



STAFFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Prep 3-11 | Senior 11-16 | Sixth Form 16-19

The Meaning of Grades

Policy Review

Date of Review	Reason for Review	Reviewer	Checked & approved	Date of approval	Next review
15.09.25	Annual review	Deputy Head: Academic	Headmaster	15.09.25	01.09.26

1. Aspirational grades – Every student is given an aspirational grade in each subject. This grade indicates what the student should be aiming for, based on their baseline scores and teacher assessment. In Years 7, 8 and 9, the aspirational grade indicates the level of marks the student should be aiming for in their class work, homework and tests. At GCSE and A-level, the aspirational grade indicates the grade students should be aiming for in their public examinations. It is not a prediction. With the exception of Year 11 and the Upper Sixth aspirational grades are not sent home until the second set of grades.

2. Effort grades (please see attached chart) – Students in Years 7 – 11 receive an effort grade on a scale of A – E. The grades chart is displayed around the school and is in the homework diary so that teaching staff can refer students to the requirements for grades as necessary. The effort grades can be summarised as follows:

A – Excellent, B – Good, C – Satisfactory, D – Poor, E – Unacceptable

In practice, staff will check that none of the criteria for giving grades D or E apply and then work down from grade A.

In the Sixth Form, students will receive an effort grade on a scale of 1 – 5:

1 – Excellent, 2 – Good, 3 – Satisfactory, 4 – Poor, 5 – Unacceptable

3. Attainment Grades – This grade is based on the teacher's judgement and gives an overall sense of how the student is performing. The overall Attainment Grade aims to give a sense of where the student is heading as well as where they are right now. This grade aims to answer the questions 'if this student continues to work at this level of effort, they are on course to achieve...' and 'students who typically produced work like this at this stage went on to get...' As the course progresses, this grade is expected to become closer the final result.

Attainment Grades in Years 7 – 9

There is a scale from 9 – 1, with 9 being the highest grade. These grades are in bands as follows:

Attainment Grade	Descriptor
9/8	Excellent
7/6	Good
5/4	Satisfactory
3/2	Room for improvement
1	Unacceptable

If students receive a '3' or below, parents should consider it to be indicative of a poor level of performance compared with their child's Year group. Action will therefore be needed to rectify the situation.

Attainment Grades in Years 10 – 11

Students will receive attainment grades based on the 9 – 1 grades used in GCSE examinations.

A grade '5' is now considered the new international benchmark for a 'Strong Pass' and '4' as a 'Standard Pass.' A grade 4 and below would be a cause for concern.

Although direct comparison between former letter grades at GCSE and current number grades is discouraged, the following table has been provided to give a broad overview:

Number GCSE Grade	Broad comparison to previous GCSE grades
9	Top half of A*
8	Bottom half of A* / top half of A
7	Bottom half of A
6	B+/B
5 'Strong Pass'	C+/B-
4 'Standard Pass'	C-
3	D/E+
2	F/E
1	F-/G

Attainment Grades in the Sixth Form

Students will receive attainment grades based on the A* - E grades used in A-level examinations. The highest grade available in the Lower Sixth is usually an 'A'.

Aspirational and Attainment grades indicate a student's performance **in relation to their current Year group**. Therefore, **a grade 8/9 in Year 7 is not indicative of a GCSE grade** at the same level, as the standard expected and level of challenge will change over time. In order to maintain a strong level of progress, a student will need to continue performing highly with the increased challenge as they move through each Year group.

Stafford Grammar School Effort Grades

Start from this end 			 Start from this end	
EXCELLENT effort in all work	GOOD effort in all work	SATISFACTORY effort in all work	POOR effort in submitted work	UNACCEPTABLE effort in submitted work
Work ALWAYS in on time	Work ALWAYS in on time	Work RARELY late	Work OFTEN late	Work RARELY HANDED IN
ALWAYS FULLY equipped for lessons	USUALLY FULLY equipped for lessons	USUALLY equipped for lessons	OFTEN has to borrow equipment	USUALLY has to borrow equipment
FULLY attentive in class	USUALLY attentive	USUALLY attentive, RARELY distracted	FREQUENTLY distracted	FREQUENTLY DISTRACTS OTHERS
FREQUENTLY volunteers answers and asks RELEVANT questions	VOLUNTEERS answers in class	Volunteers answers OCCASIONALLY	DOES NOT volunteer answers	DOES NOT give SATISFACTORY answers to direct questions
ALWAYS punctual to lessons	USUALLY punctual to lessons	RARELY late to lessons	OFTEN late to lessons	USUALLY late to lessons
1st ROW and at least THREE MORE A (Y7 – 11) 1 (VI Form)	1st ROW and at least THREE MORE B (Y7 – 11) 2 (VI Form)	1st ROW and at least THREE MORE C (Y7 – 11) 3 (VI Form)	AT LEAST TWO D (Y7 – 11) 4 (VI Form)	AT LEAST ONE E (Y7 – 11) 5 (VI Form)