



August 2016

Parents of Year 12

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As your son/daughter completed GCSE examinations this summer and will collect results on Thursday, 25 August, I thought it may be useful to provide you with an overview of the support the school can offer once the examination results have been published. This support includes the following:

- 1 Enquiries about results to the examination board.
- 2 Careers Department support.

1 Enquiries about Results

CCEA is the examination board for all GCSE examinations entered by students in Wallace.

When your son/daughter receives his/her GCSE results, for each subject, as well as a grade, he/she will receive a “raw mark” and a “uniform mark”. Percentages are not used by examination boards for awarding grades. The raw mark shows you the proportion of the total mark available that was achieved. This raw mark achieved, for each examination module within a subject, is then converted to a Uniform Mark. This uniform mark across all the examination papers completed in a subject is then used to set grade boundaries. As way of a worked example, in the summer of 2015, the French GCSE grade boundaries for each higher tier paper were as follows:

French Speaking (worth 30% of GCSE)

The maximum Uniform Mark was 120.

To gain an A*, candidates had to achieve 108+

To gain an A, 96-107

To gain a B, 84-95

To gain a C, 72-84.

These were the same grade boundaries for the French Writing (worth 30% of GCSE).

The other two papers, Listening and Reading, are both weighted as 20% of the total GCSE. The maximum Uniform Mark in these papers was 80. The grade boundaries were as follows:

A* 72+

A 64-71

B 56-63

C 48-55

So, for example, if a candidate achieved a B grade overall in French, this could be made up as follows:

French Speaking	84
French Writing	84
French Listening	56
French Reading	<u>56</u>
Total Uniform Mark	280

The range of Uniform Marks for a B grade is 280-294. Therefore, a mark of 280 is just into the B grade.

Candidates with 290 and above, or those who are close to the next grade, may decide to ask for a remark of some of the papers in a subject.

Parents may wish to approach Wallace, Mr Kidd is the designated member of staff responsible for the administration of remarks and the recall of scripts, to ask that a paper is remarked because, for example, if it is very close to the next overall grade boundary for the subject, e.g. if the French GCSE worked example had been 290, rather than 280. Parents should be aware that uniform marks can go up or down, as can the grade awarded therefore. The majority of 'successful' remarks, from the candidates' perspective, are those which add a couple of uniform marks and bring the candidate up to the next grade.

The cost of remarks is borne by parents as it is your choice, with the advice of the school, if you would like to request these. Remarks and any other enquiries about results have to be made through the school, they cannot be made to CCEA directly. Information about the costs of the various services is available on

http://ccea.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/exams_officers/June_2016_Summary_Document.pdf

There is a third service available which is access to photocopies of GCSE scripts with the mark scheme, before a remark. This is only available for GCSE English Language and Mathematics at a cost of £8.50; access to a photocopy of a remarked script with the mark scheme after a remark, also £8.50 and finally access to the original script with a mark scheme, £6.30.

When deciding if you should request a remark on behalf of your son/daughter, in summary, it is worth considering the following:

- (1) Looking at the Uniform Marks, how close is he/she to the next grade boundary and in which papers, which make up the subject, should a remark be considered?
- (2) What is the impact of a potential increase in the grade, if the candidate is very close to the next grade. For example, for prospective Medical applicants, one or two more A* grades can mean they are more likely to get an offer from certain universities.

- (3) It is worth moving quickly, but not rushing the decision, and being aware of the deadlines for remarks. These will be enclosed in the envelope with the GCSE results available in school on Thursday, 25 August and are on the link above.

Heads of Department also have a useful insight into remarks and previous experiences but it is always important to remember that marks (and grades) can go up or down. It is usually the subjects in which there is the greatest level of 'subjectivity' in which there are significant increases in marks, i.e. English Literature, History, Geography and Business Studies. To help support your decisions the school will tweet and post on Facebook the CCEA UMS subject grid for Summer 2016 on results day.

2 Careers Department Support

Young people, post GCSE release, fall into three categories and should seek support as follows:

- (i) Those who have decided not to return to school after GCSE and are already enrolled on another course or have employment.
- (ii) Those who expected to return to school after GCSE but have not met the school's entry criteria of 14 points.

Mr Beaton and Mrs Palmer (Careers Department) will be available as will a member of the NI Career Service to help those in this situation. Please contact the Front Office on the morning of GCSE results to make an appointment. It is important to move quickly. If your son/daughter is considering studying A Levels elsewhere, it is very important to consider if this is the correct route for him/her and if a more vocational route may be a more suitable one.

There are a small number of schools locally which have a lower entry criteria for A Level study. It might be worth enquiring how students historically perform in your son's/daughter's chosen A Level subjects with e.g. 10-13 GCSE points. If your son/daughter is taking A Levels as a route to University study in Northern Ireland, then it is important to appreciate that both local universities now accept almost exclusively, for all courses, A and B grades at A Level only.

- (iii) The vast majority of our GCSE students will have expected or better grades (last year 80% of students had 7 or more A*-B grades at GCSE including English and Mathematics). Some may wish to make 1 or 2 changes to A Level subjects and it is important this is not rushed and you may be required to arrange a Careers Interview before such a change can be made. Within this group there will be some students who are not eligible, based on their GCSE result, to study an A Level subject previously selected.

The school follows its published criteria and the entry requirements for each A Level subject; it has been very carefully designed to take account of historical trends and norm referencing assessment of comparative cohorts across N Ireland.

I trust this short paper has been of some use and I wish our students every success with their GCSE results. Although our results at GCSE are excellent, I appreciate that some parents may have understood the “Enquiry About Results” service better than others and I trust this explanation goes some way to levelling this out, complicated as it is.

Yours sincerely,

D O’Hare (Mrs)
Principal