



Biddenham

International School & Sports College

Principal: Mr David Bailey

Head of School: Ms Eleanor Grylls

9th March 2021

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

There is much going on in the world of education and schools at the moment, what with mass testing, reopening schools and of course, what is happening with examination results this year. Following an announcement from The Department for Education and Ofqual, we wanted to write and outline some of the key information included in the statement. The link to the full statement can be found [here](#).

Attached to this letter is a Parent/Carer and Student factsheet which summarises how students will be assessed and how the school will award grades. We are now waiting for the exam boards to provide us with assessment and training materials and we expect to receive them by the end of this term, possibly into the Easter break. Although there is more information to come from exam boards, we were in a similar position last year and already have robust systems in place that enable us to feel confident that we can fully prepare and support our students.

We appreciate how difficult it has been not knowing how results will be awarded this year. We also understand that students want to be able to move forward with their studies and work hard to achieve well, and it's tempting to ask teachers to provide lots of additional assessment. However, we do have lots of experience of preparing students for assessment and we've learned a great deal from the process of awarding grades last year. More detailed assessment information will be shared with all students, when it has been finalised, and as soon as possible.

The message to all students now is how important it is that you keep engaged in your learning and study. We have been so impressed with your commitment to remote learning and how well you have maintained motivation. But even if remote learning has been difficult, you have every opportunity to make a difference from this point now. All of your hard work will contribute to your grades and it will stand you in good stead for the next stage of your life. The teaching, learning and consolidation of information we complete in school prior to May half term, is essential to students successful transition into their post 16 courses, at every level. You need to be prepared to refocus, engage with your teachers and trust that we are all working towards you achieving your full potential. We have faith in you!

Finally, we can confirm that the leaving dates will remain as originally planned.

Year 11	Thursday 27th May
Year 12 Level 2	Wednesday 26th May
Year 13	Friday 28th May

We are very much looking forward to welcoming students back into school on Monday 15th March.

Yours faithfully

Mr D Bailey
Principal

Ms E Grylls
Head of School

Biddenham Turn, Biddenham, Bedford, MK40 4AZ

Tel: 01234 342521

Fax: 01234 334530

Email: enquiries@biddenham.beds.sch.uk

Website: biddenham.beds.sch.uk

BIDDENHAM INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL & SPORTS COLLEGE

PARENT/CARER AND STUDENT FACTSHEET

Summer 2021 GCSE, A Level and BTEC Results: What you need to know

Find out how students will receive assessment grades this summer for GCSEs, AS and A Levels, BTECs and vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs)

What's happening?

- Exams are cancelled this summer for GCSEs, AS and A Levels and well as BTECs and some VTQs
- Instead of exams students will receive grades based on assessments undertaken in school
- School assessed grades will be sent to the exam board to be processed

How will schools make judgements on grades?

- Teachers will **assess students against a national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
- Schools will use a range of evidence of students' work, like coursework, practice papers and classwork, to inform their decisions
- Schools will let students know what evidence is being used before submitting grades to the exam board. This is so students can confirm it's their own work.
- Schools will only assess students based on what they've been taught
- Individual teachers do not make judgements on grades. The grade students achieve will start with their teacher's assessment of their performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally-defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion.

How will we know grades are awarded fairly?

- Departments will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards. This is to make sure that judgements aren't too harsh or lenient
- Our school results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of the school's evidence
- We'll submit a declaration to the exam board confirming that we've followed the requirements for our internal quality assurance process
- If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**

When will we get our results?

- **AS and A-level, Level 3 BTEC students:** Tuesday 10 August

- **GCSE and BTEC Level 2 students:** Thursday 12 August

Can students and parents make a case for higher grades?

- Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence they are committing exam malpractice.
- In 2020, any undue pressure by students or parents pressuring teachers to increase grades was also considered exam malpractice. It is likely to be the same for 2021. If students or parents are found to be putting teachers or leaders under undue pressure to increase grades, then this matter will be referred to the exam boards and an investigation into malpractice may ensue.

Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

- Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students, including marked or graded pieces of work. However, we are not allowed to disclose the final submitted grades we give to the exam boards.
- Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as the school will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

Can we still appeal?

- Yes, all students will have the right to appeal their grade. After you receive your results if you have any queries about your school assessed grades please email george.foy@biddenham.beds.sch.uk for Year 11 GCSE and alan.brown@biddenham.beds.sch.uk for Year 12 and 13.
- If you appeal, we'll carry out a review to make sure we've followed all processes correctly and that we haven't made an error in your grade
- If we do find an error, we'll submit your revised grade to the exam board. If the board is satisfied, it'll issue a revised grade
- If we don't believe an error has been made, you can ask us to appeal to the board on your behalf. We'll share the evidence the school used to set your grade, and the board will review it to see if we made the right judgement. If they find the grade we set isn't reasonable, they'll provide an alternative grade
- If you disagree with the school's or the exam board's decision, you can refer the issue to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). The exam board will have the final say unless the EPRS finds that it has made an error

What about vocational and technical qualifications?

- If you're taking BTECs or VTQs to progress to further or higher education, you won't have exams. Your grades will also be awarded based on judgements made by the school
- If you want to appeal your results, we can do that on your behalf following the process set out by the individual awarding organisation concerned