

Email from John D Anderson, Depute Head Academic Leadership - Thursday 8th October

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important information for parents of pupils in S3, S4, S5 and S6

Our senior school pupils have shown great dedication and resilience since we started back at the college in August. They have adapted well to new modes of working and have shown great commitment to their learning. Our teachers have enjoyed welcoming our pupils back to class and continue to show great skill and ingenuity as they guide our pupils through their courses.

The depute first minister's announcement yesterday afternoon informed us that the SQA is planning to run an exam diet for Higher and Advanced Higher albeit slightly later in May 2021. **However, a decision has been made to cancel the National 5 examination diet. For National 5, awards will be made based on internal assessment.**

Pupils in S3

For pupils in S3 who have now started National 5 courses, yesterday's announcement does not affect their learning. Pupils will continue to follow the National 5 courses, aiming to complete coursework and sit an external exam in May 2022. Should external factors affect the 2022 diet, we will guide pupils and parents through this as appropriate.

Pupils in S4,S5 and S6

There will be no external assessment of National 5 courses this year – either by an exam or by coursework.

Higher and Advanced Higher externally assessed exams, including the completion of coursework where appropriate, will remain as planned. The course content of some courses (i.e. what should be learned and what will be asked in exams) has, in some cases, been reduced. Changes to coursework and course content have been made on a subject by subject basis. Teachers will scrutinise the information detailed on the subject specific guidance issued by the SQA and will update pupils after the October break.

Pupils in S4/5/6 studying National 5s

National 5 courses will now be assessed using an alternative certification approach. This will be based on teacher judgement supported by assessment resources and quality assurance. This means that, for our pupils in S4/5/6 following National 5 courses, their grades will be based on prelim evidence (normally sat in January, details for 2021 tbc) along with other class tests generated by teachers and by the SQA. We await full details from the SQA but have been assured that SQA will publish detailed guidance for each subject exemplifying the standards required for internal assessments. Given that National 5 grades will be based on the prelim and class tests, the college will use an internal moderation procedure, similar to the one used for May 2020, to quality assure the grades generated. We also understand that SQA will sample our work to check that our marking, assessments and awards are accurate.

In writing this email to you, I want to offer you reassurance that we are very much prepared for this alternative method of assessment and for any changes to Higher/Advanced Higher courses. We are fortunate to have a team of very skilled teachers (many of our teachers are highly experienced SQA examiners) who are dedicated to teaching our pupils and helping them achieve highly. As soon as we receive the detailed guidance from the SQA and understand the full implications for our pupils, we will write to you with further updates.

We hope that you and your family have a restful October break.

Kind regards,
John Anderson