

*Be inspired and achieve together*

January 19<sup>th</sup> 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you to provide an update regarding examinations and how grades will be awarded for GCSE, A Level and Vocational qualifications in 2021. As you may be aware, Gavin Williamson announced on the 13<sup>th</sup> January that he would like OFQUAL to begin a consultation regarding the process to be applied this summer. In his update he has asked that teacher assessments should be informed by a breadth of evidence to support them in assigning a student's grade. This evidence could include both **internally set mock exams** that are provided by the school and **externally set exams** that are written by the exam board. OFQUAL has released a proposal for a process to be applied this summer that will:

- Allow students to engage in learning for a significant period of time to further develop their understanding and knowledge to a higher level and enable future progression.
- Provide a breadth of evidence that can be used by schools to assign grades for students based on their level of understanding and knowledge.
- Enable an appeal process.

The consultation on how GCSE, AS, A level and Vocational grades should be awarded in summer 2021 is now available using the links below and is available to parents, students and teachers to read and respond. We would encourage all students and parents to read the consultation and complete the online response from by 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

GCSE and A Level: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>

Vocational: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-alternative-arrangements-for-the-award-of-vtqs-and-other-general-qualifications-in-2021>

I am aware that this update may cause some confusion for students regarding their expectations for the remainder of this year and would take this opportunity to remind you of the guidance previously shared for your child:

1. **Your hard work will still be recognised.** None of the effort you have shown so far, and will continue to show in the coming months, will be wasted. On the contrary, the new system will make sure this is fully reflected in your final grade.
2. **Your eventual results will be indistinguishable from real exams.** In the long run, it won't matter your grades came via this system. You will still be able to progress to Sixth Form and University in the normal way. The value of your GCSE and A Level qualification is not being altered, only the way they are administered. None of your ambitions for the future will be affected by this decision.

Arnold Hill Academy is part of the Spencer Academies Trust

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3. **The new system will be fair and balanced.** Grades will be awarded based on objective evidence. Any grades that your teachers set will be moderated carefully, to ensure they are consistent within and between schools. If any parent or student were to be disappointed with their eventual grade, we expect there to be a mechanism to appeal and take a follow-up exam in the autumn, just as there was last time.

I can confirm that all students in Year 11 and 13 will complete mock exams after our return to school. The dates for the mock exams will be made available following further guidance from the government and exam boards. Details of any further exams that may be set by the exam boards will be released following the outcomes of the consultation and will be shared with you as soon as they are available.

Please can I ask that you continue to encourage your child to **attend and engage in all learning opportunities available for the remainder of the year**. All provision available both during lock down and after returning to school, such as live lessons, remote learning or online intervention has been designed to prepare students for any examinations to be completed and to gather relevant evidence required for the final process of assigning grades.

Thank you for your ongoing support and we will continue to keep you informed of any further updates as they become available.

Kind regards,

**Ella Strawbridge**  
Assistant Vice Principal  
Arnold Hill Academy