



"Deo Reddite Dei"

"Give back to God what belongs to God"

Tuesday 18th August

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Statement on Year 13 Results – Centre Assessed Grades

We are writing to you to explain the recent changes in the government's examination policy, to the best of our understanding. We outline how these changes may affect a limited number of our students.

As you know, exams were cancelled this year due to the pandemic. Instead, schools were asked to submit **centre assessed grades and rank orders** that would then be moderated by Ofqual (the governmental body responsible for qualifications) to ensure that they were in line with previous years' results. Yesterday, the government announced that due to issues with the statistical moderation process, this moderation would be overturned, and students would receive their centre assessed grades as the final result. (The only exception to this is where the moderated result was higher, in which case the student will receive the higher of the two grades as their final result.)

We are emailing and writing to all Level 3 parents, carers and students, as well as publishing this statement on our website, so that there is clarity about the process behind the agreement of these centre assessed grades. We are also confirming all students' final Level 3 results with them by email and post today.

As a school, we were determined to ensure that we produced a robust set of Centre Assessed Grades. We wanted to give every student the best possible grades without risking downwards moderation by exam boards and Ofqual. In order to do this in a way that was fair to all students, we did the following:

- After exams were cancelled, we designed and agreed the following process with Governors, Curriculum Leaders and an independent data consultant who works with the school. We put this process in place to ensure that all qualifications at Key Stage 4 and 5 followed the same processes so that there was parity amongst all subjects.
- We met with each Curriculum Leader to review previous predicted data and agree which data was used as the starting point for their decision-making processes. For most subjects, this was mock (PPE) data as well as previous predicted grades. For subjects including NEA (coursework), this was included as well. The averaged marks from this data formed the starting point of our rank orders, meaning that there was parity between different classes in the same subject. For vocational subjects such as BTECs, work already completed in the subject formed the basis of this judgment.
- Individual class teachers then completed **teacher assessed grades** and rankings for their own class, using the mock exam and NEA data (where applicable) as a starting point.

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- Class teachers then met as a department team with their Curriculum Leader to moderate the teacher predicted grades and agree an overall rank order (where there was more than one class of students in a subject). Staff had access to student books and compared individual pieces of work where necessary to decide on fine judgments in the ranking of students. These meetings produced **department assessed grades**.
- The Senior Team, including the Headteacher, then reviewed all the department assessed grades with the school's independent data consultant. We moderated, comparing and department assessed grades to the last set of the predicted grades while considering the context of the school's improving results over recent years.
- Senior staff also met with the SENCO to review the department assessed grades for students who would normally have been given special consideration in exams. This was done in order to review each student's grades, checking that departments had taken these access arrangements into account in making their decisions.
- After the Senior Team review, Senior Staff met with Curriculum Leaders in all subjects. Where we had concerns that the department assessed grades might be moderated downwards by exam boards and by Ofqual's algorithm, we asked Curriculum Leaders to look again at their data. Equally, where we felt that there was an opportunity to increase grades without risking downwards moderation, we asked them to consider moving some borderline students upwards. This is because we were committed to giving each child the best possible results, while not triggering significant moderation downwards from the exam boards and the use of the Ofqual algorithm.
- Where necessary, Curriculum Leaders adjusted grades after these meetings to produce the **centre assessed grades**. These were, again, quality assured by the Senior Team and the independent data consultant.
- The final centre assessed grades were inputted by a member of the data team and double-checked by another member of the team. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher then sampled 20% of these grades to triple-check that the data was accurate before submitting.

This was a lengthy process that took nearly two months to complete from beginning to end. **It is important to note that no one teacher is responsible for your child's grades.** We worked in teams to moderate and recruited an external expert to scrutinise and challenge our processes and moderate our results. The Governing Board also scrutinised the process. We have acted with integrity to ensure that, to the best of our knowledge, every student was treated fairly, equitably and impartially and no child would be significantly moderated down by the exam boards and Ofqual's algorithm.

You may have read in the press that, nationally, 40% of A Level Results were downgraded. At SJF, only 8% (ten individual subject results) of our Level 3 qualifications were downgraded. Of all our Level 3

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qualifications this year, only 6% (seven individual subject results) have been upgraded. This is a vindication of the quality and robustness of our moderation processes. We are delighted to say that the vast majority of our students achieved their first-choice university.

Although only a very small number of our grades have been increased due to yesterday's announcement, we are nonetheless writing to all students in Year 13 with their centre assessed grades, their grade as initially confirmed by the exam boards, and what we believe will be their final grade. We are doing this for the sake of clarity and transparency and because we want all our students (not just those whose grades have increased) to know exactly what the processes were that took place in the school so they can have confidence in what they have achieved. A copy of this letter and student results will be emailed to students' school email addresses today and posted to arrive later this week. Due to data protection, we are unable to email results to parents and carers unless the student has specifically given permission for this by emailing Mrs. Darby, the Exams Officer, on s.darby@stjohnfisher.school.

The vast majority of students who came to us in Year 7 and stayed with us for the whole of their time in secondary school have successfully achieved places in their first-choice universities. Mrs. Bailey has been working to place students who have now decided, on the basis of their excellent results, to go to university. She will be glad to work with anyone who is considering negotiating a different university place. Please do email her if this is the case.

We are aware that despite the robust nature of our process, and the confirmation of centre assessed grades as the final results, some students will be unhappy with their results. We are awaiting confirmation from the Department for Education and Ofqual as to how the appeals procedure will work. If you have previously raised concerns with us, we will be in contact with you as soon as we have further details.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at the email addresses below.

Yours faithfully,

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