



## **1. General Update**

### **Options and Timetabling for session 2021/22**

The overwhelming majority of options were submitted within two weeks of all deadlines. The timetable schematic for next session is complete. Our model is a 'free choice' model whereby the column structure in S3, S4 and S5/6 must be altered annually to try to accommodate pupil preference. Pleasingly, and as anticipated when we altered our BGE structure, the model has resulted in much greater breadth and depth of choice in the Senior Phase. Specifically, we will be able to offer more in house Advanced Highers than in any year in recent memory. In addition, we will also offer seven NPAs or similar. In previous years we have offered around three.

It was always the case that our alteration of the BGE curriculum would lead to better breadth at all stages of secondary schooling. It is worth noting that the above are in addition to the re-introduction of several subjects in S1-S3 (Drama, Business, Computing). We are confident that the free choice model and curriculum structure will support improvement in attainment at all stages.

Regardless of model (fixed column or free choice) there are always inevitable unresolvable issues, namely:

- Subjects which are offered but are not viable due to low uptake
- Subjects which are not offered but are desired e.g., some Advanced Highers
- Clashes due to specific pupil by pupil combinations e.g., a pupil selects two subjects which can only run at the same time of the week

As S5/6 has the least scope for alteration (only five columns), it is usually the case that this impacts S5/6 more than other year groups. Discussion with the small number of pupils impacted by this is ongoing. In the case of Advanced Higher (AH), we know that other EAC schools are offering AHs in courses we cannot, and/or in courses that clash on an individual pupil by pupil basis and we will liaise with families closer to the start of the new timetable to communicate timings, transport and options.

The timetable is due to change on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Staffing for session 2021/22**

The above is against the reality of reduced staffing next session. We have a surplus of around 4.0FTE with the specifics to be confirmed at a later date. None of the surplus declarations will impact on our 2021/22 schematic/timetable.

## **Reports**

Reports were issued since our last Parent Council meeting (or will be issued in the next working week) for the following stages:

- S5/6 Full Report
- S4 Full Report
- S2 Interim Report
- S5/6 Interim Report

## **Lateral Flow Testing**

We have now issued around 3000 boxes of test kits. Pupils to have registered will receive their next batch of kits in late May/early June. The next batch issued will last until the end of term. We await clarity on what will happen over summer and in August.

## **NET Ministries Retreat and Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary**

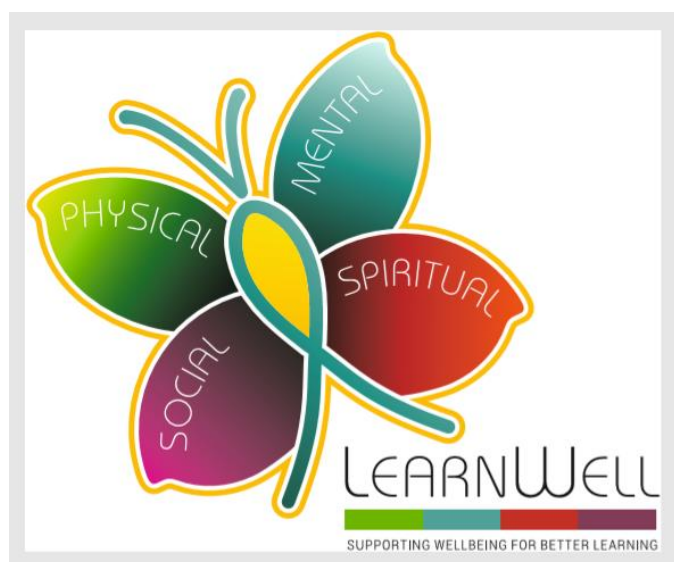
Since Easter, we have been joined in school by a group of missionaries from NET ministries as part of our pastoral team. NET ministries deliver a range of annual retreats in most Catholic Secondary schools across the West of Scotland. The team have worked mainly with our S3 cohort. We were also joined by our chaplains, Fr. Martin, Fr. Stephen, Fr. Philip and Fr. Gabriel at various points over the past fortnight. The NET team leave St. Joseph's on Wednesday, with this having been their last school of the academic session. We are grateful for their input and witness.

In January, the deanery welcomed three Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The sisters have established a community in Kilmarnock and will work with Fr. Martin and Fr. Stephen to support parish life and a wide range of wider pastoral ministry, including School chaplaincy. Sisters Mary Rose Confidence, Mary Mabel and Marilyn Juliet will work in school every Monday, mainly with our RE classes. The religious order of which the sisters are members originated in Nigeria. We very much look forward to welcoming the Sisters in the near future.

## **Vision, Values and Aims**

Mrs Shearer will lead the further development of our Vision, Values and Aims, and will shortly formalise the start of this process by leading a review of our House patronage. In the longer term, our Vision, Values and Aims will feed into a wider review of our awards structures.

Mr Boyle has also led the development of an initiative we will launch in August, named 'Learn Well'. Learn Well is in part a response to some of the recommendations made in our HMIe report and will allow us to clearly articulate how we support pupils in the following four key areas (shown within logo).



## **P7/S1 Transition**

Miss Cathie and Mr Boyle will write to parents/carers of those in Primary 7 over the course of the next fortnight. Local authority guidance around physical visits is clear, in that they are not expected nor mandatory, and must focus on one class group at a time if they do take place. Enhanced visits for those with complex needs will be possible on an individual basis. Virtual events were offered to all associated schools, with most accepting the offer earlier in the session. Further virtual sessions will follow for all pupils with any visit arrangements shared once agreed with associated primary schools. Miss Cathie and PC Dempster have also visited some of our schools to undertake outdoor transition activities.

## **Award Ceremonies**

Staff are in the process of submitting returns for BGE awards. As was the case last session, there will be no in-school award ceremonies, but virtual communication via an online video. The dates of release will be confirmed in June.

## **Prom**

There will be no Prom this session. Current guidance permits in school celebration during school hours only. We appreciate that this will be difficult for many pupils and families. We are considering how we can celebrate our S6 cohort during school hours and will consult with pupils in the coming weeks.

## **2. SQA Update**

### **Assessments**

All but the appeals process has now been confirmed by SQA and EAC. The Alternative Certification Model (ACM) necessitates the gathering of between two and four pieces of evidence per pupil in each subject area. In some subjects, some of the evidence is practical work/tasks alongside written assessment. In others, written assessment only.

As stated at the last Parent Council meeting, most of this evidence has to be gathered between Easter and the start of June. As a reminder, this is because:

- N5 guidance was released in November, we had planned to gather initial evidence in January
  - Lockdown was announced the day we closed for Christmas
  - January assessment then deferred
  - Education Scotland/Scottish Government directive that no assessment for SQA purposes could take place during remote learning
  - Return to school was partial and it was felt it would be unfair to assess prior to Easter given disparity in pupil-by-pupil engagement with online learning
- Above is also true of Higher other than that Higher guidance at subject level was only released in January

All schools in EAC are working on the basis that written assessment evidence is gathered in two ways. The first is in-class assessment, the second via the May assessment diet. Some schools elsewhere are not utilising an assessment diet but will have a much longer period of class-based assessment. It is our view that a hybrid provides more scope for in class revision and support.

### **Support during assessment window**

Timetabled classes will run as normal during the May assessment diet. Staff will be in school and available. However, given that there are various assessments each day, it is unlikely that all pupils will be able to attend

class together. Staff will offer revision support during timetabled class time. However, we recognise that some pupils may have multiple assessments on consecutive days and appreciate that some families would prefer that time is given over to study at home.

There is no formal study leave for the following reasons:

- Tension between formalising time away from staff/school following a lockdown against the view that studying at home is in the best interests of young people undertaking numerous assessments in quick succession
- Variance in the number and timing of assessments for different pupils in S4-S6
- Transport issues for half of our pupils i.e., attend school for a 9am assessment, if study leave were formalised, pupils would have no access to transport until 3.40pm, creating a lack of equity in terms of in school support (conversely for those who would prefer study leave, inequity in study time at home)

Due to accommodation restrictions, pupils cannot attend school and not report to class. Pupils should not leave school early.

School staff are sympathetic to the view that study leave would be of benefit but are also keen that timetabled classes are also available to all pupils for revision purposes. We understand that families, on a pupil-by-pupil basis, are best placed to decide what is necessary on a given day during the next fortnight.

### **May Assessment Grades**

Teaching staff will endeavour to mark assessments quickly but are doing so while still timetabled to teach all classes. It is important to note that while very significant, the May assessments do not constitute the totality of a potential grade. No May assessment grades will be shared during the assessment diet, so as not to place undue pressure or stress on candidates. Staff will share grades thereafter, but pupils and families should understand that the grade in any May assessment is not the final award, as these assessments account for one piece of evidence only.

### **SQA and EAC Verification**

SQA confirmed last week that three of our courses would be verified. One at Advanced Higher level, one at Higher level and one at National 5 level.

EAC are in the process of finalising local authority level verification procedures, with recent discussion at HT level suggesting that Higher will be the main but not sole focus of EAC verification.

Verification involves submitting evidence to be checked by those appointed by the SQA (SQA verification) and those with significant SQA experience working within EAC (EAC verification).

### **Finalising and Sharing Grades (those submitted by the school to the SQA)**

SQA require grades from schools in mid-to-late June. Various checks and Quality Assurance procedures dictate that we will finalise grades by 11<sup>th</sup> June. We will share all grades submitted to SQA before the final week of term. We will also share the specifics of how grades were decided (i.e., the evidence used on a subject-by-subject basis). In the main, families and pupils are already aware of the fact that the following will be used:

- Practical Assessments in practical subjects (e.g., PE, Art, Music)
- Class based assessment conducted between Easter and June
- May diet of Assessment

Given that there is still scope to assess until around the end of the first week in June, we are not releasing a final subject by subject overview until after all potential assessment has taken place. However, parents/carers and pupils should be assured that there will be full school level transparency around the grades submitted and the specific evidence used. Sharing grades will ensure pupils leave for summer aware of how school staff graded their performance in advance of SQA issuing certificates later in summer.

## Appeals

SQA consulted on the appeals process in early April. They are due to publish their proposals soon. The models offered in the consultation varied, from SQA based appeals to school based. It remains unclear how a school can reasonably scrutinise their own judgement less any clerical errors that may have been made. There is also ongoing uncertainty around when any such appeals would be considered. School staff await with interest the specifics of the appeals process and will share what we can when clarified by SQA.

## 2. Willowbank Consultation

Formal notification of the consultation event was shared with parents/carers on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April. The consultation meeting will take place online on the evening of Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May between 6.30pm and 8.00pm. Joining details and a link to an online consultation response will be provided to school staff by EAC between now and then. School staff will share details with all parents/carers as soon as the joining details and link are made available.

## 3. AOCB – Protocol for informing parents/carers of non-completion of work issued during online learning

### General Use of SMHW during term

Staff are encouraged to upload homework task to SMHW (Satchel:One). The frequency of homework issued varies from subject to subject and teacher to teacher. However, staff should upload homework tasks as and when they are issued. Between August and December, the number of tasks issued was as follows.

**satchel:one**

[www.satchelone.com](http://www.satchelone.com)

**Report**

St Joseph's Academy

## School Overview

St Joseph's Academy - 17-08-2020 - 18-12-2020

Year Groups	Quantity	Percentage
S1	119	10%
S2	231	20%
S3	213	18%
S4	266	23%
S5	329	28%

## Remote Learning Notification

There has never been a protocol within teaching for how completion or non-completion of classwork is communicated during a lockdown/extended period of remote learning. This is because the terms and conditions which govern annual working hours presume that learning takes place in school. As such, protocols around formal reporting and informal parental requests (via Pastoral Care) are formalised. In a school setting, it would be unusual for pupils to not attempt or complete work, and as such this facet of learning is not something school staff would normally deal with less pupil absence or misconduct. General reporting protocols would cover engagement at agreed intervals, while parents/carers can request updates via Pastoral Care that will be facilitated when possible. In addition, Glow, Teams and Google Classroom have no accessible feature to allow for parental notification. Pupils were notified via their Teams and Google Classrooms, and in many cases via email.

However, the reality of wanting to keep parents/carers informed led to use of the following procedures:

- Staff uploaded notification of as many tasks as possible to the SMHW platform
  - All parents/carers can access SMHW to check work issued and completion rates
    - However actual parental sign up is lower than ideal
      - 426 parental accounts, of which 227 were used between January and April
- Where staff were concerned about low completion rates, emails were sent home as a follow up in some cases

Broadly, this was a successful way of notifying parents/carers under the circumstances, in that staff issued around 2800 class notifications in three months.

## School Overview

St Joseph's Academy - 04-01-2021 - 31-03-2021

Year Groups	Quantity	Percentage
S1	564	20%
S2	560	20%
S3	628	22%
S4	641	23%
S5	441	16%

The above is at class level. With class sizes across the entire school sitting at an average of 22, this demonstrates that school staff issued approximately 60,000 pupil level notifications via SMHW between January and the end of March and from a standing start.

In addition, Principal Teachers sent around 1500 emails (lower estimate), with some also making phone calls or sending SMS messages.

However, none of the above could be mandated or formalised as it falls outwith the scope of the Working Time Agreement. Professional Associations raised understandable concern around the viability of uploading the above volume of tasks against the general challenges of learning and teaching online. Email, as an extension, was questioned against workload/impact. For example, if a class teacher teaches, on average, eight

class groups of twenty-two pupils per week and issues one task per week (in reality usually more), but finds that completion is only 50%, they would be tasked with writing, sending and potentially replying to eighty-eight bespoke emails per week, every week. In reality, most classes had more than one task per week, meaning that 88 is a lower estimate at teacher level.

This would again be additional to normal working practices. In a corporate setting, that would be reasonable at the lower end, but when spending the majority of the working week teaching and developing materials, as well as uploading to SHMW and responding to pupil emails it was understandable that professional associations raised an issue with this potential approach.

Consideration was given to gathering data from all staff, but when scaled across 52 teachers, this would have resulted in around 4,400 items collated against a deadline, processed, and then collated by pupil for office staff, SLT or Pastoral to issue via email per week (again at lower end of estimate). This was not viable against competing pressures such as targeting those known to be vulnerable for support, managing IT issues and delivering food etc.

Pleasingly, the majority of staff opted into the above approach of using SMHW supplemented by email, which was a best response against the unique nature of teaching online and the lack of seamless software that could automate the task to the extent that it did not become disproportionate.

We do recognise that those with primary age pupils may have felt a disparity in frequency of update. This can be explained by the fact that in a primary setting, a teacher has responsibility for one group of thirty all week. The Secondary context is too broad to devise an efficient system with no notice or supporting software.

#### **4. Staffing**

The following advert is currently live:

Acting PT English (Maternity Cover) – September 2021 – September 2022

In addition, Miss McComb (Chemistry and SfL, temporary) has secured a full-time permanent post at Lenzie Academy. We are delighted for Miss McComb who has been with us for three academic years in various posts.

Congratulations and thanks are also extended to Miss Bernard (maternity cover), Mr Reid (NQT) and Mr Templeton (NQT) on securing permanent posts elsewhere from August 2021.

All other staffing matters, including aforementioned surplus as well as retirements and NQT allocations for next session will be communicated at the next Parent Council meeting. At the time of writing, we do not anticipate any permanent recruitment in advance of August 2021.