Example Secondary School
Grading Policy

Document control: Version v1.0 | Owner: Assistant Headteacher (Curriculum & Assessment) | Effective from: 13 August 2025 | Review by: 31 August 2027

1. Purpose
This policy sets out how the school assesses, grades, records and reports pupil achievement in Key Stage 3 (KS3) and Key Stage 4 (KS4). It clarifies expectations for teachers, pupils and parents/carers, ensuring assessment is fair, consistent and used to improve learning.

2. Scope
Applies to all subjects and qualifications delivered in Years 7–11. Post-16 provision will follow awarding body requirements but align with the principles herein.

3. Principles
- Assessment supports learning (formative first) and informs teaching.
- Grading is reliable and standardised across classes and cohorts.
- Feedback is timely, actionable and promotes pupil independence.
- Assessment is inclusive and reasonable adjustments are applied where appropriate.
- Data is used proportionately to reduce workload and maximise impact.

4. Definitions
Formative assessment (assessment for learning) guides next steps.
Summative assessment (assessment of learning) evaluates attainment at a point in time.

5. Grading Frameworks
KS3 (Years 7–9): Subjects report against age-related expectations using four broad bands:
- Emerging – working towards the expected standard.
- Developing – approaching the expected standard.
- Secure – meeting the expected standard.
- Exceeding – working beyond the expected standard.
Departments may also map banded assessments to indicative GCSE flight paths for internal tracking.

KS4 (Years 10–11):
- Grading references GCSE 9–1 standards and awarding body criteria.
- Pupils receive working at, most recent assessment and forecast grades where appropriate.
- Mock examinations are scheduled at least once in Year 10 and twice in Year 11.

6. Target Setting
Targets are set at the start of each key stage using prior attainment and professional judgement. Targets are ambitious yet attainable and are reviewed following major assessment points.

7. Assessment Schedule

Each subject publishes an annual assessment map showing the type, timing and weighting of assessments. Whole-school data collection points (DCPs) occur three times per year unless otherwise directed by the Headteacher.
- Low-stakes checks (e.g., retrieval quizzes) – weekly/fortnightly.
- Common assessments – once per term, standardised across classes.
- Mocks/exams – per key stage plan.

8. Feedback & Marking Expectations

- Feedback prioritises improvement: whole-class feedback, verbal/live marking and targeted written comments.
- Turnaround: significant assessments returned within 10 school days; classwork within a reasonable period per department policy.
- Pupils act on feedback (DIRT time) with evidence of improvements.
- Literacy conventions: subject-specific terminology and legible presentation are reinforced.

9. Standardisation & Moderation

- Departments hold standardisation sessions before marking common assessments.
- Moderation sampling covers all sets and disadvantaged/SEND cohorts.
- Borderline grades are reviewed; adjustments are documented with rationale.

10. Recording & Reporting

- All assessment outcomes are recorded in the school's MIS in line with published DCP dates.
- Reports to parents/carers include attainment, progress toward targets, attendance and attitude to learning (ATL).
- Progress summaries use plain language and avoid excessive jargon.

11. Raising Attainment

- Pupils not on track receive timely intervention (catch-up, tutoring, curriculum adjustment).
- Subject leaders review outcomes after each DCP and submit action plans.
- Pastoral teams track vulnerable pupils; governors receive termly summaries.

12. Access, Inclusion & Reasonable Adjustments

Assessment arrangements will be adjusted for pupils with SEND, EAL, medical needs or other vulnerabilities, in line with statutory guidance and awarding body regulations. Where appropriate, access arrangements (e.g., extra time, readers, word processors) will be applied following assessment by qualified staff.

13. Academic Integrity

Pupils must produce their own work and adhere to exam regulations. Plagiarism, malpractice or unauthorised assistance will be investigated and sanctioned in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and awarding body rules.

14. Quality Assurance

- Learning walks, book looks and data reviews occur on a published cycle.
- SLT and Subject Leaders triangulate evidence to evaluate curriculum and assessment impact.

- Findings inform CPD, curriculum planning and intervention.

15. Roles & Responsibilities
- Headteacher: overall monitoring of assessment and reporting.
- SLT (Assessment): policy implementation, calendar and quality assurance.
- Subject Leaders: assessment design, standardisation/moderation and data analysis.
- Teachers: accurate assessment, timely feedback, record-keeping.
- Tutors/Pastoral: track progress and liaise with families.
- SENDCo: coordinate access arrangements and inclusive practice.
- Pupils: act on feedback and engage in independent learning.
- Parents/Carers: support learning and attend progress meetings.
- Governors: hold leaders to account for standards.

16. Communication with Parents/Carers
Parents/carers receive regular updates via reports, parents' evenings and the school portal. Concerns about grades should first be raised with the subject teacher or Head of Department.

17. Data Protection & Record Retention
Assessment data is processed in line with data protection legislation. Assessment records are retained in accordance with the school's retention schedule and awarding body requirements.

18. Monitoring, Evaluation & Review
This policy is reviewed biennially or earlier if statutory guidance changes. Impact is evaluated through outcomes data, quality assurance findings and stakeholder feedback.

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Approval
- Headteacher: _____   Date: _____
- Chair of Governors: _____   Date: _____

Notes
This template is provided for guidance and should be adapted to reflect the school's specific procedures and any awarding body updates.