

Results Day: What Students Really Need to Hear

With exam results day looming, teachers, parents, and students alike can feel the pressure ramping up. But across all the advice we've seen, one message stands out loud and clear: results don't define you.

That's what thousands of teachers are telling their students—and it's backed by their own experiences and insights. At Teacher Tapp, we've been tracking the advice teachers give and how they help students navigate the ups and downs of results day. Here's what we've found.

1. ■■ "You are more than a grade on a piece of paper"

Time and again, teachers emphasise that exam results aren't a reflection of a student's worth. The aim? To reduce pressure and boost confidence. Teachers want students to know they are more than a set of letters or numbers.

- "You are more than your exam results—good or bad."
- "Your results don't define you."
- This doesn't measure your worth."

2. ■■ Look ahead: It's just the next step

Rather than treating results as a final verdict, many teachers help students reframe them as a stepping stone. Whether you're thrilled, disappointed, or somewhere in between, results are just one part of a much bigger journey.

- "It's the beginning, not the end."
- "What happens next is what really counts."

And teachers know this from personal experience. While 51% got the grades they needed, others didn't: 8% went through clearing, another 8% ended up at their insurance choice, and some (4%) deferred entry after missing out. These stories are part of the reassurance students need.

3. ■■■ There's always another route

Missed the grades? It's not over. Teachers are encouraging students to explore resits, clearing, alternative courses, apprenticeships, gap years—or even completely new directions.

- “Sometimes Plan B is the better option.”
- “Explore your options—your future isn’t closed off.”

And help is (hopefully) available. Among schools with Year 13 students, 40% of teachers said they offer university and careers support over summer results season. But not all students get that level of backup—something worth improving in future.

4. ■■ Stay calm and ask for help

Emotions run high on results day, so calmness and reflection are key. Students are being reminded to breathe, not panic, and talk things through with someone they trust—teachers, careers advisors, or family.

- “Don’t panic, talk to someone.”
- “Take time to get advice before making decisions.”

5. ■■ Effort still matters

Yes, results are important—but they’re not everything. Many are also emphasising effort and resilience.

- “If you know you did your best, you can be proud.”
- “Whatever happens, you can still succeed.”
- “Reflect on what you’d do differently next time.”

■■ What about the system itself?

Interestingly, over half of teachers would prefer a move to a post-results application system for university. Around 28% say students should receive offers after getting their results, while 27% think applications should open only once results are known. Just 20% want to keep the system as it is.

■■ Access to options: How well are we doing?

Most teachers feel their schools are doing a good job helping students take their next step—whether that’s A-Levels or vocational routes. In fact, 87% said students in their school have good access to A-Levels, and 85% said the same about vocational options.

That’s a reassuring sign that schools are preparing young people for a wide range of futures—not just the traditional university route.

■■ Final thoughts

For teachers, results day isn’t just about grades—it’s about guiding students through one of the most intense, emotional moments of school life. Whether it’s sharing personal stories, calming nerves, or helping find a plan B, teachers are there, every step of the way.

And remember:

- It's a snapshot, not a sentence.
- The world is still full of possibilities.
- Be proud—you've made it this far.