Rossett School
Success for everyone

25 March 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

On 6 January 2021, the government confirmed that in summer 2021, students taking GCSE, AS and A levels regulated by Ofqual, should be awarded grades based on an assessment set by their teachers. For Vocational Technical Qualifications (VTQs) such as BTECs, OCR Certificates etc, the arrangements for awarding grades will be similar - any differences will be advised by the specific Exam Board.

Staff at Rossett are committed to ensuring that every young person receives the grades that they deserve this summer. Senior leaders have used the available government guidance to develop a robust system for allocating students' grades. The key principles of this system, together with details of the assessments that will be taking place in each subject in order to generate a final overall grade are found below.

Wellbeing
We understand that this is a very challenging time for young people. We have tried to ensure students have been guided and supported to look after their mental wellbeing through whole school assemblies about proactive techniques such as self-care, PSHE sessions and through Children's Mental Health Week. Our staff are well trained to identify welfare concerns such as declining mental health and we have robust procedures in place to ensure rapid and effective action is taken in support of your child.

We encourage you to:
1. Talk to your child about how they are feeling about the forthcoming assessments and remind them of the support network they have and that they can talk to their Form Tutor, Student Support Officer, Director of Learning or any other member of staff they feel comfortable with, if they are concerned about their mental wellbeing or that of someone else.
2. Support them to establish good routines to make the assessment period easier. These include regular exercise, establishing a healthy sleeping pattern and a well-balanced and organised revision programme.
3. Inform your child's Student Support Officer of any important information we should know to help support your child during this period, such as: anxiety, low mood etc.

In order to assist schools nationally, exam boards are generating a wide range of assessment materials that will be made available to schools, and publicly after Easter. Once we have received and reviewed this important information, we will be in touch with students and parents to outline the final details regarding the 2021 Grading process. If you have any questions in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact your child's Director of Learning in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

CStone

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Overall approach:

- Grades will reflect the standard that students are performing at now, not their potential;
- Students will only be assessed on what they have been taught;
- Teachers will use a range of assessment evidence to make a judgement of the grade the student is performing at;
- Staff will not be allowed to tell students the grades submitted to Exam Boards;
- Copies of assessment evidence will be stored in school to meet external Exam Board quality assurance requirements.

Selection of Assessment Evidence:

- Consistent sources of evidence will be used for a class or cohort (except where there are mitigating circumstances that mean alternative evidence is required);
- The selected assessments will relate closely to the specification requirements and will be selected to give students the best opportunity to demonstrate their ability, taking into account what it has been possible to teach most effectively during the course;
- NEAs (coursework that counts towards the final grade) will be used where they form part of the course, using a similar weighting to that applied in the normal exam series;
- Assessment evidence will only be used if the class teacher is confident that it is the student's own work and that the student has not been given inappropriate levels of support to complete it, either in school, at home or with an external tutor;
- Where the highest grades are awarded (including higher tier grades), the assessment evidence will include appropriately demanding tasks.

Completion of Assessments:

- Students will be informed in advance what assessments will be used as evidence in each subject. This letter includes the initial detail for each of our subjects;
- Teachers will inform students what topic areas they should revise and what topic areas they do not need to revise. Students will not be told the specific task;
- Teachers will use class time to prepare students for the selected assessments (this may involve teaching new content or may not);
- Teachers will use a range of assessment evidence to make a judgement of the grade the student is performing at. This will include robust data from previously completed assessments, data generated from the 'in-class assessments' that will occur between 12th April and 7th May and some from the 'extended assessments' that will take place between 10th May – 28th May;
- Students will sign to confirm that the assessment evidence is their own work and that there are no mitigating circumstances that they wish to be taken into account (which have not yet been formally brought to the attention of the Director of Learning or Director of Studies).

Making a Judgement About the Final Grade:

- Senior leaders will ensure that teachers and leaders use the Exam Board support, guidance and training so that they know how to make fair and consistent judgements;
- In making their judgements, teachers will consider any exam access arrangements and / or mitigating circumstances that may impact on the assessment evidence selected;
- Exam Board resources will be used to inform robust moderation of marking and the standardisation of grades, using the 'national standards' established by Exam Boards for each subject;
- More recent evidence of a student's performance will be given more weighting when making a judgement about the final grade.

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Internal Quality Assurance
Schools are still waiting for Exam Boards to publish the requirements for schools' quality assurance processes, but at Rossett it will include the following:

Step 1:
SLT review the range of evidence and weighting proposed by each subject to check that it meets the key principles outlined above. SLT will check that there are plans in place for robust moderation of marking including the use of Exam Board 'national standards'. SLT will check to ensure that all teachers involved in making judgements about grades have been given training on how to make fair and consistent judgements.

Step 2:
SLT and Faculty Leaders will conduct "Learning Walks" in a random sample of lesson-based assessments and subject tests held in the Sports' Hall to check integrity of assessments.

Step 3:
Where possible and appropriate internal assessments will be 'blind marked'.

Step 4:
Subject Leaders and/or Faculty Leaders will oversee moderation to check that it takes place as planned, and that standards are amended if needed to ensure consistency across the team and ensure that standards are in line with Exam Board national standards.

Step 5:
Grades proposed by subject teachers will be reviewed by Subject Leaders and/or Faculty Leaders to ensure they are in line with: - The marks awarded for each piece of evidence - What could reasonably be expected, given each student's previous predicted grades over the two-year course.

Step 6:
SLT will review the profile of proposed grades by each subject and across the school to ensure that it falls within what could reasonably be expected from a cohort at Rossett School with similar prior attainment.

External Quality Assurance

- The Exam Boards will check each school's internal quality assurance processes before exam grades are submitted;
- Exam Boards will visit a sample of schools over June and July 2021 to check the evidence for a sample of student grades in a sample of subjects;
- In the sample schools visited, Exam Boards will check that the grades proposed by teachers, after quality assurance, are a "reasonable exercise of academic judgement of the students' demonstrated performance". If this is not the case, they will ask the school to investigate;
- Exam Boards will not remark the student's evidence or change the grade. Grades would only be changed by the Exam Board if they are not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation or malpractice is found;
- An Exam Board check can be triggered by several things, including if the school's results are out of line with expectations based on past performance.

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Appeals
Every student will have the right to appeal their grade if they so wish.

Step 1:
If a student wishes to appeal, the school will undertake an initial process review to check all processes were followed correctly and no errors were made. If an error is found, school will submit a revised grade to the exam board.

Step 2:
If the school does not find any errors, and the student still wants to appeal, they will ask their school or college to submit a formal appeal to the Exam Board for them.

Step 3:
The Exam Board will check the school has followed its own processes and Exam Board requirements as well as reviewing the evidence used to form the school's judgement and providing a view as to whether the grade awarded was a "reasonable exercise of academic judgement". If the Exam Board finds the grade is not reasonable, they will determine the alternative grade and inform the school.

Step 4:
In cases of disagreement between the school and the exam board, or if the student disagrees with the school or the Exam Board, the case can be referred to Ofqual's Exams Procedure Review Service (EPRS). The Exam Board's decision on the grade following appeal will stand unless the EPRS finds that the Exam Board has made a procedural error.

Appeals are not likely to lead to adjustments in grades where the original grade is a reasonable exercise of academic judgement supported by the evidence. Grades can go up or down as the result of an appeal.

Results' Days

Students will receive their results on:

- Tuesday 10th August for all Key Stage 5 qualifications
- Thursday 12th August for all Key Stage 4 qualifications

The format and process for distributing results will be confirmed in the summer term once the rules regarding social distancing and other restrictions are known.