

9th October 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

On Wednesday the Depute First Minister announced that the examination diet in 2021 will commence on 13th May and that there will be no examinations for National 5 subjects. However, the intention is that both the Higher and Advanced Higher exams will proceed as normal.

National 5 Grades will be awarded on the basis of centre estimates underpinned by a national moderation system. SQA will engage with centres throughout the year on quality assurance of learners' work. The final grade will be informed by 2-4 key pieces of work. These will be subject specific and details are not due to be published until after the October holiday. There will be a contingency plan to allow H/AH to fall back to the N5 model should this be required.

SQA has published general guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates. Schools are urged to "focus on gathering high-quality predictive evidence that clearly demonstrates a candidate's attainment". Mock exams, class tests undertaken and performance evidence are of particular importance. The school requires to generate evidence across all course components. "Convincing evidence" is defined as

- Applying learning in unseen contexts
- An appropriate level of demand
- Mirroring important aspects of the course
- Carried out under appropriate conditions
- Consistency of performance
- Depth of responses in relation to discriminating questions on key concepts
- Confirmed by moderation activities

Schools are advised to exercise caution where candidates have completed work outside of a controlled environment.

These requirements mirror exactly the processes followed by Jordanhill School for many years.

Pupils currently in S4 have not sat examinations since January of S2. We consider it essential to proceed with the S4 Mock Exams scheduled for 23 November to 2 December both as a contribution to generating convincing evidence and because pupils would be seriously disadvantaged if they have not been through the rigours of formal exams prior to commencing Higher courses in S5.

For all pupils, generating evidence with the necessary consistency and depth to merit high estimates requires them to apply themselves throughout the year. *"I got an A in the last test before the estimate was submitted"* does not meet the SQA criteria. There are too many uncertainties to rely on pulling it out the bag at the last minute.

Each year we produce a timetable setting out when key assessments including assignments will take place. One aim is to try and distribute the workload for pupils across the latter part of this term and into term 2. As and when we have clarity on the nature of assignments this session and the key evidence we need to generate we will seek to produce a similar timetable. It may be that the delay in the start of the diet will offer us some greater flexibility.

I hope to be able to provide further insights for you towards the end of October.

Kindest regards

Paul Thomson