

Centre Determined Grades

A Guide for Parents and Carers



'Be still and know that I am with you'
Psalm 46:10

The purpose of this guide is to explain to you our school approach to Centre Determined Grades for those pupils following GCSE, AS and A level qualifications.

For those pupils following vocational qualifications, work continues and their teachers will continue to guide them through their studies in the usual way.

This information complements a recorded presentation for pupils shared on the 'Whole School Assemblies' Teams page- please check with your son or daughter that they have viewed this information.

This year is different

WJEC and Qualification Wales have issued schools with guidance about the processes that we need to put in place in our school as an examination 'centre', to allow us to determine a provisional grade for your son or daughter.

In considering how to move forward with this, we hold at the centre of our thinking that each and every one of our pupils is created *imago Dei*, in God's perfect image and likeness and have their own unique God given talents and abilities.

The wellbeing and talents of our pupils are at the heart of our process.

Pupils have had reduced face to face teaching across their studies at various points in the school year.

Pupils have had periods of isolation from school due to positive cases in their respective Year Groups.

This has presented unique challenges which so many of our pupils have faced with extraordinary courage and resilience.

Therefore, we have decided that it is not appropriate to design a series of calendared final internal examinations for pupils which can add pressure in an already challenging situation.

Nevertheless, some additional information is required from your son or daughter if they are following WJEC GCSE, AS or A Level qualifications, to meet the demands of reaching a robust best fit Centre Determined Grade. This will be in addition to the evidence which we may already have.

We will therefore put in place a series of 'mini assessments' for pupils across their subjects throughout next half term.

Our approach

Our approach is centred on our pupils.

They will provide further evidence of their knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons through teacher mini assessments. This will help us to fulfil the requirements of shaping a fair, objective and reliable provisional grade for them.

Following information which was sent to us within the last fortnight from WJEC, at the time of writing, each subject is writing a Subject Assessment Plan which sets out how they will use pieces of evidence to arrive at your son's or daughter's grade. This will be shared with you.

This evidence will help teachers to determine the provisional grades for WJEC GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications. These will be called 'Centre Determined Grades'.

What is a mini assessment?

- A short assessment in lessons of the knowledge, understanding and skills that your son or daughter has already covered.
- Topics will be recapped and consolidated by teachers in lessons before pupils have a mini assessment.

Centre Determined Grades

Will be based on the evidence that pupils provide within lessons from short approximately 30 – 45 minute mini assessments which will be planned into a sequence of lessons.

A *typical* mini assessment cycle would run like this:

- *Lesson 1 – Pupils retrieve past knowledge, understanding and skills with their teacher*
- *Lesson 2 – Pupils refine and consolidate knowledge, understanding or skills with their teacher*
- *Lesson 3 – Brief recap and mini assessment*

Sometimes this cycle will be *longer or shorter* if a teacher thinks it is necessary, based on their professional judgement and expertise.

This mini assessment cycle will repeat across subjects so that teachers can build up a body of evidence to shape a Centre Determined Grade.

Can other evidence be used to shape Centre Determined Grades?

Yes.

Nearly all subjects will use mini assessments in lessons as a source of evidence.

A number of subjects will also use Non-Examined Assessments at GCSE level or historical evidence of pupils' knowledge and understanding where it is possible to do so.

Each subject will make clear to pupils the evidence that they will be using in the Subject Assessment Plan.

How will my son or daughter be assessed during the next half term?

For pupils following WJEC GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications, the mini assessments will be marked by the subject teacher against an agreed mark scheme.

The marking of mini assessments will be standardised by subject departments so that every teacher marks equally.

The marking will be checked or moderated by a named member of staff.

The numerical scores will be recorded on a Learner Decision Record.

How will the Centre Determined Grade be worked out?

Teachers will consider the marks from the body of evidence cited in the Subject Assessment Plan.

Teachers will consider each of the standardised mini assessments, any historical evidence if relevant and the grade descriptors provided by WJEC. Using all this and their professional judgement, they will arrive at a 'best fit' grade for your son or daughter.

The grade will be the 'best fit' for the body of fair, reliable and accurate evidence that we have for pupils in a subject.

This grade will be reviewed carefully by the Head of Department and checked against other data which we hold for your son or daughter.

All of the grades will be reviewed members of the Senior Leadership Team.

Throughout the process, pupils can have discussions with their teachers about their broad attainment. However, pupils will find out the provisional grade on June 18th by letter.

Will my son or daughter have a chance to re-do a mini assessment if they perform poorly?

No.

However, teachers will base their 'best fit' grade for your son or daughter around **several** pieces of evidence.

A provisional 'best fit' grade will not be based on a **singular** piece of evidence.

When will my son or daughter be assessed?

Teachers will plan their mini assessments into their sequence of lessons.

Pupils will be aware of the topics being reviewed and when the mini assessment will take place.

Pupils will be assessed in the 8 weeks following the Easter holidays in a period of time known as the 'Assessment Window'.

The Assessment Window will open on Tuesday 13th April and close on Friday 11th June, although most will be completed by Friday 28th May.

The Assessment Window is defined as such because as a school we are working to deadlines for information which are set by WJEC.

What happens if my son or daughter is absent?

This will depend on the circumstances of the absence.

If it is a short absence affecting a small number of subjects we try to reschedule.

If a pupil is absent for all or a large number of the mini assessments across the 8-week window, this will reduce the evidence which we can realistically base the CDG on. In these instances, absences and the evidence will be carefully considered on a case by case basis.

If a year group or a pupil is required to isolate then we will use our contingency plans.

The evidence

The evidence that we use to shape CDGs must be fair, valid and reliable.

Teachers will think very carefully about the evidence that they use to shape the Centre Determined Grades.

Teachers' selection of evidence will be scrutinised as part of a longer internal quality assurance process.

Centre Determined Grades can only be formed on the valid evidence that teachers have on pupils and is cited on the Assessment Plan.

Additional Learning Needs

If your son or daughter has additional learning needs and if they are entitled to access arrangements this will be put in place for them by their subject teachers.

Miss Smith, Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator, will advise and liaise with subject teachers to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place.

What if I don't think my Centre Determined Grade for my son or daughter is fair or accurate?

Following the publication of provisional results in school on Friday 18th June, pupils following GCSE, AS and A Levels WJEC qualifications have the opportunity to request an internal review of these grades. This will be before the school (centre) sends the provisional results to WJEC.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting written guidance on this area for vocational qualifications.

For GCSE, AS and A Level WJEC students, a 'Stage 1' internal review will be conducted by Mrs Owen following a request and pupils will be informed of the result.

It is important to note that following a Stage 1 internal review a provisional grade can stay the same, go up or go down.

If you disagree with the outcome of the internal review we will outline next steps nearer to the time.

What if my son or daughter's year group has to isolate?

We are making contingency plans which will allow us to assess pupils, with a different level of control, across a digital platform should we need to.

This is also why we have not created a formal examinations calendar for pupils that doesn't allow for flexibility. In doing this, if pupils did need to isolate as a year group they may miss a key subject examination which could prove difficult to reschedule.

Instead we have planned mini assessments for pupils which are spread out across subject lessons next half term which reduces the impact of absence on a particular subject should there be a need to isolate.

Spreading out the mini assessments and placing them within a sequence of lessons guided by teachers also aims to support pupils' wellbeing in this process.

What if my son or daughter is studying a BTEC, vocational qualification or the Skills Challenge Certificate?

Pupils studying vocational qualifications, BTECs and the Skills Challenge Certificate will continue to complete tasks and work in the usual way.

As these qualifications are based on coursework or tasks completed, teachers will continue to guide pupils through this, using the adapted materials and guidance from the relevant exam board.

Teachers will update and share a checklist with pupils, to guide them through and explain which pieces of coursework will be used since there is some flexibility here.

At the time of writing we are awaiting further guidance on BTEC and vocational qualifications.

Will there be a school-based results day in August?

AS and A level final results will be issued on Tuesday 10th August.

GCSE results will be issued on Thursday 12th August.

Our school arrangements for results day will depend on Welsh Government guidance in place in August.

If it is safe to do so and in line with the guidance at the time, we hope to bring pupils into school in a safe and organized way to collect the results issued, in person.

In this situation, arrangements can be made for those pupils who are unable to collect their results in person.

More information on this will be shared nearer the time.

Special Consideration

The process of centres submitting Special Consideration applications to awarding bodies will not apply this summer.

However, your Special Consideration can be applied by teachers if a pupil experiences significant events outside of their control *at the time of taking the relevant assessments*.

These include:

- *Temporary illness or accident or injury*
- *Bereavement*
- *Domestic crisis*
- *Access arrangements which have not been applied for some reason.*

The relevant Head of Year, Mr. Walker or Mr. Slater will be able to advise you or pupils further on this. If you think your son or daughter may be entitled to Special Consideration please speak to the above-named staff.

Your son or daughter's teachers are here to help

Teachers are here to help and guide pupils.

Encourage your son or daughter to speak to subject teachers about any information on subject grades that school has previously sent home for you.

It may help your son or daughter to explore the published grade descriptors with their teachers if they are worried about their potential grade and consider ways in which they could improve their performance.

Teachers will not be in a position to feedback the summative marks of mini assessments as it will take time to standardise and moderate the marking of different classes.

Remember that the CDG grade will be a 'best fit grade'.

Ways to support your son or daughter throughout this process

Encourage them to speak to their class teachers about their performance in their subject.

Emphasise that school has considered carefully the best way to manage this situation.

Remind them that Centre Determined Grades are based on several pieces of evidence for each subject.

Remind them that mini assessments are just that – short focused assessments which aim to capture their knowledge after teachers have recapped material already covered.

Get in touch with us if you are worried about your son or daughter during this time.

Have a look at our Teams Wellbeing page and on our website for further sources of support.

'I can do all things through him who gives me strength'
Philippians 4.13

