



The Thomas Hardy School

QUEENS AVENUE DORCHESTER DT1 2ET

Headteacher
MT Foley BA MEd

TEL: 01305 266064
EMAIL: admin@thomas-hardye.net
www.thomas-hardye.net

15 March 2021

Dear parents and carers

As students return to school I thought it would be a good time to bring you up to date with what we know about centre assessed grades at the moment, although I must emphasise that we are awaiting more detailed guidance from the exam boards by the end of term.

How will grades be awarded this summer?

Grades for GCSEs, A levels, and most other qualifications will be based on a process involving teacher assessment against national standards with checks and balances being carried out by the school and also by the exam boards.

The national process follows five key stages:

1. Teachers will **assess students against a national standard**, which will be defined by the exam boards before the Easter break.
2. Departments will submit grades which will be **quality assured by the school**. This internal quality assurance process will have to be signed off by the exam board to ensure it is rigorous and in line with national standards.
3. Our school or college results will be **quality assured externally** by the exam boards, which may include random sampling of our school's evidence.
4. If the exam boards are confident in our submitted results, **then the exam boards will award students their final grades**.
5. If students do not think their results are accurate, they will have the right to **appeal**.

So, do teachers award the grade?

Ultimately it is the exam boards that award grades. The process will start with the teacher's assessment of a student's performance across a range of evidence. This is against a nationally-defined standard, not the teacher's own opinion. This assessment is then subject to both internal and external checks before the final grade is awarded by the exam body as usual. Unlike last year there will be no use of computer generated algorithms.

Leadership Team

Mrs L Cheney BEd
Mr I Cornell BSc
Mr J Dean BSc
Dr T Ennion BSc PhD
Mr T Hardinge BSc MA
Mrs L Morrison BEng
Mr R Nicholls BSc
Mrs C Noble BA





The Thomas Hardy School

Headteacher
MT Foley BA MEd

QUEENS AVENUE DORCHESTER DT1 2ET

TEL: 01305 266064
EMAIL: admin@thomas-hardye.net
www.thomas-hardye.net

What about loss of learning / impact of Covid?

This year, teachers will only assess students on content they have been taught – because of the continued disruption of the pandemic. This means students will not be disadvantaged if they have been unable to complete their full course. However, grades can only be submitted on the basis of the evidence we have of students' performance, even if that evidence covers less of the course than usual.

Will grades be different between different schools and colleges?

It will be more difficult to achieve parity using this method but the standard against which teachers will be assessing students is set nationally by the exam boards. This is the standard that will be used during external quality assurance and appeals to ensure consistency and fairness across the system.

What evidence will be used?

Teachers are able to draw on a range of assessment evidence from across a student's study of the course, up until the point at which grades are collected and sent off. This may include homework tasks, mock exams, and papers set by the exam boards. This will include evidence from before the second lockdown, as well as evidence from March – June. The exam boards are producing assessment materials that will be sent to us before Easter. Different departments may use different sources of evidence, and there is no requirement for any one type of assessment to be used – it's about a performance across a range of evidence.

Exams have been cancelled and we have no intention of re-running them in some other format. There will be tests and assessments as part of the normal learning process but not high-stakes testing such as mock exams.

Can students and parents make the case for why a student should get a higher grade?

Our teachers are already using their professional expertise to assess students on the content they have been taught. Teachers are unable to submit higher grades for students unless they have the evidence that they are consistently working at this level. If teachers submit higher grades without evidence they are committing exam malpractice.

In 2020, any undue pressure by student or parent who placed undue pressure on teachers to increase grades was also considered exam malpractice. It is likely to be the same for 2021.

Can students discuss their grades with teachers?

Teachers will be able to discuss which evidence they are using to inform their judgement with students, including marked or graded pieces of work. However, we are not allowed to disclose their final submitted grade we give to the exam board.

Leadership Team
Mrs L Cheney BEd
Mr J Cornell BSc
Mr J Dean BSc
Dr T Ennion BSc PhD
Mr T Hardinge BSc MA
Mrs L Morrison BEng
Mr R Nicholls BSc
Mrs C Noble BA





The Thomas Hardy School

Headteacher
MT Foley BA MEd

QUEENS AVENUE DORCHESTER DT1 2ET

TEL: 01305 266064
EMAIL: admin@thomas-hardye.net
www.thomas-hardye.net

Students should not attempt to second-guess the grade submitted, as teachers will be using a range of evidence to inform their final judgement. Students must not pressure teachers to reveal the grades they are submitting, or to increase the grades, as doing so may be considered exam malpractice.

What should students do to improve their grades?

The best thing students can do is to continue to attend classes, learn, act on feedback from their teachers, revise for any class tests, and read around their subject. Their grade will be based on their performance, and so their outcomes are ultimately in their hands.

We are also awaiting further advice on a suitable leaving date for Years 11 and 13. Most schools are aiming for a date somewhere around May half-term but please don't rely on this or make any firm plans until we have had further confirmation.

We want students to continue to make progress and to enjoy their learning. Most of the questions to do with centre assessed grades can be answered by referring back to the good practices in teaching and learning that we adhere to at any other time.

We will write to you again once we have further information but I hope this update keeps you informed about where we are at the current time. As ever, best wishes to everyone reaching final assessment this summer.

Yours sincerely

M Foley
Headteacher

Leadership Team

Mrs L Cheney BEd
Mr I Cornell BSc
Mr J Dean BSc
Dr T Ennion BSc PhD
Mr T Hardinge BSc MA
Mrs L Morrison BEng
Mr R Nicholls BSc
Mrs C Noble BA

