

March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers of Year 11 students,

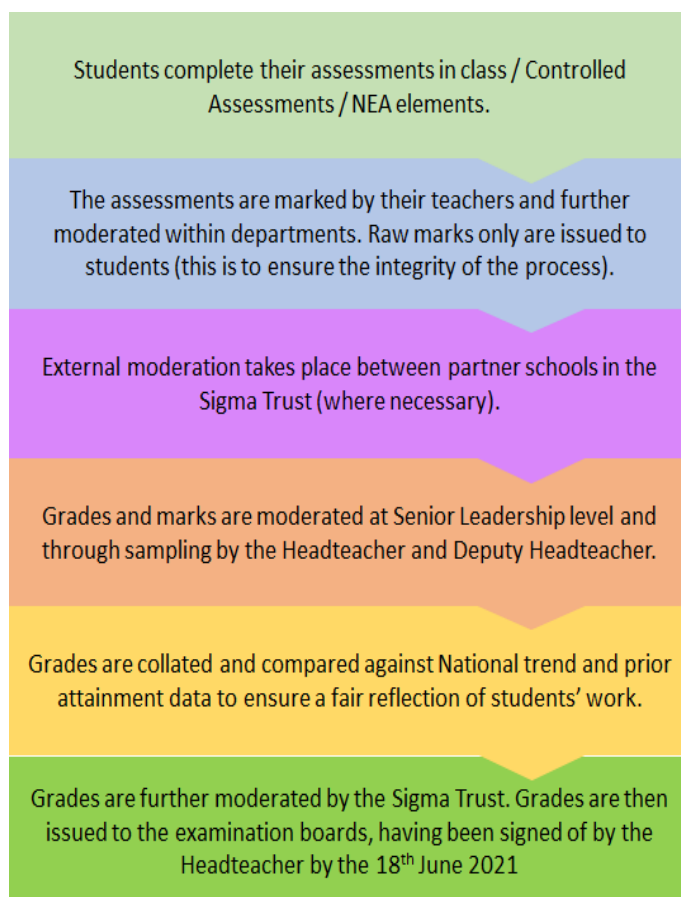
As you are undoubtedly aware, the government released some initial guidance regarding the awarding of grades for students completing their GCSEs this summer. We want to take this opportunity to inform you of our approach so that you can be reassured that students will get the results which reflect their talents and abilities. This process for awarding teacher assessed grades is very similar to what we followed successfully in 2020.

The teacher assessed grades must be submitted to the exam boards by Friday, 18 June. Therefore, we cannot stress enough how important the work that students will be completing over the next three months is as it will provide the final pieces of evidence for teachers to use when determining their grades. We are mindful of ensuring that we get the balance right between the wellbeing of young people and their families, and the need to set up a process that is fair and robust. The details below should give you a good insight into the process we will be using for awarding grades this summer, but if you have any further questions, please [Contact Us](#) directly.

### A Summary of the process

Departments have outlined the structure by which a final grade is to be determined for their students. This varies by department, but essentially combines past assessments, such as essays, in-class assessments and “Non Examined Assessment” elements (NEA is effectively a coursework module) with upcoming assessments such as the Controlled Assessments after Easter, further in-class assessments and completed NEA elements. These will combine to produce a portfolio of evidence that can be used as justification of the grades awarded.

Students who have already completed component elements of their course (such as an Examination module or NEA) may already have ratified grades from examination boards for these units. They will be combined with further course elements to produce an overall teacher assessed grade. You can view the Department for Education’s overview infographic about how grades will be awarded in the summer [here](#).



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As part of this process, internal moderation is occurring at various levels to ensure a rigorous and fair process (see diagram above). This ensures full impartiality in the process and provides a number of moderation layers to our evidence basis prior to any grades being submitted to the examination boards. At the same time, examination boards will conduct their own checks, through a combination of random sampling and more targeted scrutiny.

In total, these protocols will ensure that the process this year meets the following criteria:

- **Clarity and simplicity** – We want the process to be as clear and easily understood as possible.
- **Transparency** – We will be open about why we are doing what we are doing.
- **Opportunity** – Students should have as much opportunity as possible to show us what they can do
- **Fairness** - The grades students receive should be a reflection of their ability.
- **Achievement** – We need to give students a sense of satisfaction and provide them with the appropriate platform for their next steps in education and employment.

## Assessments

Students will only be assessed on content which teachers have covered during the course. From the point our students returned to school, teachers have been focusing on the topics which will be assessed in revision-style lessons, combined with low-stake assessments to help build a profile of each student's abilities. Going forward, students and parents will be given at least 1 weeks notice of any assessment taking place that may contribute as evidence to inform their allocated grades. The examination boards are releasing extra materials for schools to use by the end of March that could then be used to further establish a fair and robust system of assessment.

## Timeline for students

Date	Action
Monday 8th March - Friday 26th March	Students returned to face-to-face teaching. Teaching has prioritised the most important aspects of the course.
Monday 29th March - Friday 9th April	Easter holiday
Monday 12th April - Friday 23rd April	First day back at school for the summer term - Controlled Assessments begin in a number of subjects (see the paragraph below)
Monday 26th April - Friday 28th May	Internal Assessment Period – Key assessments will be occurring in class time.
Monday 31st May - Friday 4th June	Half Term

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Monday 7th June - Friday 18th June	Internal Assessment Period continued. Internal moderation completed and grades prepared for exam boards. (Final Year 11 leaving date to be confirmed)
Friday 18th June	Final grades submitted to examination boards
Thursday 12th August	GCSE Results issued to students

## Controlled Assessments

Controlled assessments will begin on the 12th April. The timetable for these can be found below and on the school website. To support the students in preparing for these, we will be including some independent revision sessions when they are not in assessments. We will issue all students with a timetable of where they will need to be for each session on the 12th of April. However, the linked timetable gives them an overview of when these revision sessions will be run. The Yellow indicates that students not in an assessment will be allocated a revision room to work in for that session. The Pink slots are when we expect them to be in normal lessons, if they are not in an assessment.

We would therefore ask that all students bring in their own revision books and resources so that they can utilise the time efficiently. If they are unsure of how to revise, we have produced some 'How to revise' videos to help guide them on a variety of techniques, these are available on the school website at <https://www.stanway.essex.sch.uk/how-to-revise/>. They are also encouraged to talk to their class teachers about what revision would be beneficial in preparing them for the upcoming assessments.

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**April Controlled Assessments**

Wk1	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> April	Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> April	Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> April	Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> April
am reg	Normal Registration	Normal Registration	<b>Exam starts in form time</b>	Normal Registration	Normal Registration
<b>1</b>	Biology 1hr 15m/1 hr 45m	Computer Science Paper 1 1hr 30	English Lit Macbeth 1hr	Technology 2hr	English Lit Jekyll & Hyde 1hr
<b>2</b>		History (Living Under Nazi Rule) 1hr		Citizenship Paper 1 1hr45m	
Break					
<b>3</b>	Maths Paper 1 Non Calc 1hr 30m	Chemistry 1hr15m/1hr45m	Geography Paper 2 1hr30m	Maths Paper 2 Calculator 1 hr 30m	Food Paper 1 1h30m
<b>4</b>					PE 1hr
pm reg					
<b>5</b>					

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Wk2	Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> April	Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> April	Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> April	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April
am reg	Normal Registration	Normal Registration	Normal Registration	Normal Registration	Normal Registration
<b>1</b>	History (Elizabethans) 1hr	English Language Paper 2 1hr 45	Physics 1hr 15m/1hr 45m	Computer Science Paper 2 1hr 30	Citizenship Paper 2 1hr 10m
<b>2</b>					DIT Paper 1 1hr 30m
Break					
<b>3</b>	Maths Paper 3 Calculator 1hr 30m	Music GCSE 1hr 15m	History (History Around Us) 1hr	French/German/ Spanish Writing Foundation 1hr 5m Higher 1hr 20m	Catch up session
<b>4</b>			PE 1hr		
pm reg					
<b>5</b>				French/German/ Spanish Reading Foundation 35mins Higher 45 mins	Catch up session

### Where do I go if I am not in an assessment?

**Normal timetable will be running**

**You will be in revision rooms rather than your normal lessons**

**\*\*Please bring in your own revision materials each day.\*\***

We hope that this helps to clarify the processes over the coming weeks. It is a very important time for our Year 11 students and, whilst it may be a difficult time for some with the frequency and gravity of the assessment taking place, please be reassured that we will do everything possible to help our students achieve. It is very likely that you may still have several questions at this point. I have attached a FAQ section at the end of this letter that will hopefully alleviate some of your concerns, but if there are any further queries you would like addressed, please [Contact Us](#).

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In the meantime, please make sure that your son/daughter continues to study hard and help them to recognise that they have a wonderful chance to demonstrate their real potential. With all our support, they will undoubtedly emerge from this difficult and unprecedented period with everything they need to make a positive next step in their education /employment.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Player

Deputy Headteacher

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## Frequently Asked Questions:

The following answers will hopefully provide you with as much information as possible given what we have received to date from Ofqual. We will update you as and when we receive further information.

### 1) Will these additional assessments be the equivalent of sitting GCSE examinations?

No, these have some similarity to what most schools refer to as planned 'mock-exams', but covering only some sections of content (not all the content) and spread over a shorter period of time.

### 2) Will my previous classwork and homework grades count equally alongside my assessment grades?

Previously assessed classwork and homework *may* form part of the evidence used towards the final grades awarded. New assessments will cover a broader range of topics than homework assessment alone and will give a more complete picture of how well students understand the course content.

For many students, grades naturally improve over the course of their qualifications and this is why students should continue working to the best of their ability. The final grades will be compiled with a greater emphasis on more recent assessments, conducted over the final weeks of the course, as instructed by Ofqual and the examination boards.

### 3) Will teachers take into consideration the disadvantages faced by the periods of school closure and home learning?

Yes, teachers will be selecting assessments and any other classroom based work and homework which students have had the opportunity to cover properly. Students will receive more information on which topics will be assessed and be provided with the appropriate revision material. If there are any special considerations that the school needs to be aware of, please [Contact Us](#).

### 4) Will the Academy use the Exam Board produced materials?

This is a possibility, and will enable us to ensure that our marking is at the right level and grade decision are not challenged. However, our final decision will be made when we see the material and how it fits with our own assessments. This may vary subject by subject, but we aim to create a fair and robust approach to support accuracy in our judgement across the entire range of subjects.

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## 5) What's happening for vocational and technical qualifications, like BTECs?

Students studying vocational and technical qualifications (VTQs) that are similar to, and taken alongside, or instead of, GCSEs and A levels will also receive grades assessed by teachers rather than sitting exams. The arrangements are similar to those for GCSEs.

## 6) Will the Controlled Assessments take place in the Sports Hall?

We anticipate that most of the controlled assessments will need to be in classrooms. We will also ensure that students who would normally have exam access arrangements have the support they need. This should allow all students to demonstrate the best in their assessments.

## 7) What are my rights if I'm not happy about the grade I receive from the school?

We will try very hard beforehand to make sure that the grade we award is a true reflection of students' abilities. So, we will take into account your performance in the formal internal assessments as well as other information such as classwork, homework and any NEAs or coursework. We know that the lockdown period has affected people in different ways so you must tell us if there is anything exceptional about your personal circumstances which may have affected your ability to engage with learning during this period. To do so, please contact Mr MacPhail, Head of Year 11, at the following email address: [STA-HeadofYear11@Stanway.School](mailto:STA-HeadofYear11@Stanway.School)

There are two grounds on which you can appeal a grade you have received in the Summer:

1. *If you think an administrative error has taken place in the submission and award of the grade. This is relatively straightforward to remedy if this has happened.*
2. *If you feel that the grade(s) that have been awarded are unfair, unjust and have not followed the process set out within the official guidance. In this instance, you will need to direct your appeal to the school. We will then review the evidence and process we have used to issue the grade.*

If there has been an error, the school will liaise with the examination board to have this error corrected. If the student still believes their grade is wrong, we can then submit an appeal to the exam board on your behalf. The exam board can confirm whether the grade is reasonable based on the evidence. If not, they will determine the alternative grade. An exam board will only revise a student's grade where the evidence cannot reasonably support that grade, rather than as a result of marginal differences of opinion. Students should be aware that grades can go up or down as the result of an appeal.

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If you are still unsatisfied with the grade awarded, then there will be an opportunity to take examinations during the Autumn series. You would need to contact the school to notify us of your intention to do this.

### **The Grade Appeal Process 2021**

Our decision on what grade you should be awarded for each subject will be based on a broad range of evidence. We want to make sure you are fully aware of what we are using and so have made sure we explain the evidence for each subject. This information will be put in your google classroom, on the year 11 sections of the school website, sent home, as well as explained in class.

We hope that you will all be happy with your grades you receive and feel it reflects the work you have done. If you feel that the school has made a mistake with the grade you have been given, you are entitled to appeal it. The process for appeal is explained below.

Before we get to results day

Appealing can be stressful and will not guarantee your grade will be changed. To prevent you from having to make an appeal, we would suggest you do the following;

- 1) Discuss any concerns you have about the assessment marks you are getting with your teachers as you receive the feedback. This will also help you to be clear on what you need to do to improve in the next one and ultimately improve your chances of achieving the grade you want.
- 2) Tell your teacher AND Year team if there is anything that is going on in your life that may affect how well you do in your assessments. (for example this could be you being unwell or a serious illness or event in the family).


If there has been an error with the grade and you are considering whether to appeal, please follow the chart below to see if you are able to and what will happen.

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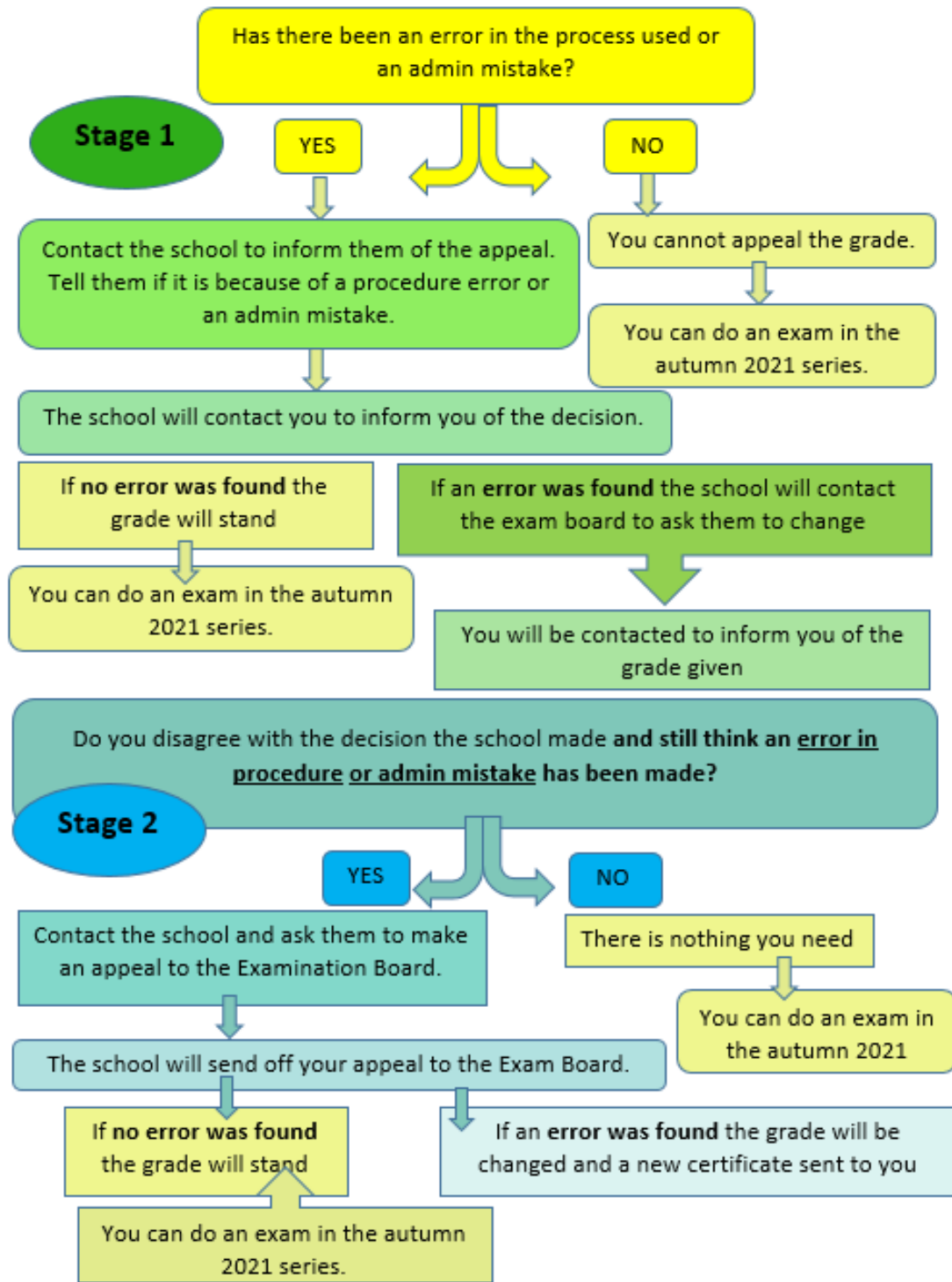
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