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8th January, 2021

Extension to online learning

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may have seen in the media today, schools across the county are **'likely to continue with online learning until at least February half term** unless there is a significant reduction in coronavirus cases'.

This morning (Friday, January 8), the Welsh Government announced that alert level four restrictions will continue and unless there is a significant reduction in cases before 29 January – the date of the next review – schools will continue to provide online learning until February half term.

Schools will remain open but only for children of critical workers as well as vulnerable learners where absolutely necessary. However, the Local Authority has made clear that it remains important that children stay at home wherever possible, as this is the safest place for everyone.

Important update on GCSE and A-level assessment arrangements

Overnight, a second important announcement has been made, this time in relation to qualifications. **Qualifications Wales has cancelled the spring internal assessment window (due between 22 February and 23 April) for GCSE, AS and A levels. Revised assessment arrangements for the award of these qualifications in summer 2021 will be put in place shortly.**



Following the First Minister's announcement today (8th January 2021) that most pupils will continue to learn remotely until 29th January or possibly even February half term, Qualifications Wales has announced that the GCSE, AS, and A level assessments that were planned to take place within the **spring** window - planned to take place between 22 February and 23 April - will not take place and new arrangements will be made.



Philip Blaker Chief Executive of Qualifications Wales has said, *“Following the decision that most pupils in schools and colleges will continue to learn remotely, the planned spring internal assessment window will not take place for GCSE, AS and A levels and revised arrangements, adapting the plans previously announced, will be made. We know that learners need clarity about how they will be assessed and there will be clarity on revised arrangements soon.”*

Headteacher’s commentary

The announcement about the cancellation of WJEC’s spring term ‘internal assessments’ is exceptionally good news for our GCSE and A-level pupils.



I cannot remember a time when pupils and parents have been more concerned about GCSEs and A-levels. Staff have also been concerned about the impact of proceeding with spring assessments without being able to prepare students through face-to-face teaching. In these circumstances, we are relieved that decisive action has been taken at a national level.

Teachers will now continue working tirelessly to deliver high quality live and/or asynchronous educational provision. The content of lessons will be adapted as further detail emerges about the adaptations introduced by the Welsh Government, Qualifications Wales and WJEC exam board.

It has been a privilege to serve on the Minister’s Design and Delivery Advisory Group. We will now be considering the way forward and more detailed information about revised arrangements will be made available shortly.

And finally...

If your child is finding the workload tough, please encourage them to let their teacher know and they will receive a very sympathetic and supportive response. Conversely, if you are finding it hard to ensure your child consistently engages in online learning, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk email address or by ringing the school on 01686 412289 and we will do everything we can to help.

Thank you for your splendid support and adaptability at the beginning of what looks set to be an unusual year. I appreciate that home learning is a daunting prospect, especially where stakes are high, but please be assured that teachers are there to support you and your child every step of the way to ensure success.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Daniel Owen'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel Owen (Headteacher)