

A Guide for Parents to Target Grades in the Senior Phase

What are target grades ?

Each year we set target grades for our students in the subjects they are studying at National 3, National 4, National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. For National 3 and National 4 the target is a Pass as these qualifications are not graded and there is no final examination required. Assessments for these qualifications are completed during school and class time. For National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher those targets are based on grades A, B, C, D. They are further divided into bands which are summarised in the following table.

| Grade | Band |
|-------|------|
| A | 1 |
| A | 2 |
| B | 3 |
| B | 4 |
| C | 5 |
| C | 6 |
| D | 7 |

For students aiming for success at National 3 or National 4 the target will be **Pass** as these qualifications are not graded and are awarded on a pass or fail basis

For students aiming for success at National 5 the target grade will be A, B, C or D. The target will be set using baseline assessment data that we hold for all of our students. This provides us with a predicted grade for each subject for each student. We have been using this data for a number of years and know that the data is reliable and that the predictions generated are appropriately challenging. They are at the top end of what the students could potentially achieve.

For students aiming for success at Higher or Advanced Higher the target grades will be A, B, C or D. These targets will be set by a formula which takes into account the prior attainment of each student. Again we want our students to aim high and so these targets will be aspirational and set at the top end of what our students could potentially achieve.

How will progress be monitored using these targets ?

In 2018 we are introduced a new reporting format across the whole of the school. This new format allows us to better track the progress of all of our students towards the targets they have been set. For our students in S4, S5 and S6 three tracking reports will be issued across the course of the session. The report for each subject shows the target grade together with an indication of progress towards that grade. We use the following to show progress :

| | |
|-----------|---|
| A (above) | At this point in their learning the student is on track to achieve at a level above their target grade |
| O (on) | At this point in their learning the student is on track to achieve their target grade |
| B (below) | At this point in their learning the student is below their target grade |

The report also indicates how the student is doing in terms of effort and homework. Most importantly teachers will include 2 or 3 bullet point next steps in learning. These comments will show what the student should focus on in order to get back on track or sustain progress.

It is important to remember that the targets we are setting are aspirational – the best we think each student can achieve based on their ability and previous performance in school. Not reaching an aspirational target should not be seen as a failure. If students get close to that target they will have done very well and achieved what we would have expected. If they manage to achieve the target they will have managed to succeed at the top end of what we would have expected.

How will students be supported in achieving their next steps in learning ?

All students will have regular discussions with their subject teachers about next steps in learning. In S4 students are allocated a member of staff as a mentor who will discuss their report with them when the reports are issued. This discussion will support the student to identify targets to sustain positive progress or to bring about improvement to get back on track. These might be subject specific targets or more general targets to do with organising time, working to deadlines, attending study support etc.

Don't forget you can contact your child's Pupil Care & Support teacher at any time to discuss any issues regarding your child's progress.