



Bellahouston Academy
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Head Teacher
Barry Mochan BA(Hons)

30th of March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

S4-S6 Formal Assessment Periods

As you will be aware, due to the cancellation of SQA examinations this session at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels, candidate performance will be assessed and accredited through the SQA's Alternative Certification Model. This model involves pupils evidencing their performance in SQA courses by undertaking a series of assessments within school; this evidence will allow teachers to submit quality-assured grades for each pupil to SQA.

To ensure that pupils and parents can be confident that the assessment judgements we reach are fair and credible, teachers will undertake moderation and cross-marking work with other subject specialists within their departments/faculties, and with subject specialists from other schools; SQA will also liaise with the school and – through a sampling process – confirm how effectively our assessment processes allow accurate judgements of pupil performance to be made. This means that we can be sure that pupil work is marked in accordance with SQA standards, and that the final judgments we make about pupil performance are accurate, and based on a fair assessment of the evidence each young person has been able to produce. Schools will submit grades to SQA towards the end of June, and pupils can expect to receive their SQA certificates in August.

Pupils will undertake assessments at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher within two Formal Assessment Periods:

- **April 20th - April 30th**

In the April Formal Assessment Period, most assessments will take place during existing timetabled classes, limiting – as far as is possible – the potential for assessments to disrupt valuable learning time in other subjects. However, some minor adjustment will be inevitable where assessments are too long to take place within timetabled classes.

- **May 17th - May 25th**

In the May Formal Assessment Period, it is likely that some assessments will be longer, and will, in some subjects, assess a greater breadth of the required course content. In many subjects, therefore, the evidence produced in these May assessments will be of highly predictive value, meaning that this evidence will be particularly helpful to teachers in arriving at an appropriate final grade. It will be necessary - as some assessments in this May diet will be longer and may not fit comfortably within normal lessons - to construct and issue an assessment timetable for each student, so that we can be reassured that individual pupils will not face an assessment burden which may feel difficult to manage.

A small number of assessments may take place outwith these two Formal Assessment Periods, where such an arrangement would benefit young people by further spreading the assessment burden over a longer period of time. Pupils and parents/carers will be notified in advance of any





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such arrangements. We will not be offering “study leave”, as this would impact on the time remaining for valuable learning and assessment preparation; as far as is possible, pupils will be expected to attend their normal timetabled classes when not participating in assessment.

Preparing For Assessments

Pupils will be reminded of which subject assessments will be undertaken during each Formal Assessment Period through our Formal Assessment Period Overview document which will be accessible through the school website, the App and Show My Homework. Our Subject Route Map resource will be available in the same locations, and will remind pupils of the learning associated with each of the assessments they will undertake. The assessment schedule for each subject has also been discussed in detail with pupils in class; Show My Homework, Microsoft Teams and other online learning platforms have been used to further remind pupils of the arrangements in place for April.

I am pleased to announce that Spring Revision Masterclasses are available to assist our S4-S6 pupils as they prepare for SQA Assessments. I am grateful to our teachers for taking time out of their Spring Break to support our SQA candidates, and would encourage our young people to take advantage of the learning opportunities on offer. Young people who wish to attend these Masterclasses should have signed up in advance (using the link available on Show My Homework), so that we can ensure adequate accommodation is available, and that any required Covid-19 mitigations can be easily managed.

We have recently purchased and issued a pack of Subject Study Guides to our pupils for the levels at which these are available, and have also issued collapsible desks to some young people who would benefit from a more comfortable study area at home as they undertake the revision and home learning required in preparation for assessment.

I am very grateful for the support we have had from parents during this challenging term, as Covid-19 restrictions have led us to rely on remote and blended learning provision. I hope that we can look forward to a more settled term in April, and that we can continue to work together positively. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish a peaceful and joyful time for those within our school community preparing to celebrate Ramadan.

Yours sincerely,

Barry Mochan
Headteacher
Bellahouston Academy

