

Formby High School

'Determined to Achieve'



DMA/LFO

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Dear Year 11 Students / Parents

GCSE Results Summer 2020

Students received their GCSE grades on Thursday and I wanted to write to share some important information about the grades students have received and the appeals process.

In my letter that was included with results on Thursday I commented that, overall, the grades that students have received are very impressive and, whilst there will inevitably be some individual disappointment, are reflective of the hard work, effort and endeavour of the students and their teachers up until school closed on 20 March 2020.

To demonstrate how well students have performed the table below compares this year's results to the average of the last two years.

	9 – 7%	9 – 5%	9 – 4%	9 – 1%
2020	33%	74%	88%	100%
Average of 2019 and 2018	26%	68%	85%	100%

Events this year are unprecedented. When GCSE examinations were cancelled, schools were asked to use their professional experience to make a fair and objective judgement of the grades they believed students would have achieved had they sat their examinations, based on work that they had completed. Schools were directed to provide a fair assessment based on available evidence and not simply a prediction (based on how hard students may work in the final few weeks before examinations commenced). These centre assessed grades had to be submitted to the relevant examination boards.

Schools were issued with clear criteria to apply by Ofqual. You can read a copy of the guidance [here](#). On pages 6 and 7 you will see the different evidence that schools were asked to consider when determining centre assessed grades and you will notice the reference to historic results in each subject. On page 11, Ofqual sets out the ill-fated standardisation model where reference is made to adjusting centre assessed grades submitted by schools that are inconsistent with historic results. Furthermore, on submission of centre assessed grades to the examination boards Headteachers were asked to sign a Head of Centre Declaration. I have copied below a paragraph from the Head of Centre Declaration which outlines the consequences if schools submit grades above a certain level of tolerance.





I understand that exam boards will conduct a statistical standardisation exercise, using a model developed with Ofqual, and that, if the profile of grades submitted is substantially different from what might be expected based on my centre's historical results and the prior attainment of this year's students, the grades for my centre will be adjusted to bring them into line with national standards.

Teachers, Subject Leaders and the Senior Leadership Team took this process seriously, both in terms of generating grades and conducting internal moderation and standardisation to ensure the grades submitted were a fair representation of the cohort and would not be subject to 'downward adjustment' that may disadvantage our typically high achieving students.

All staff involved in the process acted with fairness and integrity, based on the information that was made available to us at the time. In addition, to ensure objectivity and balance, teachers drew on a wide body of evidence, not just results in Pre-Public Examinations, when making their judgements.

When preparing centre assessed grades we were unaware that they would become students' final grades. The intention was that the examination boards would moderate the submitted centre assessed grades to check that schools had approached the task consistently, before providing students with their final calculated grades. Unfortunately, as you will no doubt be aware, the statistical method they used to do this proved problematic and would have led to many grades being unfairly downgraded. The government, therefore, made the decision that GCSE students would be awarded whichever was higher for each subject – their centre assess grade or their calculated grade.

The late decision to change to a different method, while necessary in the circumstances, is also far from perfect. Whilst most students will have received grades which accurately reflect their performance over the last two years and enable them to move on to their next stage of education, some will be disappointed and may feel they have not been fairly treated.

According to [Ofqual guidance](#), the grounds on which students can appeal their grades are limited – essentially, if they believe there has been an administrative error in communicating their grades. In addition, any student (or his/her parents) who believes he/she received the wrong grades as a result of bias, discrimination or intentional wrongdoing (malpractice or maladministration) may raise a complaint with the school directly, or with the examination board.

Schools cannot appeal where a student disagrees with his/her grade(s), believes the centre assessed grade is not an accurate reflection of his/her ability or that he/she received a higher grade in a mock examination (known as a Pre-Public Examination at FHS). Furthermore, the school wishing to change a centre assessed grade is not considered grounds for appeal.

For those students who are disappointed with a grade, they do have the opportunity to take examinations during the Autumn series. Whilst I would encourage students to be cautious taking examinations if they have achieved the grades required to progress to the next stage of their education, if they wish to do so they should complete an [entry form](#) and submit it to the Examinations & Data Department.

I hope this letter is helpful in providing information about how students' grades were generated and the mechanisms available to students to contest the grades they have received.

To finish, I will repeat my message from the start of this letter that the grades students have been awarded overall are excellent and should be a cause for celebration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D A Mackenzie'.

D A Mackenzie
Headteacher