

## **Education Department**

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## **Mearns Castle High School**

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Dear Parent/Carer

### **SQA Examination Appeals in 2014**

I write to you in relation to the arrangements for SQA Examination Appeals in 2014. I am concerned that there seems to be a perception developing that SQA Examination Appeals are being removed from 2014. This is not the case. Changes to the arrangements for Appeals have been made but Examination Appeals are not being removed.

Since August I have delivered a number of presentations on this matter to pupils in S4, S5 and S6 and to parents of pupils in S5 and S6. I write to you now to re-iterate the information delivered in these presentations as I think it is vitally important that our school community fully understand the new arrangements for SQA Examination Appeals.

The SQA recently published a booklet on their new Examination Appeals arrangements entitled 'Introducing Results Services – new support from SQA' which offers the following information:

*From April 2014, SQA's new Results Services replace the Appeals Service for all National Courses where an exam or coursework contributes to the candidate's final grade.*

#### ***What are Results Services?***

*There are two Results Services*

- ***Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service***
- ***Post-results Service***

#### ***Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service***

*This service will assist candidates who could not sit an exam or who sat an exam but their performance suffered because of exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances include bereavement and serious illness. Minor ailments will not be considered exceptional circumstances.*

*The service will operate **before** the exam results are sent out.*

*If a school or college believes that a candidate is likely to have been affected by exceptional circumstances, it must inform SQA within 10 working days of the exam. The school or college must submit alternative evidence in support of the candidate. A wide range of evidence will be considered and requests are submitted online. Candidates who have had an estimate submitted to SQA will be eligible for this service. The decision to submit a request will be made by the Head Teacher. The candidate's final award will be decided by SQA, however it may not be the grade that was estimated by their school/college.*

*Results and certificates will be sent to candidates on results day.*

### **Post-results Service**

*This service will run after candidates have received their certificates.*

*If a school or college is concerned by a candidate's result, they can request a clerical check and/or a marking review of the exam paper.*

#### **Clerical check**

*SQA staff will check that all parts of the exam paper have been marked, that the marks given for each answer have been added correctly, and that the correct total mark or result was entered into SQA's computer system.*

#### **Marking review**

*A clerical check will first be carried out as described. Next, an SQA Senior Examiner will review the marks awarded in the candidate's exam paper. This is to ensure that the original marking was in line with the national standard.*

***A candidate's grade can go up or down following a clerical check or marking review.***

*The candidate's school or college will be informed of the result immediately following the review. A revised certificate will be sent to the candidate if there is a change to their results.*

***Schools and colleges will be charged a fee for using the Post-results Service where there is no change to the original grade following the clerical check or marking review.***

#### **Which qualifications are affected by the changes?**

*Results Services will be introduced in 2014 for all National Courses where an exam or coursework contributes to the candidates' final grade, these are:*

- *Intermediate 1*
- *Intermediate 2*
- *National 5*
- *Higher*
- *Advanced Higher*

*Further information on our new Results Services, including clerical checks and marking reviews, can be found at [www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices](http://www.sqa.org.uk/resultsservices)*

It is crucially important to understand, as I have already explained to our pupils, that although the arrangements have changed, a pupil's performance in the Prelim Examinations is still likely to have an important impact on the subsequent Appeals process, should it be required.

In relation to the Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service, which could ultimately be required by any of our pupils, the most compelling alternative evidence that can be submitted is a pupil's Prelim Examination in the subject.

Although there is no longer an opportunity to submit 'alternative evidence' in relation to the Post-results Service a pupil's performance in the Prelim Examination and the subsequent Estimate Grade sent to the SQA will play an important part in determining whether or not it is appropriate to request either a Clerical check or a Marking review. Making the correct judgement on whether or not to request a Post-results Appeal is even more important now, given that a pupil's grade could subsequently do down, and if the grade doesn't change as a result of the Appeal the school will be charged a fee.

It is clear, therefore, that, as previously, the key to maximising the possibility of a positive outcome in the new Results Service is a strong performance in the Prelim Examination generating the best possible 'alternative evidence' and resulting in the highest possible Estimate Grade being submitted to the SQA. Ultimately, therefore, a pupil's performance in the Prelim Examination is still vitally important in relation to any subsequent Appeal, as well as in preparation for the forthcoming SQA Examinations themselves, in May 2014.

I trust you find this information helpful in supporting your child to produce their highest possible attainment in both the Prelim and the SQA Examinations.

If you require any further information on this matter, or wish to discuss it further, please contact me or the Depute Head Teacher responsible for your child's Year Group.

Thank you for your continued support of our school.

Yours faithfully

Dean Smith  
Head Teacher