



St Peter's Catholic School



National Teaching School
designated by
National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Faith is our Foundation

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Archdiocese of Birmingham
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Thursday 20th August 2020

Dear Parents,

I wanted to write to you during these extremely challenging times to explain the latest situation regarding this year's A-level results and to answer some of the questions you may have. I am sure that, like me, you feel confused, bewildered and anxious about the developments that have occurred over the last few weeks and I know that this must have been an extremely stressful time for your family. I share your frustration about the mixed messages and last-minute changes from our Government which has caused a lot of confusion for pupils, parents and teachers. I have formally voiced my concerns to the relevant authorities and am awaiting a response.

Please find below some Frequently Asked Questions which I hope will explain some of the latest developments. The answers I have provided are correct at the time of writing, but please be aware that this is an ever-evolving situation and new updates are being released daily by the Department for Education.

At this point, I wanted to reassure you that, as a school, our main priority is to support our pupils as they choose their next destination. We will offer all the help and guidance that we can during this difficult and uncertain time. If your son or daughter would like some support in finding an appropriate course, apprenticeship or job, or they are unsure about what to do next, then please email the school office and they will be allocated an appointment with a member of staff.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs M. E. Murphy
Headteacher



Frequently Asked Questions

What grades will be my son or daughter use as their official A Level grades?

Last Thursday, your son or daughter was issued with two grades – an Official Grade from the Exam Board and a Centre Assessed Grade (which is the grade that we submitted as a school). On Monday, the Government announced that pupils would be able to use whichever is the highest grade out of these two grades for each subject. For example, a pupil received the following grades last Thursday:

Subject	Official Exam Board Grade	Centre Assessed Grade
Biology	B	A
English Literature	C	B
Sociology	C	D

This pupil's results would now be A (Biology), B (English Literature) and C (Sociology) as the highest grade out of the two is awarded for each subject.

My son or daughter studied BTEC and/or Applied courses. Can they now use Centre Assessed Grades as well?

We are waiting for final confirmation on this. However, we understand that most grades for BTECs and other vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) won't be affected by the government's announcement. This is because most of these grades weren't calculated using the kind of algorithm used for A-levels. For those that were, Ofqual has asked awarding organisations to review their approach, which it says may lead to a "small proportion" of results being reissued – we'll update you as soon as we know more about this.

How did the school decide on the pupils' Centre Assessed Grades?

When schools were asked to enter Centre Assessed Grades for each pupil, Ofqual issued a list of criteria that schools should use to decide on these grades. Please refer to our Centre Assessed Grades Policy, which explains these criteria in more detail (section 1.4). Our process was rigorous, robust and fair and involved high levels of scrutiny and moderation.

Can I appeal the Centre Assessed Grade?

No, there is not an appeal process for Centre Assessed Grades. The only circumstance where a Centre Assessed Grade can be appealed, is if the school believe there has an administrative error. We have checked all the grades carefully and we do not believe there have been any administrative errors made. Currently, an appeal can only be lodged by a school; a parent or pupil is unable to make an appeal.

Last week, the Government announced that pupils could appeal their Official Exam Board Grade if their mock grade was higher. Is that still the case?

No, that is no longer the case. As Centre Assessed Grades are now being used, there will no longer be the opportunity to appeal based on mock results.

Why is my child's Official Exam Board grade lower than their Centre Assessed Grade?

Despite us following the procedures recommended by Ofqual and using a rigorous and fair process, a significant number of our grades were reduced by the regulator. We know many other schools locally and nationally fared the same and we feel very disappointed about this. We do not believe that the Official Exam Board grades reflect the ability and efforts of our pupils. We have submitted a complaint about this and are awaiting a response.

Why is my child's Centre Assessed Grade lower than their mock grade?

It could well be the case that your child's Centre Assessed Grade is lower than their mock grade. There are a number of reasons for this:

Firstly, mock examinations are held in Year 12 and Year 13 and they test on a component or section of the course. They do not assess the entire content of the course. They are marked and moderated internally by staff. Centre Assessed Grades were based on pupils' performance over the course as a whole.

Furthermore, whilst mock exams were one of the criteria that we used to decide on Centre Assessed Grades, it was one of many criteria, as detailed in the Centre Assessed Policy. A number of different factors had to be considered when deciding the Centre Assessed Grade for each pupil.

Finally, Ofqual made it clear to all schools that the Centre Assessed Grades had to be in line with the historic attainment data for each subject and the prior attainment of the pupils. If we submitted grades that deviated substantially from the results that we have achieved in each subject over the past three years, or that were not in line with pupils' prior attainment data, then the regulator made it clear that those grades would be moderated.

Why is my child's Centre Assessed Grade lower than their predicted UCAS grade?

Staff enter UCAS predicted grades in the summer term of Year 12, so less than halfway through the A-Level course. When staff are entering predicted grades, our philosophy is to be ambitious and optimistic at this early stage. We want to give all our pupils the very best opportunity to secure a place on their preferred University course and do not want to limit pupils' options. We also want our pupils to feel positive and confident in their studies.

Will my son or daughter still have the opportunity to sit their exams in the Autumn Term if they wish to?

Yes, pupils can still sit their examinations in October if they wish to and we would encourage them to do so if they are unhappy with their Centre Assessed Grade. We are awaiting more details on this, but our understanding is that there will be no charge to pupils.

Can my son or daughter resit their exam in the Summer term?

Yes, but these costs will be payable by the pupil.

If my son or daughter is sitting an exam in October will the school provide taught lessons?

No, unfortunately the school has no capacity or funding to facilitate this. However, the school will be happy to provide revision material on request. Pupils will continue to have access to their school email account.

The Universities only have the Official Exam Board Grades. When will they receive the Centre Assessed Grades?

We have contacted UCAS for clarification on this and are awaiting a response.

My son or daughter was rejected from a University based on their Official Exam Board grades? Will they now be offered a place based on their Centre Assessed Grades?

This will be up to each University. The Government has lifted the cap on the number of places a University can offer for each subject, but this does not necessarily mean there will be spaces on each course. You will need to contact the specific University and discuss this directly with them.

My son or daughter has accepted a place at a University but now has higher grades. Can they switch to another course/University?

If your son or daughter has accepted an offer but now wants to change it based on their new results, they should be able to release themselves from the offer they have accepted. However, they should only do this if they have a confirmed offer from another institution.

Should my son or daughter defer until next year?

This is a personal preference and we know that some students are going to defer their place and start University in September 2021. One point for consideration though is that Universities will not be receiving high numbers of International students this year due to Covid-19 therefore there may well be more availability than usual on courses this September.

My son or daughter doesn't have a University place. What do I do?

There are staff available in school to support pupils. Please ring or email the school office to make an appointment. Alternatively contact the UCAS helpline number is 0371 468 0468.

My son or daughter is not going to University. What do I do?

There are staff available in school to support pupils. Please ring or email the school office to make an appointment. Alternatively, contact the National Careers Service helpline on 0800 100 900.

What other support is available?

Make sure they speak to someone they trust if they are feeling anxious or struggling with mental health.

You can also contact:

Young Minds Text YM to 85258 [youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Childline 0800 11 11 [childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk)

Your GP: call and ask for an emergency appointment.

NHS 111: they can assist in providing the [mental health support](#) you may need.