



Ark Burlington Danes Academy

10th March 2021

Re: Awarding Grades

Dear Year 11 and Year 13 students,

I know you have been keen to know how the process for awarding grades this year will work since the government announced the cancellation of the normal exam schedule for your GCSE, BTEC and A-level qualifications. At present it is difficult to provide as much information as we would like because the full guidance from the exam boards has not been released.

The consultation process is still underway with the exam regulator, Ofqual, and will conclude on Thursday 11th March. We anticipate that we will receive the final guidance on how grades are to be awarded a few weeks after that date.

Nonetheless, although the guidance lacks certain critical details and has yet to be finalised, I can update you on some key points that I think will provide reassurance to students, parents and teachers on how grades will be awarded.

What we know about the process

Although we don't have the final details of the process yet, we do know the following:

- Grades will be based on teacher assessment
- The range of evidence will likely include:
 1. *Work done prior to lockdown, including assessments and classwork*
 2. *Work that has been done during lockdown*
 3. *Work done since the return to school on March 8th, including classwork and a more formal exam period in the summer term*
- Assessments in the summer term will not be full exams – they will be shorter and based only on the material students have covered. They will be based around a bank of exam-style questions that will be provided by exam boards.

What we don't know about the process

We are awaiting confirmation of key details before we share the process for awarding grades with students and parents, namely:

- We are awaiting confirmation of the specific evidence sources we can use
- We are awaiting instruction on the weighting of each type of evidence
- We are awaiting sample examination material from the exam boards
- We await guidance on the process by which Ofqual will moderate the grades that schools provide

Our core principles

Across the Ark network, all schools will be working in a similar way, using a set of key principles to guide our work. These principles are:

- The process that we will use will be fair and rigorous. The grades given will represent students' ability.
- The school will use a robust range of evidence on which to base judgements.

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- The grades awarded will be quality assured across the network.
- We will ensure that you feel well informed, involved and supported in the process.
- We will also ensure that staff feel supported as much as possible through the process.

A tentative timeline

With the proviso that we are awaiting confirmation on key parts of the process from Ofqual, we have attempted to map out the coming months for our Year 11 and Year 13 students:

| Period | Activities |
|--|---|
| Spring 2 term <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 weeks• 8th March – 1st April | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Year 11/13 back in class from 8th March• Teachers will use a range of different assessment methods to uncover key knowledge gaps. These assessments will not be used as part of the generation of Centre-Assessed Grades.• No new content will be taught beyond completing your current topic• The school will communicate the post-Easter assessment plan and further guidance to students and parents as soon as we have it from the exam boards |
| Easter break <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 weeks• 2nd April – 19th April | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All students will be provided with revision packs through Show My Homework for each subject, targeted to the key topic areas that will be assessed after Easter.• All students will be provided with a pack of practice exam questions for each subject through Show My Homework.• Virtual revision sessions may take place in some subjects. |
| Summer 1 term <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 weeks• 20th April – 28th May | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run-in to assessment fortnight begins• Lots of exam practice• Smaller, in-class assessments take place – mainly topic focused• Formal assessment period takes place |
| Summer 2 term <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6 weeks• 7th June – 20th July | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marking and moderation concludes• Additional evidence gathered from students if required• Grades submitted to exam boards |

This is as much information as we can confidently share with you at present, but I shall be writing to you with details of the full process as soon as more information becomes available to us.

For now, it is important that our Year 11s and Year 13s focus on the following:

- Make sure you are in school and your attendance is high
- Follow your teachers' guidance and study hard in class and at home
- Focus on the topics that your teachers advise you to revise

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- Rest assured that BDA teachers, heads of departments, senior leaders, the Principal and Ark will have a rigorous and fair process in place to make sure you get the grade you deserve
- Aim High, Be Brave, Be Kind and Keep Learning

These are challenging times, but we are thankful that we are back in school and have the opportunity to really focus on our learning over the coming months. I look forward to working with our families, students and staff to ensure that our students get the grades they deserve. If we **aim high** and **keep learning**, we can be confident that our students will achieve a great set of results that truly reflect their potential.

I look forward to writing to you with more detailed plans over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Bhatia
Principal

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