



Mountain Ash Comprehensive School

Ysgol Gyfun Aberpennar

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

Tel: 01443 479199
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www.macs.uk.net

S J Evans BA, MA
Headteacher

Our Ref: DM/ja

Date: 17 November 2020

Please ask for: Mr D Mead

Dear Parent/Carer,

As I'm sure you'll understand, the Year 10 parents' evening, due to be held on Thursday 19th November 2020, has been cancelled due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. Instead, pupils will be given an interim report containing details of their current attainment and attitude to learning in their subjects. These reports will be distributed early next week due to a slight delay caused by the recent 'firebreak'.

I'm sure you will also be aware of last week'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. This will affect Year 10 pupils who are due to sit exams in English Language at the end of Year 10. 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. **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.

I am sure you will agree that this is an extremely important time in your child's school life and it is vital that we continue to work together in partnership to ensure that he/she receives all the support on offer. If you would like to speak to a member of staff regarding any aspect of your child's interim report, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. S. Richards, Head of Upper School, Mrs. H. Latham, Assistant Headteacher, or myself at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Mead
Deputy Headteacher

