



St Columb's College


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5th March 2021

Dear Year 13 and 14 Students (and Parents/Guardians/Carers)

We are really looking forward to welcoming you all back to St Columb's College on 22nd March 2021. We have been planning for your safe return and are preparing the pathway ahead in terms of developing a process for awarding Centre Determined Grades (CDGs).

I will be writing to you and your Parents/Guardians/Carers again before Monday 22nd March with details about how we plan your safe return to school; in this letter I want to focus primarily on CDGs.

In the first instance, when we return to school we will want to spend some time readjusting to school life after this period of lockdown and remote learning. We are fully aware that all our experiences have been different and we will take time as form groups, friendship groups and subject groups to reflect on our individual experiences and to re-establish relationships.

We recognise that many of you are keen to know how your CDGs will be decided. The School's Management Team have met regularly since the Education Minister's announcement on 2nd February in order to agree the process of developing CDGs. Based on our current understanding, we hope that the following preliminary information offers some much needed clarity.

Q: When will I be doing the next Assessments?

A: We recognise that you were prepared for mock examinations in January and then continued to prepare for mocks during remote learning but that you never got the opportunity to demonstrate this hard work and preparation. We believe that students can still demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in each subject by completing small assessments which should last approximately one hour. We hope to be able to give you two opportunities to complete Assessments, one before Easter (Assessment 3) and one after Easter (Assessment 4).

Q: When should I start preparing for these Assessments?

A: You have actually been preparing for these Assessments for some time. All teaching in these next weeks of remote learning before our return to school on 22nd March, and in the days back, will continue to focus solely on preparing for Assessment 3. Similarly, when we return to school after Easter the teaching will focus completely on Assessment 4. Your teachers will guide you on the content of these Assessments in good time by providing detailed revision guides.

Q: What evidence will be used to determine my Grade?

A: We are currently waiting for clarification from Examination Boards about what evidence we are permitted to use to enable us to decide on CDGs.

Q: I am a Year 14 student; will my UCAS Grade be used to determine my CDG?

A: For Year 14, UCAS predicted grades cannot be used in the process of awarding of A-level CDGs. CDGs will be awarded on the best evidence we have on each student.



Q: I am a Year 14 student; will my AS Grades (CAGs) be used to determine my A-level CGDs?

A: CCEA/DENI have previously stated that AS Grades (CAGs) are not to be used in deciding A-level CDGs. CDGs will be awarded on the best evidence we have on each student.

Q: I scored poorly in an Assessment, will this affect my CDG?

A: Teachers will be asked to draw on a range of available evidence in the process of awarding CDGs that ***best demonstrates*** what a student knows, understands and can do.

Q: Why are we assessing as we are before Easter?

A: Due to the constraints of time we will complete Assessment 3 before Easter with our AS and A2 classes.

I am delighted to say that the time for you to return to school and see your friends and your teachers in person is drawing ever nearer. In the meantime, keep working hard and – as always – stay safe.

FJM Madden
Principal