



Assessment at Key Stage 3
A parent's guide to Life After Levels

Dear Parent/Guardian

As you may be aware from our initial correspondence regarding Life After Levels, the Government has announced a series of reforms to the current GCSE system including changes to the grading scale. From the Summer 2017 exam series a new grading scale will be used in English and Maths where letters have been replaced by numbers. This means the traditional A*-G scale parents may be familiar with has been replaced by a scale from 9 - 1, where 9 is the highest achievable point and a point 5 or above is classed as a 'good' GCSE. Further information about the phases of the government's GCSE reform programme can be found at <https://goo.gl/aUNzRI>.

In addition to the above, the Government has also removed National Curriculum levels, therefore the system of Level 4, 5, 6 (including sub levels such as 5c, 6b, 7a) etc which you may be familiar with is no longer valid for use in schools.

What does this mean for The Appleton School?

It means that as a school we needed to formulate an assessment system which robustly and accurately tracks the attainment and progress of each and every student from their very first day at Appleton to the day that students collect their results.

What system are we using at The Appleton School?

As the Government are introducing a new 9 - 1 point scale at GCSE level, we have decided to extend this scale for all students from Year 07 to Year 11. The use of the point scale will allow students to follow a personalised flightpath (based on their KS2 (Year 06) attainment) from their first day at The Appleton School through to the end of Year 11.

The use of a common scale for years 7 to 11 will breed familiarity for students and parents who will be able to track individual progress towards a final GCSE point. In addition, the teaching at Key Stage 3 will be more closely aligned to that of the GCSE which under the aforementioned Government reforms will be more rigorous and challenging for our students.

In our system, progress grades take account of how well each student is doing compared to where they started and all students have scope to make excellent progress regardless of where they start and maximise their potential.

When will all this be happening?

The Government's reforms to GCSEs have already started; they plan to reform the GCSE specifications in all subjects but have decided to do this in three phases:

Phase one subjects include English Language, English Literature and Mathematics.

Phase two subjects include Art and Design, Citizenship Studies, Computer Science, Dance, Drama, Food Preparation and Nutrition, Geography, History, Music, Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Spanish), Physical Education, Religious Studies and sciences (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Combined Science).

Phase three subjects include Business, Design and Technology, Economics, Engineering, Media Studies, Modern Foreign Languages (Bengali, Chinese, Italian, Modern Hebrew, Polish, Panjabi, Urdu) Psychology, Sociology, Statistics.

(GCSE Timeline of Reforms - taken from AQA - <http://goo.gl/2Ped4W>)

What does this mean for your child?

It means different things for different year groups, the table below outlines the implications for each of the current year groups and makes reference to the three phases detailed on the previous page:

In September 2015, my child was in . . .	Your child will be assessed using . . .	In which subjects?
Year 07	The 9 - 1 point scale	All of them
Year 08	The 9 - 1 point scale	All of them
Year 09	Both the 9 – 1 point scale and A* - G grades	9 - 1 Points in Phase 1 & 2 subjects Grades in Phase 3 subjects
Year 10	Both the 9 – 1 point scale and A* - G grades	9 - 1 points in Phase 1 subjects Grades in all others
Year 11	A* - G grade scale	All of them

Assessing and Reporting:

From the Summer Term of 2016, all students at The Appleton School will have their work assessed using the 9 – 1 scale in accordance with the table above.

Whilst assessing and reporting on a student's work, we will be using fine levels at each point, i.e., each point will be sub divided with a suffix of either +, = or -. Therefore a student may find his/her work graded at 7-, 5=, 3+ etc. where the number represents their point on the 9 – 1 scale and the suffix describes how securely they're working at that point, as outlined below:

+ denotes that a student is securely working at the specified point, there may be very few areas of weakness and the student could with increased effort reach the next point.

= denotes that a student is safely working at the specified point, there may be some significant weaknesses which as a consequence if the student continued to work at their current output they are unlikely to move either up or down from the point.

- denotes that a student is starting to work at a specified point or is at risk of dropping to the point below the specified one due to a range of weaknesses or gaps in knowledge. These students would require additional work and/or intervention may be necessary to ensure they remain at that point.

Questions?

Should you have any questions regarding the changes to assessment I would recommend watching a short video which explains the government's reforms and its impact on schools and students, this video is accessible via <http://goo.gl/M8zrV9>.

Yours faithfully

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