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26th January, 2021

Summer grading update

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been an exciting couple of weeks in the world of education! The final summer grading process has now been announced. This version looks set to stay as it is resilient to unpredictable developments brought about by the pandemic. It is worth briefly highlighting what has led to the changes.

It has, of course, been a challenging start to 2021 due to the rapidly changing public health situation. The return to remote learning for most learners and significant policy developments elsewhere in the UK has caused Welsh Government to revisit their plans for awarding qualifications. Promoting learner well-being and progression has been at the heart of the changes.

Supported by advice from Qualifications Wales and WJEC, the Design and Delivery Advisory Group (DDAG) has worked at pace to adapt the proposals published before Christmas. Our recommendations have been incorporated by the Minister in full. In this newsletter, I will share three important pieces of information.

1. Details of live webinars at which you can ask questions about the summer assessment process.
2. Key changes to the grading process.
3. The work now being undertaken by the Design and Delivery Advisory Group who are advising the Minister, so you know what information to expect in the near future.



1. **Live webinar invitation**

Next week, given the importance of the summer assessment and grading process, I will be hosting three live webinars for parents. The webinars can be accessed via the links below:



- **Year 10: Monday 1st February at 6pm**

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_M2VkNmM3ZTItNGYyNi00ZTZkLTk5OTgtMzdmOWUwNTQxMDVi%40hread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%224f3f0e52-b734-4164-9409-1b601d147993%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22157d903e-9d08-4550-a9f4-ec2b7556300%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d

- **Year 11: Tuesday 2nd February at 6pm**

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_YWNmNzFiOGYtZWQ0OC00MzNjLWFIZTctZmE4ZmIxM2E5NDUw%40hread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%224f3f0e52-b734-4164-9409-1b601d147993%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22157d903e-9d08-4550-a9f4-ec2b7556300%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d

- **Years 12/13: Thursday 4th February at 6pm**

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NjA3MDFjYTQtMGM1Zi00YThjLTkzNzUtZWm3Mjk1Y2Y5NDg1%40hread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%224f3f0e52-b734-4164-9409-1b601d147993%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%22157d903e-9d08-4550-a9f4-ec2b7556300%22%2c%22IsBroadcastMeeting%22%3a%22true%7d

If you cannot make the evening allocated to your child's year group, you are welcome to join one of the other meetings. If you cannot make any of the meetings, you are welcome to contact me directly at the school.

I will also be hosting assemblies for students on the same day as the relevant parent webinar. Please encourage your child to attend via their year group Team.

2. What are the key changes to how your child will be graded?

For those who prefer to read about the changes, here are the key points. Learners undertaking GCSE, AS and A levels approved by Qualifications Wales will have their qualifications awarded through a Centre-Determined Grade (CDG) model. This means that **grades will be determined by the school based on an assessment of the learner's work.**



The **school will be able to use a range of evidence to determine the grades** to be awarded to your child, including Non Examinations Assessment (NEA) elements, assessments set by the teachers, classwork, and work produced via online learning. In addition, the WJEC will offer a set of **adapted past papers** which can be used to help assess learning within teaching plans. These will be optional assessment materials but they are intended to provide extra support for teachers. The adapted past papers are due to be released by the WJEC in February and we will share them with your child as soon as they are made available.

What is happening to the Non-Examined Assessments (NEAs) that my child has been working on?

Recognising the challenges posed by the ongoing disruption, the deadlines and controls around non-exam assessment are being removed. This means your child's NEAs will not be moderated by the WJEC.

This is good news for your child as NEAs have been a source of some anxiety since our return to remote learning. However, where possible, teachers will continue to support your child to complete their NEAs as they can be used as evidence of attainment. NEAs also help build pupils' learning and skills.

Indeed, building knowledge and skills, and covering core concepts to support progression, remains a high priority.

My child is in Year 10, how will this affect them?

Where learners in Year 10 are due to complete a qualification this year then this approach will apply, but **it won't apply to learners due to take individual units of assessment.**

My child is in Year 12, how will this affect them?

Learners in Year 12 will be awarded an AS grade that is Centre Determined. This will recognise the hard work and learning that they have undertaken this year, provide for progression into the A-level course of study, and support UCAS applications, but **will not contribute to the final A-level award in 2022.** This is the same approach that has applied to the current Year 13 cohort.



I know a family who home educate their children. What should they do?

For many years, we have supported private candidates by serving as their examination centre. The Design and Delivery Group are going to consider arrangements for private candidates as a priority. We are committed to ensuring there is a clear option for private candidates to support their progression too.

What are the benefits to my child of the Centre Determined Grade approach?

The Centre Determined Grade approach puts trust in teachers' commitment to prioritise teaching and learning in the time available, and their knowledge of the quality of your child's work.

3. What work is now being undertaken by the Design and Delivery Advisory Group?

Qualifications Wales will now work with WJEC, supported by the Design and Delivery Group (DDAG), to provide an **assessment framework**. This will support schools in developing their '**assessment plans**'. Our assessment plan will explain how we have ensured sufficient coverage of key concepts to allow learners to progress. It will also explain how we will determine a learner's grade.

Each school's assessment plans will be quality assured by WJEC to support teachers in arriving at their professional judgements and to assist with any future appeals.

Alongside the Assessment Framework, WJEC will publish guidance to support schools to develop **internal quality assurance processes**. The Design and Delivery Group will consider an approach to promote consistency across Wales.

Once quality assurance has been completed at the school, the grade will be submitted to WJEC. There will be no intervening action on the grades. **Your child will be able to appeal to the school if they are unhappy with their grade, and to WJEC if they are unhappy with the process that school followed** in determining their grades.

Alongside the framework and guidance, **training** will be available for teachers across Wales so that processes are applied consistently, equitably, and fairly.

What is my child going to be taught now?

Teaching the core content and aspects of each course remains our absolute priority for learners in exam years, so they are supported to progress with certainty into their next steps, and with confidence in the grades they will be awarded. Welsh Government are working with higher education institutions to look at how they can support learners in Wales through this transition, and can provide a bridge into university courses.

Update bulletins: As usual, when Welsh Government, Qualification Wales and the WJEC provide us with more information, we will immediately pass this onto you and your child. You will continue to receive this information by email. It will also be posted on our website and shared with pupils via their year group Team.

And finally...

It has been deeply encouraging to be asked by some parents what they can do to support their child. At this stage, we would encourage you to reinforce our message to students that teachers will be required to draw upon evidence of attainment when assigning grades. Every piece of work your child produces can be used to support these teacher judgements. This presents pupils with a **wonderful opportunity right now** to demonstrate precisely what they can do. This year is different from examination years when some revision relates to material that doesn't actually come up in the examination. Your child is guaranteed to be rewarded for all the work they produce. Therefore, please help us impress upon them the importance of prioritising the completion of work set by teachers at this crucial stage of their schooling.



If your child is finding the workload tough, please encourage them to let their teacher know so we can provide appropriate support. 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.

We appreciate that supporting home learning at such a high stakes time in your child's academic career is daunting, but please be assured that we are committed to supporting you and your child every step of the way.

I look forward to seeing you next week at one of next week's webinars.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D Owen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Daniel Owen (Headteacher)