

## **Whole School Principles, March 2021 (Provisional)**

### **Awarding Grades at Level 2 & Level 3**

#### **Summer 2021**

In January 2021 the government confirmed that students taking examinations in the summer of 2021 should be awarded grades based on assessments by their teachers.

Teachers are allowed to use a range of evidence to make a judgement of the grade students are performing at and students should only be assessed on what they have been taught, ensuring sufficient coverage of the curriculum to enable progression. When determining the grade, teachers should reflect the standard at which the student is performing now, not their potential.

#### **Our over-riding principles**

- Students will be awarded the grades that they deserve and no student should be disadvantaged due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Sufficient curriculum content is covered in all subject areas to allow students to continue to study that subject at a higher level, or to access relevant employment.
- Grades are given fairly and based on a wide range of evidence with greater weight given to assessment tasks completed towards the end of the two-year programme of study.
- Moderation and anonymised standardisation are engaged with at every level to ensure that bias is eliminated from the grading process.
- If students attend school and engage in learning, as much as possible (with the exception of absence due to illness), then they should be awarded a grade that is at least as high as the grade they attained in the full exam papers ("mocks") which they sat in December of 2020.
- Special consideration and exam access arrangements will be taken into consideration where appropriate.
- Students accessing education at alternative providers will be given an opportunity to engage in assessment, and evidence provided by those providers will also be taken into consideration.
- Assessment evidence will carry greater weighting if it has been completed in controlled conditions and quality assurance processes will ensure that only work that has been completed by the student on their own is used as evidence.
- Assessments will be carefully scheduled across the school to ensure that students are not overloaded and put under excessive pressure, whilst ensuring that they are given an opportunity to demonstrate the progress they have made and the commitment they have shown to their studies. Students must feel confident that the grade awarded is a true reflection of their attainment in that subject and that their qualifications stand up well against those awarded to students in other cohorts, and in other schools.

#### **The general approach**

Students will continue to be taught fully across all subject areas for as long as possible, in order to ensure that as much of the curriculum has been covered as possible.

Each subject will decide on the most appropriate form of assessment for their subject and will develop a clear assessment schedule and rationale which will be signed off at a whole school level, and shared with students.

Examples of assessment that may be taken into account:

- Full exam papers, taken in exam conditions and marked using official exam board mark schemes
- Short topic assessments, built using exam board past questions
- Assessments provided by the exam board
- Short knowledge and recall quizzes
- Controlled assessment for subjects that have a practical element

Outcomes from assessments will be shared with students as they are completed, however it is important that students and teachers recognise that it is not always possible to provide a 'grade' on every assessed piece of work.

### **Reporting to parents and students**

We will continue our usual approach to reporting to parents and a final progress report will be sent home by 7 May 2021. This report will include a predicted grade based on the assessment evidence gathered to date, and an effort grade.

It is likely that there will be a further 3-6 weeks of teaching and assessment following this date, so we would anticipate that all students would achieve a final grade that was at least in line with the predicted grade, and in some cases the additional time and assessments may allow students to demonstrate an even greater depth of knowledge and understanding by 18 June, when the final Centre Assessed Grade (CAG) must be submitted.

A webinar will be available to all parents of Year 11 and Year 13 students to allow them to understand our approach to assessment and to ask questions, prior to this final progress report being sent home.

After each small in-class assessment the outcomes will be shared with students, but it is important to note (as mentioned above) that these might not always be graded.

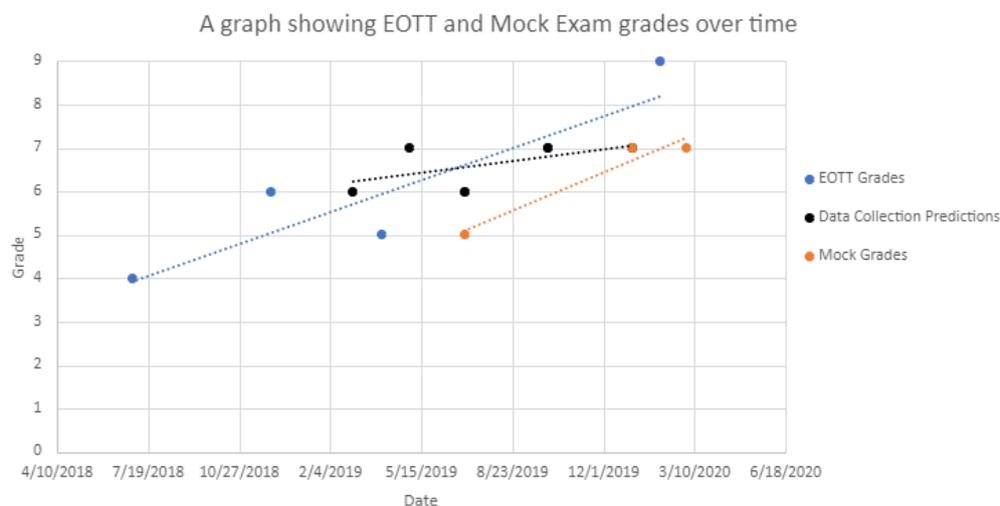
### **Arriving at a final grade**

A similar process will be adopted to that used in Summer 2020.

Trackers will be used to gather every piece of evidence possible and then teachers will work closely with subject and senior leaders to evaluate the tracker and award the most appropriate grade based on the evidence.

For example:

In the graph below it is clear that the evidence gathered for this student in biology at the end of 2020 was sufficient to justify awarding a grade 7 to this student.



The predicted grades awarded to this student were consistently around the grade 6/7 mark throughout Year 10 and 11. The student showed significant improvements in Year 11 and secured grade 7s in both January and March when assessed using full Biology past exam papers taken in full exam conditions, and graded using official grade boundaries.

There is evidence of one end of topic test (EOTT) at grade 9, but this does not provide the same valid evidence as the mock grades, as it was based on one small test covering just 30 marks and no official grade boundaries were available to assign the grade. In addition, other end of topic tests had only secured grade 4, 5 and 6.

Therefore, this student was awarded a grade 7 overall. This was supported by the teacher assessment of their class and homework throughout the course.

### **Quality assurance steps**

#### ***Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors (CIEA)***

We have been recognised by the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors as demonstrating Excellence in Assessment at Lawnswood School for the last 5 years. We gained re-accreditation in November 2019 following a full audit of our approach to assessment and curriculum and were therefore given external recognition by the CIEA of our acknowledgement of assessment policy and a structured process.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 we have maintained a consistent structured approach throughout the last year, and have actually increased our rigorous approach to gathering and evaluating data.

#### ***Professional organisations***

We have engaged fully with advice given from ASCL. In order to ensure that we are meeting the expectations placed on us as a centre.

#### ***Exam boards***

Subject leaders have taken every available opportunity to engage with information and training provided by the exam boards.

#### ***Engaging with other schools***

Leaders involved in assessment throughout the school, work closely with the other schools in the Red Kite Alliance and with schools in Leeds Local Authority.

Approaches to awarding grades, the information gathered and the standard of grade given will be scrutinised across schools to ensure that our students are assessed fairly.

***Internal analysis and evaluation***

All grades submitted by teachers will be carefully scrutinised by senior leaders to check for any anomalies and to ensure that there is a strong evidence base provided for every grade given.

**It is important to note therefore that the grades submitted to the exam boards are not the sole responsibility of the class teacher, but that they will have been carefully checked and validated at a department and whole school level, and therefore subject to moderation at that point.**

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