

OUR VISION

Working together
Learning together
Achieving together



OUR VALUES

Ambition
Growth
Success

8 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS 2021 – ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Earlier this afternoon, the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, announced that SQA Higher and Advanced Higher external examinations have been cancelled. The Higher and Advanced Higher examination diet, scheduled for May 2021, has been suspended.

As is the case with National 5 qualifications, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications will now be awarded on the basis of estimate grades which will be submitted by schools to the SQA. These estimates grades will then be confirmed as the final grade by the SQA, as the awarding body.

As a school, we have already considered and planned our strategy for assessment in order to support teaching staff to reach robust evidence – based judgements on pupil progress and attainment. The two main approaches which we have taken are:

Timed Class Assessments

Class assessments have been taking place, on an ongoing basis, since August. The purpose of these assessments is to encourage pupils to learn a part of the subject course in a paced and manageable way. These assessments provide evidence of pupils' progress over time and help teachers and pupils to plan for improvement.

Assessment Weeks

SQA guidelines emphasise that the body of assessment evidence used by teaching staff to reach an estimate grade must reflect the breadth and depth of the whole course in an unseen situation. In order to generate these key pieces of assessment, formal Assessment Weeks have been planned. As already communicated to you, Assessment Weeks for Higher and Advanced Higher courses are scheduled from Monday 11 January to Friday 22 January inclusive.

The timing of the Assessment Weeks originally scheduled for March will now be reviewed, following the Depute First Minister's statement today. For example, it may be beneficial to schedule these in April. This requires further thought and consultation with staff, pupils and parents.

Appeals

There will be a review of the appeals system for National Qualifications. Further details to follow.

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I do understand that pupils will be anxious and unsettled by this further change and wish to reassure you that we will work tirelessly to support our young people as they continue to prepare for National Qualifications.

Kind Regards

A. Murison

Ms A Murison

Head Teacher