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## Grange Academy

**Head Teacher: Mr Robert Johnston**

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14<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear S4, S5 and S6,

### Reflecting on your progress

Please read the enclosed tracking report carefully. It will help you to have a clear understanding of your progress at this particular point in time.

It's important to note that your teachers completed this report in the week ending 7<sup>th</sup> May and for that reason, it may be the case that some of the practice assessments you completed fairly recently are not yet reflected in your updated Working Grade. If in any doubt, please contact your class teacher and ask.

Please note also that this report was written before the May assessment calendar began so your Working Grades do not include your achievements in these.

### What do the Working Grades mean?

*National 5, Higher, Advanced Higher:*

- 1: grade A
- 3: grade B
- 5: grade C
- 7: grade D
- 9: no award

*National 3, National 4 and internally-assessed courses (for example, Sports Leadership, Musical Theatre, Health Sector, Laboratory Science):*

- 6: pass
- 7: no award

### How exactly will my final grade be decided?

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| Coursework.<br>(Key evidence.)                   | For example, your N5 English folio is worth 30% of your overall mark; your Higher Music performance is worth 60% of your overall mark, and so on.   |
| May assessments.<br>(Key evidence.)              | The reason these are so important is because they cover the whole course and they come as late as possible in the year. These two factors give them high status (or "weighting") in terms of what the SQA considers to be appropriate evidence of your knowledge and skills.  |
| Post-Easter practices.<br>(Supporting evidence.) | After Easter, you did lots of rehearsals and practices during lessons. You sat them under exam-conditions (no notes, timed, no advance notice of the questions). The main purpose of these was 1: to practise and 2: to spot gaps in what you understood so that we could fill those gaps. However, we also kept those practices up our sleeves in case you had an off-day in the May assessments and these ones went better for you. |



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| <p>Limited additional evidence from August to December.<br/>(Supporting evidence.)</p> | <p>There may be some assessments that you did before lockdown which may be helpful in providing some evidence of your work. However, these will have limited value for two reasons. The first is that almost everyone gets better with time and practice – assessments done early in the course don't show you at your very best. The second is that because you were only halfway through your courses at that point in time, your teachers will have set assessments with more support than you would otherwise have. For example, perhaps you did an end-of-topic test immediately after studying the topic, so the test has not assessed your ability to retain the information over time; perhaps you did a timed essay but you knew the question in advance, so that isn't strictly-speaking SQA conditions, and so on.</p> |
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**When will I find out the marks I achieved in the April practices and the May assessments?**

Your class teachers have contacted/will be contacting you directly to give you your raw scores for all assessments. Please keep an eye on your Glow e-mail and on Satchel One. Because of the amount of work involved in both the marking and the cross-marking, we are unable to give you timescales for this, so please be patient. (Cross-marking is when your assessments are marked by two different teachers who then compare their marking and agree your scores.)

**If we know our raw scores, can't we pretty much work out our final grades before we're told officially?**

No, not with any accuracy. This is for two reasons. The first is that your final grade is not purely based on your end-of-year assessments. (See table above.) If your teacher thinks you underperformed in the end-of-year assessments, they will be looking back at whether they have any alternative evidence that might help them to justify an improved grade.

The second reason is that you won't know the grade boundaries. Every year, the SQA analyse patterns in how Scotland's candidates responded to the exam papers. For example, if across Scotland, very few candidates scored any marks in a particular question, SQA would normally lower the grade boundary for that paper by the number of marks the question was worth. As one of many strategies to maximise fairness in your assessments this year, a similar process is underway across all seven East Ayrshire secondary schools. This is the reason that guessing your final grade based on your raw scores would be inaccurate. Moreover, this process takes a great deal of time so this is also the main reason we won't be able to give you your final provisional grade as soon as we've finished marking your assessments.

**Who will be marking my assessments?**

Every pupil's assessment for every subject at every level will be signed off by more than one teacher (cross-marking). In addition, a process called moderation is in place. This involves groups of teachers from across all seven East Ayrshire secondary schools cross-marking a sample of assessments from each other's schools.

**What if I didn't do as well as I hoped in the May assessments?**

We'll look for evidence elsewhere, such as in the practice papers you did in April.

**When will I know my final grades?**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> June, you will receive your final tracking report for this school year. The Working Grades on this report will match the provisional grades the school has submitted to SQA.

**Will the SQA change the grades that the school has submitted?**

No.

**I don't agree that the Working Grades on my report are an accurate reflection of me. What should I do?**

It's not about whether your Working Grades reflect your ability or future potential – it's that they match the marks you have achieved so far in certain types of assessments. Remember that there is no teacher estimating or predicting this year – your results are based purely on "demonstrated attainment". (In other words, what you produced in certain types of assessments.)

We are very keen that you feel comfortable about the fairness of your results so if your Working Grades surprise you, please do speak with your class teachers. They will remind you what assessment evidence they hold for you so that you understand where the grade has come from. (If you think the teacher has made a mistake, show them the assessment evidence you think they haven't taken into account.)

Please don't wait until the May assessments are over, or until your results certificate arrives, to seek clarification or advice – talk with us now if anything is on your mind. Nothing is being decided behind closed

doors - each of your class teachers will very much welcome a dialogue about it. If unsure, pop in to see them and ask to see all your evidence and talk it through: nothing is private.

### **Apart from my class teacher, who can I speak with about my Working Grades?**

After talking with your class teacher, if any questions remain, please speak with the Principal Teacher of the department. Here is a reminder of who the Principal Teacher of each department is:

*Sciences:* Mrs. McLean

*Art, Business, Technologies:* Mrs. Cuthbert

*English:* Mrs. Dunsmuir

*Maths:* Mr. Taylor

*Music, Drama:* Mr. Ramsay

*PE, Practical Cookery:* Mr. Allan

*Modern Languages:* Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Jackson

*Modern Studies, Geography, History:* Mr. Gray

In addition, remember that your House team (your House Head and Guidance teacher) are here for you if your questions are not about a specific subject, but are more generally about your overall progress, feelings, or plans. Here is a reminder of your House team:

*Bruce:* Mrs. Quinn, Mr. Dixon, Miss MacKinnon

*Douglas:* Mr. Faulds, Mrs. Causer, Mr. Cowan

*Graham:* Mr. Bruce, Mrs. Dunsmore, Mrs. Crawford

*Hamilton:* Mr. Alldridge, Mrs. McDowall, Mrs. Brotherston

### **What will SQA appeals be like this year?**

At the time of writing, SQA have not yet published this information to schools. For that reason, as explained above, don't wait. If you feel a Working Grade is unfair or inaccurate, talk to us now and we'll review your evidence with you so that you understand why that is your Working Grade.

### **In closing...**

You are on the home stretch and we couldn't be more proud of you. Thank you for being such a wonderful group of seniors. Your teachers are working very hard to help you achieve the best results you are capable of so please keep in regular communication with them if you need to talk. Best wishes for your remaining assessments.

Yours faithfully,

*M. MacKinnon*

Mary MacKinnon  
Depute Head Teacher  
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