



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

Date: 9th March 2021

Please ask for: Mr D Mead

Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to Monday's letter from the Headteacher regarding arrangements for the phased return of pupils to school from the 15th March, I would like to provide more specific details regarding the return of pupils in Years 11, 12 and 13. We are very much looking to welcoming pupils back following a long and difficult lockdown. We understand the anxiety this has caused for you as parents and for your child and I would like to provide some clarity on arrangements for the term ahead, including plans for the grading of qualifications this summer.

Centre Determined Grades

As you will be aware, pupils will not be sitting external GCSE, AS or A Level examinations this summer but will be given Centre Determined Grades (CDGs) instead. Guidance from Qualifications Wales and the WJEC insists that these CDGs must be **evidence-based** to ensure equality and consistency of approach both within and across schools. With this in mind, teachers at MACS have been asked to provide details of the assessments that they will use to decide pupils' CDGs and the school is developing robust procedures to quality assure these assessments to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The key assessments to be used for each qualification will be shared with pupils before Easter 2021 (see attached 'Key Dates Timeline for Learners' from Qualifications Wales).

Provisional CDGs will be given to pupils in June and you will be given an opportunity to ask for any grades you are unhappy with to be reviewed (see attached Qualifications Wales 'Appeals Process'). The provisional CDGs will then be sent to the WJEC by the 2nd July. At this stage, these grades are not confirmed as the WJEC will need to make final checks for all schools and colleges, to ensure clear processes have been followed.

Final grades will be distributed to pupils on results days. Results day for AS and A Level Learners is on **Tuesday 10th August** and, for GCSE learners, results day is on **Thursday 12th August**.

Following publication of final CDGs, you will have a further opportunity to appeal results with the WJEC (see 'Key Dates Timeline for Learners' for specific dates).

Vocational Qualifications e.g. BTEC

Pupils taking qualifications that are similar to A levels or GCSEs, such as BTECs, WJEC Vocational Awards or Applied Certificates and Diplomas, will also have their grades determined by teachers based on a range of assessment information. As with A levels and GCSEs, we will ensure that the assessment of pupils' work is on topics that have been covered during the course, so they are not at a disadvantage from this process.





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Return to School

All Year 11, 12 and 13 pupils will return to school full-time on Monday 15th March and will follow their normal timetables. Pre-lockdown arrangements regarding staggered start and finish times and break and lunch times will remain. Further guidance regarding the return to school is available on the school website (News page) in an updated document 'MACS Guidance for Parents and Carers' or can be reached at the following link:

https://macs.uk.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MACS-Guidance-for-Parents-and-Carers-Final_March-15th-Return.pdf

The next 9 school weeks will be crucial in terms of gathering sufficient and appropriate evidence to support teachers' decisions on pupils' CDGs. Whilst many qualifications already have a sound evidence-base, there will be a need for more evidence in many subject areas which means pupils will need to sit assessments in some of their lessons.

With this in mind, it is absolutely vital that pupils attend school every day or they may miss important assessments that could be used to determine their CDGs.

I'm sure you will appreciate the importance of the next few weeks and months in preparing pupils for the next step in their career, whether this be a return to sixth form, a college course, university, apprenticeship or employment. Whatever their next step is, it is vitally important that they achieve the grades that they are capable of in the summer. Your support and guidance, in partnership with school, will be invaluable to helping your child to achieve these.

Many thanks for your continued support and co-operation during this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Mead
Deputy Headteacher

