



**Bellahouston Academy**  
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**Head Teacher**  
Barry Mochan BA(Hons)

24<sup>th</sup> of November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you in order to make you aware of our current planning in relation to Senior Phase qualifications this session. As you may be aware, there have been some changes to the method of certification to be used at National 5 level, and these changes will have implications for our school calendar.

### **National 3 and 4, and National Progression Awards (NPAs)**

Qualifications at these levels will continue to be certificated in the same way as in previous sessions. Candidates will compile assessment evidence across the session through work undertaken in class, and, if these meet the appropriate assessment standards, the candidate will be awarded the qualification at the appropriate level. As in previous sessions, these courses are not graded; candidates either achieve the award or do not, depending on the quality of the evidence they produce.

### **National 5**

As you will be aware, there will be no SQA examinations this session at National 5 level. An alternative model of certification will be used instead, meaning that grades will be based on quality-assured teacher judgements of candidates' performance in assessments undertaken in school.

Guidance related to the assessment evidence required for pupils in each subject is being published by SQA in November; this process was completed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month, when the final subjects in the publication schedule received their advice.

I have asked colleagues in our various faculties and departments - following publication of the subject-specific guidance relevant to them - to agree upon an appropriate assessment timeline for each subject. Our school's key principles for decision-making in this regard have been agreed upon: firstly, all decisions taken must be fully compliant with SQA advice; secondly, faculties/departments will ensure a consistent experience for every young person sitting the subject, so each learner will follow the same assessment timeline, regardless of which particular class they are in; thirdly, the assessment timeline will be structured in way which is fair and is supportive of our young people, spreading the assessment burden across the session where possible, and giving learners the best possible chance of performing well in the key assessments used by teachers to assign a final grade.

Departments/Faculties will structure their assessment timelines around three Assessment Checkpoints. We will have National 5 Assessment Checkpoints in:

- December
- February
- April





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At each of these checkpoints, we will be able to evaluate the progress of each learner (evidenced by performance in the assessments undertaken by these times) and make parents aware of current performance. Our Tracking and Reporting calendar has been modified to allow for this.

By the December checkpoint, any assessments are very likely to have taken place during class time; however, around the times of the February and April Assessment Checkpoints, a Formal Assessment Diet will take place.

Each of these Formal Assessment Diets will last two weeks (from the 25<sup>th</sup> of January until the 5<sup>th</sup> of February, and the 19<sup>th</sup> of April until the 30<sup>th</sup> of April); faculties/department will - perhaps if a required assessment will last longer than a single period, or if more formal assessment conditions are required - be allocated the time and accommodation to issue this assessment simultaneously to all candidates within the subject.

Prior to the commencement of these Formal Assessment Diets, a timetable of assessments will be issued, so that pupils can organise their preparations accordingly. Study leave will not be made available to young people for these assessment diets, as it is thought best to limit the amount of time lost to learning. Preparation will be supported by classwork undertaken around these times.

SQA have not yet provided a final date for the submission of schools' National 5 grades. When we become aware of this date, it may be necessary to amend the date of the Formal Assessment Period in April. For instance, if the final date given by the SQA for the submission of teacher grades is in early May, it would be appropriate to move this April Formal Assessment Diet to a point slightly earlier in the session to allow time for teachers to mark these, and appropriate moderation involving other subject specialists to take place. Any changes deemed necessary to the above schedule will be communicated to parents and young people at the earliest opportunity.

### **Higher and Advanced Higher**

Candidates at Higher and Advanced Higher level are still scheduled to sit final examinations in an SQA diet beginning in May. For this reason, it remains our intention to organise a prelim diet in order to track the progress of these candidates, and compile evidence. At the moment, this Prelim Diet is planned to take place from the 25<sup>th</sup> of January until the 5<sup>th</sup> of February.

Further communication will be provided when it is possible to give final confirmation of the assessment calendar to be followed this session.

Yours faithfully,

Barry Mochan  
Headteacher  
Bellahouston Academy

