



Dear Parent/Guardian

Today we await the announcement of the next steps for schools. Uncertainty is a challenge for everyone during this difficult time and can impact pupil welfare. We will, of course, be supporting children's mental health week next week.

Key stage 3 core independent work will focus on mental health and wellbeing, but it is important for pupils and parents to know that support is always available through the school and other agencies for example Meic: the helpline service for children and young people up to Aged 25 in Wales (www.meiccymru.org or 080880 23456).

There are also a number of welfare links available to pupils through the year 'Team'.



Year 11 Parents' Evening and Afternoon to Ask Questions

I hope you found the afternoon to ask questions of teachers useful. Usual parent evenings will continue, with year 11 parents' evening on the 8th of February.

Questions about teaching and assessment at GCSE, AS and A level

I understand that a number of questions have been raised during parents' evenings regarding what will be taught and examined for GCSE, AS and A-level courses. It's an uncertain time as year 10-13 pupils face another summer without traditional formal exams. So many questions remain and decisions will come from a range of organizations. Key ones are:

Qualifications Wales:

- [Qualifications Wales / Information for learners](#)
- [Qualifications Wales / Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Qualifications Wales \(@quals_wales\) / Twitter](#)

WJEC:

- [Assessments 2021: Get the support you need \(wjec.co.uk\)](#)
- [WJEC \(@wjec_cbac\) / Twitter](#)

Education Minister:

- [Kirsty Williams \(@wqmin_education\) / Twitter](#)

Here is the information we have so far:

Content of courses

At the beginning of the year changes were announced to the content of examination courses, reducing the content to reflect the reduction in the time available for teaching. Since the minister's announcement on January 20th, teachers have the freedom to target the key elements of each course. Teachers will identify the content that is key by considering the aspects necessary to continue with studies in the subject or similar subjects. The assessment process will focus on the content pupils have studied, considering the impact of national lock-outs and periods of self-isolation. Assessment will not rely on work not covered.

The assessment process

For GCSE / AS / A level:

The school will create a clear assessment plan for each course. No guidelines have yet been issued for this. The scheme of assessment will be externally verified and approved, and there will be training to support the assessment process. Once this assessment plan has been drawn up and verified by WJEC, the assessment process will be in the hands of the school - the course outcomes will come from feeding the results of assessment tasks into the assessment plan.

Elements that may be included in the assessment plan are:

- Controlled assessments completed eg oral tasks, essays, practical work, sketchbooks etc. These can be undertaken by pupils in school or at home and can be assessed in school as normal. The marks for the individual tasks will not be collected by the exam board so the school has more flexibility with the timing of these tasks.
- WJEC adapted assessments. The exam board will provide a range of customized assessment material - which we assume will include old examination papers or controlled assessments. The school will be able to select suitable ones, or adapt further if necessary. Schools are encouraged to include these in their assessment processes, but Penweddig will not make a decision until the assessments are published.
- Substantial pieces of work completed during the course. These may include assessments completed during the autumn term of 2020 and 2019 and work completed during the lockdown or return period.

We will ensure that the assessments are based on work that pupils have had the opportunity to complete. We can consider the impact of COVID and self-assessment on individuals' studies as the process focuses on what they have studied not what has not been studied. However, if a pupil has decided not to complete a task after sufficient time and there is no official reason, this may affect his or her grade.

For AS only

AS grades will be assessed, and if a pupil completes a course at the end of year 12 he will receive this as a final grade. If the pupil continues with the course at A level then only the 2022 Summer A level examination marks will contribute to the grade.

Welsh Baccalaureate

The individual assessments that make up the Bac form the assessment plan so it is important to complete all assessments given.

BTEC

BTEC uses unit level grades to form the final grade. Many of the units are assessments completed each term, but a few are examinations. Exams will not continue, but we use the unit grades that have been completed as part of the assessment process so it is important to complete the units that teachers submit in order to receive a grade in these courses in the summer.

Year 10

The Qualifications Wales message for year 10 is:

"If you have completed the course and you are going to be entered for the full GCSE course this year, then you can get a grade set by your school. However, it will not be possible to take only some GCSE units this year, and we will need to consider what the assessment arrangements for those subjects will be next year. "

This affects science exams for everyone - the arrangements may be similar to those of AS qualifications ie a final grade based on year 11 exams only. This also affects module exams for some other subjects.

Discussing grades

During the assessment process for summer 2020 clear guidelines came from the government about what could be shared with parents and what could not. We continue to follow similar guidelines, so teachers can discuss marks and grades for individual tasks and pupil work during the last term. The grades we expect to give pupils in the summer cannot be shared.

Results days

England has suggested results days for early July. The position in Wales is unclear at present.

Future examination arrangements

A new curriculum is coming to Wales for year 7 from September 2022 and this will lead to new GCSE courses. These are being consulted on by Qualifications Wales and you have the opportunity to have your say on the qualifications that will be offered to pupils currently in year 5 and under when they reach year 11. Details of the consultation is given below.

Consultation launch – Qualified for the future: the right choice for Wales.

Today we launch our [consultation](#) Qualified for the future: the right choice for Wales. From now until 9 April, we will be consulting on which qualifications should be available to support the new Curriculum for Wales.

We know it's an exceptionally busy and challenging time for everyone. We're doing this now to make sure everyone can have their say on these important decisions and to make sure that schools and learners have enough time to prepare for any changes.

We've tried to make it as easy and quick as possible for people to tell us what matters most to them. We've worked with education experts to come up with our proposals about what the choice of qualifications should include. Now we want to test those proposals and see what you think.

The following consultation documents are available on our website:

- [Main consultation](#)
- [Summary / youth friendly version](#)
- [Learner briefing](#) and [General briefing](#)
- [News story](#)
- [Promotional resources](#)
- [FAQs](#)

I hope everyone remains healthy. Remember we are here to respond to questions or comments. You can contact us at enquiries@penweddig.ceredigion.sch.uk .



Dr Rhodri Thomas
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