

# Summerhill School

## Grade Appeals Policy

### Summer 2021

This policy was approved by Headteacher on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

..... Martyn Palfreyman

Adopted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## **1 Aims and Application**

- 1.1 Due to Covid-19, exams have not been able to take place in the usual way in 2021 with students receiving grades based on Teacher Assessed Grades. Summerhill School (“the Centre”) submitted grades for students this summer in line with the relevant guidance from the Joint Council on Qualifications (“JCQ”), Ofqual and the awarding organisations.
- 1.2 Whilst the Centre hopes that most students will be satisfied with the grades awarded, there may be some who are not. The aim of the policy is to explain the process for students and parents about the process for appeal at GCSE and BTEC.
- 1.3 This policy should be read alongside the Centre’s policy (<http://www.centre-policy.summerhill.info/>) in relation to grading and the JCQ guidance on the appeals process, which can be found here: [https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/JCQ\\_Appeals-Guidance\\_Summer-2021.pdf](https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/JCQ_Appeals-Guidance_Summer-2021.pdf)

## **2 Complaints**

- 2.1 Where the student is unhappy that a grade was not submitted in a subject because of insufficient evidence, this policy will not apply, and it should be raised as a complaint through the Centre’s complaints process which can be found here: <https://www.summerhill.dudley.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=189&type=pdf>
- 2.2 Where a student has made an appeal through this process, they will not be able to make an additional complaint under the Centre’s complaints policy.

## **3 Evidence Used**

- 3.1 The Centre has kept copies of evidence that has been used for the purposes of determining the grades. The Centre will share with students in advance of results day to inform them of the evidence used as part of the grade decision-making in each subject, and whether any variations were made or special circumstances considered as part of that decision making.

# Appeals Process

## Stage 1: Centre Review

- 1.1 Ofqual determined that there would be a two-stage process for appeals on Teacher Assessed Grades this year. The first stage is a centre review to ensure that there have been no procedural or administrative errors in the determination of the grades for the student. A student may request a centre review on the following grounds:
  - a. the school has failed to follow its procedures properly or consistently in arriving at that result; or
  - b. the school has made an administrative error in relation to the result.
- 1.2 This stage 1 process is completed even if the student does not believe that there has been an administrative or procedural error and so all appeals will first go through stage 1.
- 1.3 The Centre will consider the following as part of the centre review process:
  - a. the reason presented by the student for the review (where this has been specified) and any evidence provided by the student regarding issues that were not known about at the time the grade was determined;
  - b. the Centre's approved policy and whether it was followed properly and consistently;
  - c. the evidence which was used to determine the student's grade;
  - d. any relevant assessment records detailing for the student any amendments to the range of evidence used for the cohort and, where applicable, steps taken to address any known mitigating circumstances/special consideration or approved access arrangements/reasonable adjustments;
  - e. a record that the grades had been signed off by at least two teachers in the subject, one of whom was the head of department/subject lead or head of centre where there was only one teacher in the department/subject;
  - f. the record, where it exists, of any relevant pre-results communications between the Centre and student (for example, where a student has raised mitigating circumstances earlier in the process); and
  - g. the relevant centre administration records.
- 1.4 **Students will need to provide their signature confirming they understand that as part of the appeals process their grade can go down as well as up.**
- 1.5 Where an administrative or procedural error is found, the Centre will also need to decide whether there has been an impact on the grade in question. There may be circumstances where an error is found but it had little impact on the grade awarded.

### Timeframes for Centre Review

- 1.6 All requests for a centre review must be submitted to the Centre by midday on **3 September 2021**. Requests for centre reviews received after this date will only be accepted by the Centre where there are clear reasons for the delay.

### How to Request a Centre Review

- 1.7 Requests for a centre review must be made using the application form for a centre review which can be located on the Summerhill Website here: <https://www.summerhill.dudley.sch.uk/site/data/files/documents/F05B1E9F63D3B2F32301CD5092B6EAE3.pdf?pid=5> and must be fully completed and signed. This must be submitted via email [assessment@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:assessment@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk) or sent to posted/delivered to Summerhill School, Lodge Ln, Kingswinford DY6 9XE for the attention of the Exams Officer, to arrive before the deadline.

### After the Review

- 1.8 Following the centre review, the student will be informed of the outcome and, if the grade has been changed, what it has been changed to. Students will be able to make a request for a stage 2 appeal if they remain unhappy and there is a ground for review.

## Stage 2: Appeal to the Awarding Organisation

- 2.1 Where a student is unhappy following the outcome of stage 1 because they believe there has been a procedural or administrative error or because of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement, they may request that the Centre makes an appeal to the relevant awarding organisation.
- 2.2 Requests for a stage 2 appeal can only be made following the completion of the stage 1 process as set out above and the exam bodies will not accept direct appeals from students.
- 2.3 There are three broad grounds upon which students can request that a stage 2 appeal is made to the relevant exam body. These are:
  - a. the Centre did not follow its procedure properly or consistently in arriving at the result, or during the centre review;
  - b. the awarding organisation made an administrative error in relation to the result; or
  - c. the Centre made an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement in the choice of evidence from which to determine the grade and/or the determination of that grade from the evidence.
- 2.4 For some of the above grounds the awarding organisation will require a rationale from the student to explain the basis of the appeal. The form makes clear where additional information must be provided, and it is important that this is provided. Failing to provide this information where required will likely result in the awarding organisation refusing to consider the appeal and will delay the outcome.
- 2.5 Where an appeal is made on the ground of an unreasonable exercise of academic judgement by the Centre, the awarding organisation will not be reviewing whether another grade would have been reasonable, but whether the grade awarded was unreasonable. This is a high threshold.

### Timescales for Stage 2 Appeal

- 2.6 Appeals must be submitted to the Centre by midday on **Monday 13 September 2021**. All the required information must be supplied with the request with the application signed by the student. The Centre will then submit the appeal to the relevant awarding organisation by Midday on **Friday 17 September 2021**.

### How to Request a Stage 2 Appeal

- 2.7 Requests for a stage 2 appeal must be made on the provided application form with all the relevant details within it completed and signed. This must be submitted via email [assessment@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk](mailto:assessment@summerhill.dudley.sch.uk) or sent to posted/delivered to Summerhill School, Lodge Ln, Kingswinford DY6 9XE for the attention of the Exams Officer, to arrive before the deadline.

### After the Stage 2 Appeal

- 2.8 Following the submission of the stage 2 appeal, the relevant awarding organisation will review the request and may approach the Centre for further information. It is expected that the decision will be issued to the Centre within 42 calendar days; however, delays may be expected

if significant numbers of appeals are received by the awarding organisations. This is outside of the Centre's control.

- 2.9 Once the awarding organisation has issued the decision to the Centre, the student will receive confirmation of the outcome from the Centre (rather than the awarding organisation) with details on any further stage or process. The Centre will seek to inform the student within five school days of being informed of the decision.
- 2.10 The awarding organisation will generally either find that the appeal is upheld or rejected, in whole or in part. As set out above, even if an appeal is upheld (either fully or partly) it does not mean that this will result in a grade change.