

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Students and Parents (Year 11 and 13)

We are writing to you as school officially ends for the academic year, to clarify again the position regarding results this summer.

The word unprecedented has been used a great deal over the last four months; but it does sum up the experience that you have had in your final year of education, either as a Year 11 Beckfoot Thornton student in your final year of compulsory schooling, or as a Year 13 student in our Trust School 6th Form.

Despite not physically seeing you over the past few months, we hope that you feel we have kept in touch. Those of you in Year 11 coming into our 6th Form should have undertaken transition activities and preparatory study for when you begin with us in September, and those of you in Year 13 should have made sure you've completed your A level courses to propel you into University or employment with all the knowledge you need to succeed.

Results Days this year are on Thursday 13th August (A Level) and Thursday 20th August (GCSE). As you are already aware, the organisation of both results days will be different, and this year you will receive your results via email to your school email address. We must consider social distancing, follow Government guidance and, as schools who take safeguarding very seriously, make sure that you, our staff and everyone's family and community get our support in keeping well and healthy over the summer and beyond. To help ensure that you are able to access these results on results day, you will have been sent a test email today to your school email account, that asks you to make sure that we have the right details. **Please can you make sure that you log onto your school email account before the end of term and check these details.** If you have any problems logging on, please let us know via [results@beckfootthornton.org](mailto:results@beckfootthornton.org) as soon as possible. As well as receiving an email, your results will also be sent to you in a letter and will this be posted on results day to the address we hold on file for you at school.

The way that grades will be awarded this year is also slightly different. We have already communicated this to you, but we felt it would be useful to reiterate this information and place it into context for you again, to ensure any questions you have are answered well in advance of results day.

Despite the differences outlined above and the disruption to your final year of school/ A levels, we want to reassure you that we are here to support you. As such, the following is a reminder and guide for you around this year's grades process and next steps, so that you know what to expect on the 13th/20th August and just as importantly, so that you can enjoy your summer reassured in the knowledge that we are here for you.

**Headteacher:** Jeremy Richardson  
**Chair of Academy Trustees:**  
John Winkley

**Beckfoot**  
Trust

### **How is this year different?**

No examinations were sat this year. As such, grades are to be awarded to students in a different way.

At the request of the Government, all schools in the country have followed rigorous directions set out by the examination regulatory body OFQUAL. OFQUAL asked schools to send exam boards two pieces of information for each of your subjects.

- The grade we believe you were most likely to get if teaching, learning and exams had happened as planned and you continued to make progress at the same rate you had before. (These are referred to as CAG or Centre Assessed Grade)
- A ranked list of all students within each grade for each subject.

Every school was asked to consider a wide range of evidence to inform the grade they submitted, including work done in class, homework, previous results in assignments and any mock exams, as well as your general progress during your course.

At Beckfoot Thornton we used a variety of the following evidence: mock examination results for November; mock examination results for February; STAR marked pieces of work; class and homework; non exam assessment or practical work (if applicable). We then checked this information (quality assured it) and made sure that our grades were as accurate as they could be, based on the information we had and in line with every other school in the country. We believe this process was fair.

OFQUAL used this information to standardise grades across schools and colleges, to make sure that, as far as possible, results are fair across the country and that students are not advantaged or disadvantaged because their schools or colleges are more generous or harsh than others, when making those judgements.

In essence, they provide an independent quality assurance check to reassure students and parents that the grade allocated is the right one each student deserves.

### **What to expect on Results Day?**

On Results Day, the grade(s) you receive will come from the examination regulatory body OFQUAL. All of the above processes have taken place and school grades have been checked, moderated and standardised.

This means that the final grade you get could be different from the one your school or college sent to the exam board.

You will not routinely receive the grade that the school gave you (neither the CAG or the Rank you received) – only the fairly moderated/quality assured grade that OFQUAL has awarded you. As with any other academic year, these grades will then help Universities (year 13)/6th Forms/ Colleges (Year 11) to put students onto courses that they can succeed on and that they are suited to.

For those Year 13 students who are applying to University, UCAS have reassured schools that they will take this year's unusual situation into account when allocating places and although, as in every other year, we cannot guarantee you will get onto your first choice if you do not have the expected grades, we will be there to support you and make sure that you get a great choice University or destination. For those students who are not looking to University this year, or who need different advice, we can support you in making contacts with careers and gap years, please make sure that you speak with us.

For those Year 11 students coming into our Sixth Form here at Beckfoot Thornton, the advantage of staying with us is clear – we have a raft of school information that we can use to make sure you make the right choices. Although, just as in any other year, we always refer to published entry criteria for entry onto subjects your teachers know you, understand your capabilities and are in a strong position to guide you to make the right choices. Students will all be given the opportunity, should they need, to individually discuss options via a meeting with the 6th Form Team/ Senior Team. We will send details to all Sixth Form applicants about the enrolment process on results day very soon.

### **Normal feelings and responses**

Some of you may feel that the grade(s) OFQUAL have awarded you are not what you (your children) may have achieved should you have sat an examination. Whilst we understand this feeling, we would urge you to focus on the more important and bigger picture – your next step. If you have the grades required to start the next stage of your journey and have secured your destination (albeit with the odd disappointing or strange grade), the prudent thing to do is celebrate your success and resilience, look after your mental and physical health and start getting excited about September.

Every single student in the country has had the same experience this year. On the one hand, whilst your grades are no less valid than any other student in any other examination year group, you also have the advantage of being able to apply context: You took your examinations in the “COVID year”. Universities know this, schools know this, and wider society will always understand. It sounds trite, but you have lived through an historical and extraordinary year. These grades do not define you as a person, your ability to adapt to an unusual situation; respond positively and “dig in and onwards” do. Again, we are here to help if you feel that you need to talk, but our advice will be thus and our support and commitment to get you to where you need to be non-negotiable.

### **Understanding the appeals process.**

In the interests of transparency, it is right that we flag up the appeals process with you. OFQUAL are clear: if a student is dissatisfied with the grade that they have been awarded this is NOT grounds for an appeal. Appeals can only be made if a student and the school suspect a technical/administrative error. But these are likely to be swiftly dealt with and relatively minor.

The advice from OFQUAL for students who feel they could have performed better is to prepare for, and then sit the examination when they are offered in the Autumn Term. Individual students can speak with appropriate teaching staff about this, but again at Beckfoot Thornton we would strongly advise that unless necessary, students should not re-sit, but instead focus on their future learning and new courses. Trying to re-sit as well as learn new information is likely to lead to a cognitive overload and cause anxiety amongst young people. We are very keen that this does not happen.

### **A final reassurance and note about CAG**

A very small minority of you may also feel that Beckfoot Thornton should share CAG (centre assessed grades) on results day. We understand this, but as stated above we are confident that we know our students well, assessed them fairly and proportionately, and that we worked professionally within a quality assured, transparent framework. Sharing CAG, on results day, in our professional opinion, will not be helpful. As we must trust that OFQUAL will take these grades and apply a fair statistical standardisation at a national level, we are asking you to trust us in prioritising you/your child's future on that day. In an extraordinary year, we all need a "little faith" and to trust in the system! Our students are our priority and we will do our utmost to get them to where they need to be.

Regarding those of you who would like to see your CAG. If this is the case, you can request them using our CAG request form. Students must request these (not parents) and should email [results@beckfootthornton.org](mailto:results@beckfootthornton.org) from their school email address. We plan to release the CAG (to those who request them) a week or so after results day. This will help us to manage our resources, prioritise students who need most support and focus on what we feel is the most important goal – supporting students into their destinations. We'd ask you to support us in this. However, if for any reason you need this information more quickly, we will do our utmost to support any such request.

Please ensure that this is outlined in the email that is sent. Please also note that we cannot release the CAG or ranking under any circumstances before results day, and that individual teachers will not be able to provide CAGs or rankings for any individual subjects.

We hope that you have found this useful and it has answered any questions you may have had around results day. We will of course, on your behalf, keep a watching brief and will be in touch again shortly before results day with a reminder of the huge amount of information in this letter.

Until then have a restful and happy summer.

Yours sincerely



Mr J Richardson  
Headteacher  
Beckfoot Thornton

**The Beckfoot Trust 6<sup>th</sup> Form (Beckfoot Thornton)**

Peter Dolan (Head of Sixth Form)

Dawn Morgan (Associate Director Beckfoot Trust 6<sup>th</sup> Form)



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