



NEWBRIDGE
SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers,

Year 11 Centre-Determined Grades – Update and Assessment Information Evening

You will be aware that Qualifications Wales have recently written to schools and pupils with further information on what the process for awarding this year's GCSEs and BTEC qualifications ('Centre Determined Grades') should look like. This information is here:

<https://www.qualificationswales.org/media/7061/summer-2021-assessment-guidance-v1.pdf>

The information applies to all GCSE subjects, and there is a very similar process for BTEC subjects. It also applies to some Year 10 pupils for GCSE English Literature only, as some students in Year 10 were due to finish English Literature GCSE this year.

Although this is not yet a full set of guidance, and we await further information, as a school we have been working on our assessment procedures to ensure that they are effective at accurately and fairly assessing our pupils in light of these requirements. The Education Minister Kirsty Williams has also recently announced that she would like to see examination groups 'return to face to face learning in a safe and flexible way' from 15th March, although this return is also not yet confirmed. We are keen to begin the assessment process sooner rather than later, so that our pupils have enough time to ensure they are settled and can do as well as possible. We will therefore be taking the following steps to ensure that our pupils are ready and able to maximise their achievement this summer. These may be subject to slight changes as further national guidance is released to us.

- Departments will be auditing the assessments pupils have already completed during the course, looking for evidence where the pupils have already succeeded and have progressed towards their target grades. This will include Non-Examination Assessments ('coursework') and other formal assessments pupils have completed throughout the course.
- There will be 'gaps' or areas where pupils have not yet been assessed. Departments need to ensure that sufficient coverage of the curriculum is assessed, but the exact detail of what must be assessed will be a matter for professional judgement. Departments are therefore arranging new assessments, based on WJEC adapted past papers, to assess what has been taught to date.
- For the new assessments, some departments will be beginning these from Monday 8th March online, where teachers can be sure that pupils are submitting their own work. If pupils begin return to face-to-face schooling on 15th March as suggested, most assessments will be done face-to-face in school. Pupils will be notified in advance if lessons will contain an assessment.

- These assessments will be designed to allow pupils to fulfil their potential and show their achievement against the examination syllabus and the WJEC grade descriptors – they are not there to ‘catch pupils out’ or replace long exams. They need to capture a fair reflection of each pupil’s achievement across the key areas of the course, in relation to what has been taught – the final grade will be a ‘best fit’ against the new WJEC grade descriptors, which are yet to be released. Although we will not be able to release a final grade until the summer, we aim to keep pupils and parents informed of progress throughout the assessments, where allowed by the guidance.
- Due to the difficult situation of the last year, we also want the assessments to be ‘non-threatening’ – we know that there are many anxieties for pupils at this time, and we want to avoid adding to these. Most will therefore will be quite short, usually 30-60 minutes, and will be completed where possible during lessons so that the assessment is seen as ‘ongoing’ and quite regular, rather than a significant, ‘one-off’ event. The assessments will also give us some flexibility to ensure that all pupils have been given the chance to show ‘what they can do’. Where pupils have already done this (for example in Year 10) and we have evidence, they will not need to repeat this – but where we feel that pupils would benefit from a further opportunity at this point to show evidence that they have reached the required standard, they will get this opportunity.
- The school will be required by WJEC to implement internal quality assurance processes to promote consistency in grade decisions across the school (within subjects and across subjects). WJEC will provide guidance on what these processes must include and we await this guidance. WJEC will also scrutinise the school’s processes to ensure they are fair and accurate.
- Year 10 assessment of English Literature will be carried in the same way, but this is the only subject for which Year 10 pupils will be given a GCSE grade this year. No other subjects are affected. Not all Year 10 pupils were to sit GCSE English Literature – your child will know if this applies to them (if they are not sure, we can confirm this through Google Classroom).

In support of this approach, and to answer any questions families may have, we have arranged an information/question and answer session. This is not a compulsory session, but please attend if you would like to hear this information explained or have any questions you would like to ask. The session is on Thursday 4th March at 5.00pm. Log-in information for this session will be sent out to parents before Thursday. Due to the potential for large numbers of families to want to attend the same meeting, we will be restricting this meeting to Year 11 parents only (not Year 10). The meeting will be recorded and available for viewing after the event.

I am sure there will be more questions to follow, and I will update you as we receive more information. I can assure you that all staff are doing their utmost to support all the pupils throughout this time and will help them to demonstrate the absolute best of their ability across the assessment process.

Yours faithfully,



Mr. A. Thompson
Headteacher