

Tudor Grange Samworth Academy



A Church of England School

Tuesday 9th March 2021

Dear Parents / Carers,

We wanted to write to you today to give you a further update about the grading process this year that has replaced exams. Like you, our overarching priority is that your child receives grades that represent a fair and accurate reflection of both their current performance and their performance over the time they have been studying their current course. Furthermore, we know that it is equally important that your child will not be disadvantaged compared with the performance of previous cohorts of students. We are confident from the information we have received so far, that like last year, we will achieve this. Our Leadership team has been working hard over the last week with our partner schools in our trust to start putting together our plans.

We know that you and your child will be anxious to get as much information as possible about the grading procedure that has replaced the usual exams process. Previously we wrote to you to inform you that the main Ofqual consultation had been completed. However, we are still waiting to hear from Ofqual about the results of their technical consultation for grading which will give us more detailed advice about how the process will work. We are also yet to hear from the individual exam boards with regards to the guidelines they wish us to follow and the resources that they will provide. Nonetheless, we do feel that we are now able to give you a broad outline of the steps that will take place between now and the results days at the beginning of August.

Ofqual has stated this year that it is important that your child's final grades reflect their current performance. Consequently, we are providing assessment windows so that your child has multiple opportunities to provide us with evidence of the continual improvement of their performance. We know that some students may be anxious about sitting assessments so soon after their return, however, we are clear that the purpose of these assessment windows is primarily for students to indicate to us how they have improved from the September assessment which is effectively providing us with a baseline starting point.

The timetable for the first assessment window can be found [here](#)

We will be sharing your child's grade from this first set of assessments as quickly as possible once we have moderated student papers and grade boundaries. As you will appreciate, this must be a robust process and we cannot rush it. However, we will immediately use the answers from the assessments to start preparing students for the second windows of assessment later in the summer. Where we identify gaps and needs, we will deal with them through teaching in lessons and intervention.

The second window of assessments (week beginning 17/5) will provide us with important evidence to confirm or uplift the grades achieved in the first assessment, especially where students feel their performance in the assessments before Easter did not indicate their current performance.

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In addition, we will also conduct a number of investigations using statistical tools provided by external institutions such as the Fischer Family Trust, as well as our own analysis to ensure that your child is not disadvantaged.

Between the two assessment windows, we will be sharing with you and your child an outline of the evidence that subject staff will be taking into consideration during the grading process. It is important that we select evidence that adheres to the guidance given to us by Ofqual and the exam boards and there will be a considerable amount of work over the next few weeks to collate that information.

The Leadership team will be meeting with all students individually after Easter to discuss their progress and current performance and to listen to any questions and concerns they might have. We know some students in our community have faced particularly challenging circumstances and we will be communicating with you regularly to help us understand your child's situation even more.

It is perhaps important to explain at this point that exam rules are likely to prevent us from sharing detailed information about our considerations during the grading process. We will however strive to provide you with the maximum amount of information that we can. We very much want this to be a process where you feel that we have been open and honest about the evidence that we will be considering with regards to your child's performance. We will try to make it as clear as we can what evidence is considered by Ofqual to be valid and what evidence is considered to be of limited value. We do ask, however that you give individual teachers and leaders the space and time to make these important decisions. Similarly, to last year, exam guidelines will likely consider any undue pressure on staff a serious issue.

Students will receive their results on Thursday 12th August 2021. We will be sharing further details of the arrangements for results day in due course and we look forward to sharing that positive experience with them.

Once again, please be assured that we are working very hard to understand the guidance being shared with us and to carefully consider how we should apply this to protect the interests of our students and the integrity of the grades they receive. We will continue to communicate with you as much as we can to ensure that we are supporting everyone in what we know is a difficult situation. Thank you for your patience and understanding in the meantime.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Roach
Executive Principal

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