



To Aspire, Endeavour and Thrive Together

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11 students,

You will have seen the announcement by Gavin Williamson on 24th February regarding the decisions that Ofqual have made for the awarding of GCSE grades in the Summer.

We know the details will have created many questions and concerns. Below we summarise this information and the implications for your child. Although these remain uncertain times, particularly for the students, we can reassure you that we have a clear and robust plan in place to support your child and enable them to pursue the pathway of their choice after Year 11.

Summary

- Teachers will award GCSE grades to students
- No algorithm will be used by exam boards/Ofqual (as it was in 2020)
- Teachers will use a range of evidence to award grades, taken from throughout the GCSE course
- Grades will be awarded according to the standard of students' work (not the grade that they could have achieved had the exams taken place)
- Students will be assessed on what they have been taught (which may not necessarily be the whole curriculum or specification)
- Some external assessments and non-examined assessments (NEA) for Vocational qualifications will still take place
- Exam boards will conduct a series of checks to ensure that grades are awarded fairly and accurately
- Schools must consider the grades for this year's cohort compared to cohorts from previous years (when exams have taken place), to make sure they have not been overly lenient or harsh in their assessment of the 2021 cohort.
- GCSE results day has been moved 2 weeks earlier in August
- Students will have the right to appeal their grades
- No decision has yet been made as to whether there will be an Autumn exam opportunity for students who wish to sit the exam in a particular subject

Please see the supporting infographic from Ofqual which is a really useful visual explanation of the arrangements.

Assessments and evidence

As a result of these decisions, it is important that we have as much evidence as possible for each student in each of their subjects. In faculties, we have much of this already from assessments, classwork, homework, work completed during remote learning, coursework and exams. It is essential that we provide every student with the opportunity to have the widest possible range of evidence that accurately reflects the standard of their work. We will therefore hold assessments in all subjects commencing 22nd March and throughout April. Students will be briefed on the content, timing and structure of these upon their return to school, and prepared for them in their lessons from 9th March onwards. The timing of these will vary between subjects according to curriculum plans and what has been covered so far. Some will take place in classrooms and some will be more formal exams in the Sports Hall. These will enable teaching staff to identify strengths and gaps and then address any gaps in their teaching in the weeks prior to the May half term.



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Curriculum coverage

From the time that students return, they will not be taught any 'new' or previously unseen units of work. DfE guidance clearly states that schools will award grades only on what has been taught so far. For most subjects, this is not as straightforward as students only studying for one exam or for one topic. Topics within each subject and exam paper overlap and, within one assessed unit, there may be a number of different topics, some of which your children will have learned and some they may not have done. Therefore, students' subject teachers will communicate the detail with them directly. The assessments that students will sit when they return to school will consist only of topics that they have studied and will be expected to know. Some new content may be needed in order to reinforce and connect to existing knowledge.

Timeline

Date	Activity	Notes
w/c 8th March	Students return to face to face teaching Tuesday 9th March: Y11 assembly to communicate details of grading	Covid Tests 1-3 also take place
w/c 22nd March - w/c 3rd May	Internal assessments + lessons as usual	Students will sit assessments in all subjects (some will be in classrooms and some in the Sports Hall). Students will also be in their usual lessons
w/c 3rd May - w/c 24th May	Subject teachers address gaps in knowledge/skills after marking assessments	Students will attend lessons as usual and may have smaller, in-class assessments to provide evidence of improved performance
w/c 14th June	Final grades entered to exam boards	Grades are confidential to schools and must not be released to students or parents
18th June - 12th August	External quality assurance of teacher assessed grades	This will be carried out by exam boards
12th August	GCSE results day	Details will be communicated nearer the time

Please note: A date for when Year 11 students will leave has not yet been decided; we are awaiting DfE guidance before communicating this to students and parents.



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Next steps for school teachers and leaders

Having carried out a similar process last year, we are confident that we can accurately and rigorously award fair grades to all students.

This is a multi-layered process. First, teachers and Faculty Team Leaders will gather all the evidence that they have on each student for each of their subjects. They will carry out a systematic process of moderation and evaluation of the work. They will then award the students' grades.

These grades will then be subject to scrutiny by the leadership team and entered by 18th June. Students and parents must not be informed of the grades that are awarded. We respectfully request, therefore, that any queries or concerns that you have regarding your child's grades are communicated to Mr. Clark or Ms. Smith rather than your child's subject teachers.

Next steps for students

GCSE exams are an assessment of the knowledge and the skills that students have acquired throughout their whole educational career. They are not an end in themselves. Our role as a school is to equip students with what they need - academically and emotionally - so that they have as much choice as possible in pursuing their next steps. Therefore, lessons will carry on as usual and our expectations of students will be the same.

We will support students in navigating the uncertainties and frustrations of the past year and coming months as best we can, and in addressing any gaps in the essential knowledge and skills that they need in each of their subjects.

So, the next steps for students are:

- Continue to work hard in lessons, respond to teachers' feedback and complete all classwork, homework and assessments to the best of your ability
- Refer to study skills guidance (in tutor times, in lessons, from our website) to practise and revise the content that students know that they need
- Take note of the calendar and content of upcoming assessments and prepare carefully for each of them
- If they have not already, thoughtfully consider their post-16 options and the qualifications that they will need to support them in that path
- Engage with the careers guidance and complete all relevant applications
- Ask questions of teachers and leaders, ask for support when needed, give us feedback on what we need to do to support and guide

Rewards and celebrations

We also know that both you and your children will want to know details regarding celebrations and commemorations for the year group. As you'll know, last year's Year 11 were deprived of their Prom and unfortunately, this will be the case again this year. However, we know how important these opportunities to share, celebrate and remember are, so our current plans are to regularly reward our Year 11 students with weekly prizes for their



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efforts. We are aiming to distribute leavers' hoodies and yearbooks in their final week, during which there will also be a leavers' assembly to celebrate their time at Glossopdale. We would hope that when things resume to 'normal', we could plan for a suitable event to celebrate this milestone in their lives. Of course, we will endeavour to keep you informed of all future celebrations and events.

Parent and student Q&A

It is not always easy to make absolute sense of a situation when information is given in writing, and there may be questions that you - as parents and students - have that we have not answered in this letter. There are also likely to be updates and further information provided over the coming weeks. As such, our Parent Forum on Tuesday 23rd March will be an online Q&A to clarify or address any questions on GCSEs and the plans for Year 11 that you may have. This is open to both parents and students and will take place at 6pm.

The login details are below:

meet.google.com/mum-nmei-xdq

If you wish to submit a question in advance, please complete this form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Zy255hw7WfKisyojlPP5i6yEcB3GvPcpgMYEhXZsEwc/edit>

We will be holding an assembly for all the Year 11 students in the week commencing 8th March in order to communicate these details directly to the students.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please email pclark@glossopdale.school or ksmith@glossopdale.school.

Finally, thank you for your support and understanding throughout this period. We are so looking forward to having the students back with us.

Kind regards,

Mrs. McGloin