



Mountain Ash Comprehensive School

Ysgol Gyfun Aberpennar

New Road, Mountain Ash, Rhondda Cynon Taff, CF45 4DG

Tel: 01443 479199
Fax: 01443 473412
www.macs.uk.net

S J Evans BA, MA
Headteacher

Our Ref: DM/ja

Date: 11 November 2020

Please ask for: Mr D Mead

Dear Parent/Carer,

I'm sure you will be aware of Tuesday's announcement by the Education Minister, Kirsty Williams, regarding her wish to remove end of year exams for GCSE, AS and A-Level qualifications in 2021. In her letter (a full copy of which may be accessed via the school's website at macs.uk.net), Mrs Williams announced that:

- Instead of exams, we intend to work with schools and colleges to take forward teacher-managed assessments.
- These should include assessments that will be externally set and marked, but delivered within a classroom environment under teacher supervision.
- My (the Minister's) expectation is that these will form the basis for centre-based outcomes which will be linked to an agreed national approach to provide consistency across Wales.

A Design and Delivery Advisory Group (involving school and college leaders, supported by Welsh Government and advised by Qualifications Wales and WJEC) has been set up to develop the proposed approach to centre-based outcomes, an appeals process and arrangements for private candidates. The work of this group will be finalised in December so that guidance and supporting materials can be in place for the start of the spring term. The first assessment activities will not commence until the latter half of the spring term.

Whilst I'm sure you, like us, will welcome the decision to remove end of year exams, the detail regarding what evidence will be used in their place is currently lacking. It appears that teacher-assessments and some sort of externally-set and marked assessments will be used as the basis for pupils' grades and the Minister has hinted that teaching may continue for longer in the summer term to equip pupils with the "knowledge, skills and experience that they need to confidently progress to their next steps – whether that is employment, training or further and higher education." **However, this is as much as we know at present and it is important that we do not speculate what this means for schools, staff or pupils.**





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With this in mind, it extremely important that we continue to encourage and motivate all pupils to work to the best of their ability and to perform well in class-based assessments, homework or blended-learning tasks and non-examined assessments. It is highly likely that these will still contribute to any centre-based outcomes in the summer.

As part of our ongoing support to Year 11 pupils in particular, we will be reorganising the form classes with effect from Monday 16th November in order to maximise support and to target intervention effectively during the morning sessions. A number of pupils have been allocated an assertive mentor to offer extra support where necessary and to help keep them on-track with their work. A KS4/5 learning coach will also be appointed next week to help co-ordinate mentoring support for pupils and Directors and Leaders of Learning will continue to meet weekly after school to discuss the progress and attitude to learning of groups of pupils in Year 11.

I would like to thank you for all your support with keeping your children focused, motivated and on-track during such difficult times. The partnership between yourselves and us as a staff is extremely important to ensure that all pupils are able to achieve their very best.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at the school if you wish to discuss any aspect of your child's education in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Mead
Deputy Headteacher

