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Headteacher Miss Lynn Black



Formal Assessment Opportunities – April to June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this finds you and your family well as we head towards the Easter break. I am now in a position to share our plans for Senior Phase (S4-6) formal assessments, which will form a large part of the evidence teachers will use to award students the provisional grades that will be sent to the SQA in June.

Circumstances have meant that we are now facing a more condensed and busy assessment period than we would have hoped. While we cannot avoid this, we are very conscious of the potential stress pupils might feel during the assessment period and we will be flexible with arrangements as far as possible. We are also in the process of planning a programme to support our students' health and wellbeing during this time, which will include activities such as: breakfast and lunchtime drop-in and advice sessions; mindfulness and relaxation sessions and supported study sessions. More details on this will be shared after the Easter break.

The Formal Assessment Timetable

The Rationale

Our formal assessment timetable has been designed to offer students as much time as possible to consolidate their learning. Therefore, most formal assessments take place after week beginning 10th May and those that are scheduled beforehand will take place in class time to ensure that there is no disruption to learning and teaching for the first three weeks of term.

The Number of Assessments in Any One Day

Our preference would be for students to have no more than one scheduled assessment in any given day, but given the number of subjects that have to be assessed and the time available to us, this has not always proved possible. The maximum number of assessments a pupil should be asked to sit in any given day is two. These assessments should have at least some space between them and multiple assessments in a day should not be a frequent occurrence. If we feel a student is in danger of being overwhelmed by assessment we will endeavour, as far as possible, to make changes.

A small number of students may find that they have assessments that clash, which can be the case with an ordinary SQA diet of examinations too. Rest assured that in this situation, the student will be able to sit one of their assessments at a different time.

Practice Assessments

Some subjects may choose to run full or partial practice assessments in class time and staff have been asked to take into account students' workload when planning these. Different subjects have different demands and not all subjects will feel the need, or have the capacity, to offer practice assessments. Please note that if all departments ran practice in class assessments *and* final assessments, our exam timetable would run to well over 100 assessments across a 6 week period, which is not fair or responsible to our young people. Departments will advise students as to the state of play in their subjects.

Exceptional Circumstances

Please be aware that SQA are not operating an exceptional circumstances service this year, which means that we cannot apply for dispensation for a students' grades on account of adverse personal circumstances and that a student's provisional grade has to be based on **demonstrated rather than inferred attainment**. As a school however, we want to support students as much as we can with any barriers to assessment. While we have to operate within SQA guidelines, we will do what we can to make the assessment process as smooth as possible for our young people.

Information Sessions for Pupils and Parents/Carers

We have organised additional information sessions regarding formal assessments for both pupils and parents/carers. Pupil sessions will take place in school during the first week back after the Easter holidays, and parents/carers are invited to attend a session on **Wednesday 21st April 6.30-7.30pm**. A Microsoft Form will be sent out in advance to allow parents/carers to pose questions and those who sign up will be e-mailed a Zoom link to enable them to attend.

What to Do if You Have Any Immediate Questions

Whilst the school closes for the Easter holidays on Thursday April 1st, we are contactable by e-mail, which we will check periodically during this time. We will try to respond to your questions within 3 working days.

I wish you and your family a pleasant and restful Easter.

Mrs Lisa McGlade
Depute Headteacher and SQA Coordinator