

John Paul Academy

'ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTAINMENT'

National Qualifications



S4 - Session 2025/26



JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

Introduction to Senior Phase	3
Ready to learn, ready to achieve	4
Resilience to achieve	5
Nationals in a Nutshell	6
Progression to Higher Qualifications	7
Targeted support	8
Key Dates	9
Homework expectations	10
Prelim exams	11
Final exams	12
Useful links and resources	13
Thank you	14



JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

SENIOR PHASE

National qualifications

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

This year marks an important milestone for our S4 cohort as they embark on their National Qualifications journey.

To support pupils and parents through this process, we have created this digital booklet, providing essential information on National Qualifications.

We are committed to working closely with pupils and parents, offering guidance and support at every stage.

We have set an aspirational target for most of our students to achieve as many National 5 qualifications this year as possible.

While some may surpass this goal and others may approach it differently, we recognise and celebrate every individual's unique learning journey.

Regardless of level or ability, we encourage all our young people to strive for excellence and reach their fullest potential in their studies.





JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

READY TO LEARN, READY TO ACHIEVE

At John Paul Academy, we encourage all pupils to come to school each day ready to learn. Being prepared and present gives them the best chance to succeed and make the most of their fourth year.

Research shows a strong link between excellent attendance and high levels of achievement. That's why we expect every pupil to aim for 100% attendance and to arrive on time each day.

Being consistently present, punctual and ready to learn will be key to unlocking their full potential this year.

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

We set high aspirations for our young people, encouraging them to achieve as many National 5 qualifications as possible.

Success begins with the right mindset. Pupils should be ready to commit fully to their studies, embracing the challenges and opportunities that come with a busy academic schedule.

Being prepared to learn, working hard, and managing time effectively are essential steps toward reaching their full potential. With dedication and focus, every pupil can achieve their best in their National Qualifications.



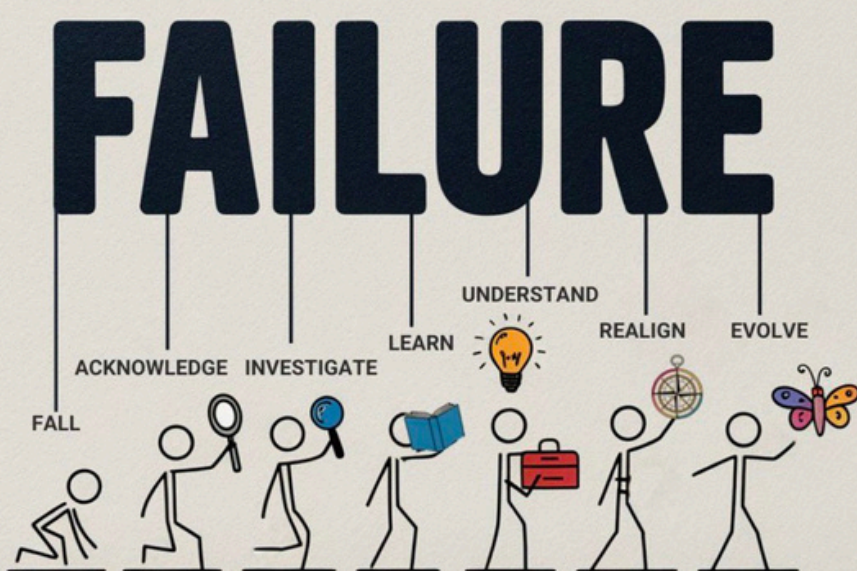


JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

RESILIENCE TO ACHIEVE

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

Why Is Resilience Important?



Resilience is a pupil's ability to bounce back from challenges—both academic and personal. It's about developing a mindset that sees setbacks as opportunities to grow, and learning from mistakes with determination and strength.

During the journey toward National 5 qualifications, resilience is essential. Pupils will face pressure, deadlines, and moments of doubt—but those who persevere and stay focused are more likely to succeed.

Building resilience not only supports academic achievement but also fosters personal growth, helping young people navigate life's challenges with confidence and optimism.

Achieving many National 5 qualifications can be challenging—but it is absolutely achievable. With the right mindset, effort, and support, every pupil has the potential to succeed.

At John Paul Academy, we encourage our young people to see failure as a valuable part of the learning process. Mistakes are not setbacks—they are stepping stones to growth. We also promote a positive attitude toward feedback, helping pupils use it constructively to improve and move forward.

Throughout S4, we will continue to support and challenge our pupils, helping them build resilience and develop into confident, independent learners who are ready to take on whatever comes next.



JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

NATIONALS

IN A

NUTSHELL

National 5 Qualifications

National 5 courses are assessed through a question paper (exam) or coursework, or both - most of which will be marked by SQA.

In some subjects, coursework is completed throughout the year under exam conditions. Prelim exams will take place to gather evidence on progress in December 2025. The final exam diet for N5 subjects will take place throughout May 2026. Pupils will be supported and given every opportunity to achieve at National 5 level.

The courses are graded A to D or 'no award'. National 5 awards are essential if pupils have aspirations to achieve Higher qualifications in S5 / S6.

National 4, National 3 Qualifications

In National 3 and National 4 courses, learners complete unit assessments throughout the year. National 4 courses also include an end-of-year assessment called an added value unit.

These assessments are marked internally by class teachers. National 3 and National 4 courses are assessed as 'pass' or 'fail' and are quality assured by SQA.





JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

PROGRESSION TO HIGHER QUALIFICATIONS

To progress to Higher level courses in any subject, pupils must achieve a pass at National 5 level, graded A to C.

Higher courses consist of individual units and a final course assessment. These assessments may include exams (question papers), coursework (such as assignments or practical activities), or a combination of both. Most assessments are externally marked. Higher qualifications are graded from A to D, or may result in 'no award' if the required standard is not met.

Highers are the standard entry qualifications for higher education in Scotland, including college and university programmes.

In S5 and S6, pupils have the opportunity to specialise in subjects at Higher level that align with their career aspirations and meet the entry requirements for further education or employment.





JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE



TARGETED SUPPORT

Learner Conversations

Supported Study

Supported study sessions will be available throughout S4, organised by each department. These sessions will be structured to support pupils in the lead-up to prelims and final exams, and may also be offered regularly throughout the school year.

Details of supported study opportunities will be shared in advance. We strongly encourage all pupils to take full advantage of this valuable additional support to help them achieve their best.

Throughout S4, class teachers will engage in regular learning conversations with pupils to provide guidance and support.

Pupils will receive constructive feedback to help them understand their progress and identify specific areas for improvement.

In addition to this, Pupil Support teachers will have check-ins with pupils to ensure they stay on track and are well supported in achieving their goals.



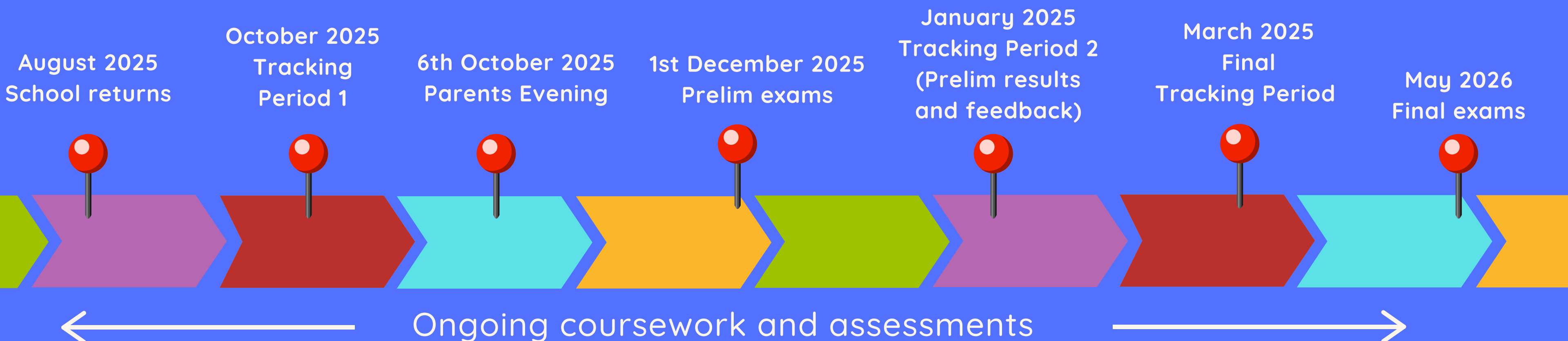


JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

KEY DATES

2025 / 26





HOMework EXPECTATIONS

Homework tasks will be set by class teachers on a weekly basis. It is expected that all pupils should complete at least one homework task per week in each subject. Homework tasks will be set on Class Teams. Feedback should be offered to pupils by class teachers on homework tasks that have been submitted.

This infographic highlights the benefits and importance of homework. Homework is not just a task assigned by teachers to keep students occupied after school; it has far-reaching cognitive benefits and contributes to brain growth and development.

Through various homework assignments, students have the opportunity to enhance critical thinking skills, memory retention, and problem-solving abilities. Improved memory retention helps students perform better on exams and enhances their overall academic performance.

Homework Benefits (Purpose & Facts)

EDU8NGE

1 Learn about time management

2 Provides a measurement of students' learning for teachers

3 Trains students to solve problems

4 Gives another opportunity to review class material

5 Parents get to see the content being taught in school

6 Learn to take responsibility for their part in the educational process

7 Students learn to do things even if they don't want to

8 Trains students to work independently

9 Learn to stay organized, act and plan

10 Deepens students' understanding of a subject matter



Poster designed by edugage.com



PRELIM EXAMS



Prelim Exam Schedule

- Dates: 1st December – 10th December 2025 (approx. 8 days)
- Note: Practical-based subjects may have exams outside this window.



Study Leave

- Pupils will have study leave during the prelim period.
- They should only attend school when they have an exam scheduled.



Exam Timetable

- A detailed schedule will be shared in advance to help pupils plan and prepare effectively.



Study Support

- Study Packs: Provided by all departments to support home revision.
- Pupil Support Teachers: Will offer guidance on study skills and revision techniques throughout the year.



Feedback & Analysis

In January 2026, pupils will receive a 'S4 Prelim Analysis' document from all subjects.

This will include:

- Detailed feedback on performance
- Progress tracking
- Next steps for improvement



FINAL EXAMS

- The 2026 exams will start on Wednesday 22 April and finish on Monday 1 June. Results day will be Tuesday 4 August 2026.
- The 2026 SQA exam timetable will be published and shared with pupils, parents and carers in due course.
- Study leave will start for pupils after the Easter break - exact date to be confirmed.
- Pupils will be offered the opportunity to engage in and be expected to attend additional supported study sessions in the lead up to final SQA exams.
- In addition to this, pupils will also be expected to attend 'Masterclass' sessions the day before each exam.

**"CONSISTENCY
LEADS TO
GREAT
ACHIEVEMENT
WITH TIME."**



USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

National 5 - Scotland - BBC Bitesize

ACHIEVE - ACHIEVE more at National 5 and Higher

<https://www.savemyexams.com/national-5/>

SQA - NQ - Past papers and marking instructions



JOHN PAUL ACADEMY

THANK YOU

Thank you for your continued support, cooperation and partnership.

We value our collaboration with families and remain committed to working together in pursuit of excellence for all our young people.

We appreciate your support in reinforcing our key message of high expectations—ensuring daily attendance, punctuality, and consistent adherence to school standards.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your child's Pupil Support teacher or Mr Cassidy (DHT) at any point.

LOVE, INCLUSION, FAITH, EXCELLENCE

"I PLEAD WITH YOU!
NEVER, EVER
GIVE UP ON HOPE,
NEVER DOUBT,
NEVER TIRE,
AND NEVER
BECOME DISCOURAGED.
BE NOT AFRAID."

—Pope Saint John Paul II

