us to do this fairly.

In the meantime, we will continue to work on interpreting the available guidance such that we can share further relevant information the other side of the Easter break which will lend transparency and, we hope, reassurance of fair process. This will include information on a subject-by-subject, qualification-by-qualification basis regarding the evidence base which the school will use. All pupils and parents will also be invited formally by the school to submit any relevant information relating to the implementation of approved access arrangements, special consideration or any mitigating circumstances which teachers should be aware of. Please could I ask that parents do not send such information in piecemeal over the course of the Easter holiday – a centralised opportunity to have this formally documented for the school's consideration will come in due course.

Yours sincerely

Mr D J Budds  
Deputy Headteacher