



# BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

*Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best*

Braehead Way • Bridge of Don • Aberdeen • AB22 8RR

Tel 01224 707583

Web: [www.bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk](http://www.bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk)

E-mail: [bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

**Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam**



13 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

## Head Teacher's Update – 23 January 2023

I write to update you on the following:

- Calendar Dates
- CFine Foodbank Collection December 2022
- SQA Prelim Exams and Assessments
- SQA Exam Conditions
- SQA 'Your Exams' Booklet
- S4, S5 and S6 Study Support
- Course Choice for Session 2023/24
- School Catering: Monday 23 January 2023
- Severe Weather
- Parent Council and 100 Club
- Contact with School

## Calendar Dates

Prelim Exams and Study Leave for all S4 – S6

Local Holiday  
In-Service Days

S2 Parents' Evening (In Person)<sup>1</sup>  
S3 Parents' Evening (In Person)<sup>2</sup>  
Last Day of Term

Monday 16 January to  
Friday 27 January 2023  
Monday 13 February 2023  
Tuesday 14 February 2023  
Wednesday 15 February 2023  
Wednesday 8 February 2023  
Wednesday 22 February 2023  
Friday 31 March 2023

It was lovely to welcome all our young people back to school on Monday of this week after what I hope was a restful break from school for all. This is always a very busy term for staff and young people with assessments, parents' evenings and course choice and pathway planning

These letters are sent once a fortnight to help keep you informed and as always, I welcome your feedback.

<sup>1</sup> Further information in the Appendix at the end of this letter. Information on making appointments to follow.

<sup>2</sup> As Above

## CFine Foodbank Collection December 2022



As you can see from these pictures there was another huge effort from young people and their families which culminated in 16 crates of non-perishable food items and toiletries being donated to C-Fine in the last week of term. Our thanks for all your efforts in supporting this worthwhile cause.



## SQA Prelim Exams and Assessments

The prelim exams are scheduled from Monday 16 January to Friday 27 January. All this information was posted into the S4, S5 and S6 Google Classrooms for young people before the holidays to help them with their planning.

These exams help support young people's learning in two ways. Firstly, they give them the experience of sitting formal exams in an environment which is different to their classroom experience to date. This is an important part of developing their confidence and their skills in preparing for a diet of assessment. A separate letter has been issued to families explaining the purpose and arrangements for study leave.

Secondly, they give young people a good indication about how close their efforts have brought them to achieving their target grades. Teachers are then able to feedback to young people and parents and carers on their next steps in class and also through the reports<sup>3</sup> issued to families.

They are important but in all cases a young person's progress and continuation with a course or exam is based on a range of information including their attitude, effort and other pieces of assessment evidence. There will also be further opportunities this term for young people to practice exam skills and demonstrate they have reached the required standard for the courses they are following.

Please note that the two-week prelim diet allows candidates to sit exams which last longer than a normal 60-minute period and are therefore closer to the experience they will face in the final exam in May. Due to the limited amount of time available for

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<sup>3</sup> Details of content and issue date of S4 – S6 reports in the appendix at the end of this letter.

a two-week prelim diet, pupils may still be required to complete other parts of prelim papers outwith the two weeks at another time in the term. In such cases, these will be arranged by the subject teacher and take place during normal class time. There will be no whole school timetable produced for assessments which have been arranged outwith the two-week prelim diet, and, as such, all communication for these will be relayed to the class by the class teacher.

### **Equipment required to complete the exam**

All young people must bring the equipment needed for each exam with them. This include pens – black or blue unless told otherwise, pencils, a ruler and a calculator: we do not have sufficient supplies of spare scientific calculators if young people forget. If there is a problem in providing such a calculator for your child(ren) please contact the school through your child's Head of House so we can help.

## **SQA Exam Conditions**

To meet the SQA's exam requirements, pupils will be placed under the same exam conditions which will be imposed for the main exam diet later in the year. The information in the section highlighted below is taken from the SQA's *Your Exams* booklet which is published each year and has already been communicated to pupils through year group assemblies this week. I would urge you to discuss these with your child, especially the list of items which are prohibited by the SQA from being taken into the exam room.

Note that the SQA's list of prohibited items includes **mobile phones** and **smart watches, even if these are switched off and out of sight**. These items must be left at home, stored in a school locker, or left for safe keeping in an envelope at the school office. **Failure to do so will result in the pupil being awarded no marks for the paper**. Unfortunately, this has happened in the past. If a pupil realises that they have an item in their possession in the exam room, regardless of whether it's switched off or out of sight, they should hand it over to the exam invigilator before the start of the exam.

### **SQA 'Your Exams' Booklet**

The SQA's *Your Exams* booklet is normally published in February ahead of the SQA exam diet each year and issued to pupils towards the end of this term. In it, the SQA clearly lay out the rules and conditions that should approved centres and candidates must abide by. Key points from the 2022 booklet are copied below.

#### **Arriving for your exam**

You should be outside the exam room at least 15 minutes before the exam is due to start. If you are late, you must report to the teacher or lecturer in charge of SQA exams on the day. They will let you know if you can sit the exam.

#### **Invigilators**

The people who supervise exams are called 'invigilators'. Their job is to make sure your exams take place according to the rules and that the rules are applied fairly.

You must listen to and follow any instructions the invigilators give you. If anything unexpected happens to you during an exam, such as feeling unwell, you should tell the invigilator immediately.

### Writing your answers

You must use a pen with black or blue ink. Do not use gel pens as these can fade. It is important that the markers can read your writing. They will do their best to read your work, but they might not be able to award marks if your writing is difficult to read. When writing on unlined pages, try to leave a space of about 1 cm between lines. In some subjects, poor spelling and punctuation could also result in marks not being awarded. If you have any concerns about this, or about your handwriting, speak to your teacher or lecturer. Remember to cross out any rough work, or any unwanted answers if you make more than one attempt at a question.

### Prohibited items

Prohibited items are things that you must not have with you at your allocated seat or desk in the exam room unless they have been approved by the SQA as part of an assessment arrangement for the exam you are sitting. Prohibited items include the following:



Mobile phones



Electronic devices such as iPods, tablets, smartwatches or any other device that stores information or can connect to the internet



Extra information - books, notes, sketches or paper, and anything written on your clothes or body



Pencil cases or calculator cases



Calculators, except for exam papers where calculators are allowed



Dictionaries, except for exam papers where dictionaries are allowed

### **Leaving the exam room**

If you finish early or have done as much of the exam as you can, and you want to leave the exam room, raise your hand and ask the invigilator for permission to leave. If the exam is longer than one hour, the invigilator may allow you to leave after 30 minutes. If the exam is less than one hour, you must stay in the exam room until the end of the exam. Before you leave, you must give the invigilator all your exam papers, including any answer booklets, extra sheets, question papers and data booklets. You could lose all marks for the paper concerned if you don't give your exam papers to the invigilator before leaving the exam room.

### **Desks**

In most schools and colleges, you will be given a desk or seat number for each exam. Make sure you know this number before each exam.

### **Fairness**

Everyone should have a fair chance to do their best during exams. Cheating and causing a disturbance during an exam are unfair to other candidates. Examples of cheating and unfair behaviour (candidate malpractice) include the following:

- Having prohibited items with you at your seat in the exam room
- Pretending to be someone else or getting someone else to take an exam for you
- Disruptive behaviour in the exam room
- Using rude, abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or images
- Copying from another person
- Collusion – working with other candidates on an individual task that must be your own work
- Plagiarism – failing to reference sources properly or presenting someone else's work as your own

Any cheating or unfair behaviour can have serious consequences for your results and your future. This could include losing marks, getting a lower grade or having your qualification cancelled. Your school or college can explain more about this.

*SQA 'Your Exams' 2022*

To help young people further prepare the SQA have past papers on their website for further practice and revision.

[Past papers](#)

## **S4, S5 and S6 Study Support**

See below for message form Heriot Watt University:

As SCHOLAR Contact for Bridge of Don Academy, we are delighted to share the following newly created resource with you. The [Learning with SCHOLAR](#) video is for

learners of National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher subjects, explaining and demonstrating how to access and use SCHOLAR to support learning and revision.

### [Learning with SCHOLAR video](#)

This video, for learners of National 5, H and AH subjects, has been divided into the following sections:



- [What is SCHOLAR?](#)
- [Do I have a SCHOLAR account?](#)
- [How do I log in to SCHOLAR?](#)
- [What if I can't see all my courses in SCHOLAR?](#)
- [How can SCHOLAR help?](#)
- [How can I find what I need to work on in SCHOLAR?](#)
- [What are the tests for in SCHOLAR?](#)
- [What if I can't work on SCHOLAR online?](#)
- [Where can I get help with SCHOLAR?](#)

## **Course Choice for Session 2023/24**

All young people will be working through the course choice process over the coming weeks in Personal and Social Education (PSE) with their Head of House. They will be provided with information about how the process works, the courses available to them and career pathway planning supports which will help them make the best choices for moving into their new year group.

### **S2 moving into S3**

All young people will continue to study core subjects – English, Maths, PE, PSE, RMPS – and will choose an additional 7 subjects from the curricular areas.

The S3 curriculum must maintain a balance between breadth of learning and the depth required to prepare effectively for National Qualifications in S4. This gives young people a chance to focus on specific subjects and the expectation is that almost all young people will make their choices for S4 from the pool of subjects studied in S3. You will get a chance to discuss course queries and progression at Parents' Evening on Wednesday 8 February.

Young people will be supported through the course choice process by their Head of House and input from Skills Development Scotland. Further information, about course choice, will be available on Google Classroom and Google Sites.

### **S3 moving into S4**

All young people have studied 9 subjects in S3. In addition, they have also continued with core PE and PSE. Learning has been more focused in S3 and

allowed them to develop the in-depth knowledge and skills they need for their 9 subjects. The expectation is that almost all young people will make their choices for S4 from the pool of subjects studied in S3.

In S4 all pupils will continue with English and Maths and in addition choose 4 subjects from their S3 subjects. They will be guided through the process in PSE by their Guidance teacher. In addition, you will also receive an S3 Report which will support and inform discussions at home about subject choices.

Further information will be given to pupils and parents throughout the process for all year groups, however, pupils should contact their Guidance teacher should they have any questions.

### **S4/5 moving into S5/6**

All S4 and S5 pupil are undertaking estimate exams for the next two weeks and therefore will start the course choice procedures on their return to school – Monday 30 January.

### **Deadlines for returning course choice forms:**

S2 into S3 – **Friday 10 February**

S3 into S4 – **Friday 3 March**

S4/5 into S5/6 – **Friday 3 March**

Information for all year groups will continually be updated and shared in Classroom and online Sites. Links will be shared in due course.

## **School Catering: Monday 23 January 2023**

### [ParentPay - Leading Cashless Payment System for Schools](#)

School catering will be changing from Accord to ParentPay on Monday 23 January 2023. The link above gives you general information.

The new system has many benefits:

- Payments can be made online with bank transfer, debit cards or at a convenient store using PayPoint.
- Free school meals allowance will be automatically uploaded
- You can access their account to track their spending and balance.
- School trips and other payments can be made using this system – removing the need for young people to carry cash to and from school.
- Access is via pin number rather than card

Prior to 23 January you will receive a letter detailing the account and pin number. There will be staff in school for three days from 23 January to support canteen staff and young people in using the service.

Young people will still need their Accord cards to access free bus transport, libraries (other than the school library) and discounts available through the Young Scot website. These are all linked [here](#).

## Severe Weather

We will use a variety of communication methods if severe weather impacts on school or school transport provision. On mornings of severe weather I check that school transport is running directly with Central Coaches and Watermills and update the emergency information line as close to 07.00 as possible. If school transport is not running this is a decision taken by the providers not the school staff. If the school is open to all who can safely travel those who normally travel by school bus are also welcome if you are able to transport them to and from school or allow them to use public transport.

The parent School Closure details are: 0870 054 1999, School ID 011020

During the school day we will use Groupcall to inform parents/carers if it is necessary to close the school for any reason including severe weather. This will follow checking of forecasts, consultation with the authority and school transport providers. The timing will depend on how quickly bus companies can organise transport to return to school. Having decided on a time we will inform you so you can make any necessary arrangements. **We respectfully ask that you do not immediately contact your child(ren) because they may not yet know, and this has the potential to cause panic.**

Young people will be told in classes just prior to the time of the closure in time for school transport. They will be able to use their mobile devices to contact home to check they can safely be released. We take what they tell us on trust and the teacher completes a form with this information and young people depart school on foot or on school transport. We use the forms completed by teachers to follow any queries.

In the case of young people with complex additional support needs an individual plan is in place.

Please note that in the event of a young person telling us they cannot make personal contact with home we will keep them in school and try to make contact on their behalf. They will not be released until this contact is made so we know they can arrive home safely.

## Parent Council and 100 Club

The group is made up of parents/carers of children and young people attending school in almost all year groups who are interested in finding out more about how education works but also keen to support the school.

If you would like to join the Parent Council, please email the school office with your name and the name(s) of your child(ren) to join online you will also need to give us an email address to send the invitation to the online meeting.

The meetings for the session are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 31 January 2023  
Tuesday 28 March 2023  
Tuesday 25 April 2023  
Tuesday 30 May 2023 – AGM

The only fund raising the PC does is their 100 Club. You can download the form to join this from the school [website here](#) or use the bank details it contains to set up a direct debit using online banking.

## Contact with School

When e-mailing please provide your child's name and registration class and a note of the nature of the concern so it can be forwarded appropriately.

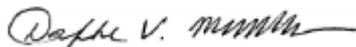
### Pastoral Care

Braemar House: Miss Howard  
Crathes House: Mrs Napier  
Drum House: Mrs Walburn  
Fyvie House: Mrs Marshall

### Year Heads

S1 and S2: Mr Haggarty  
S3 and S4: Mrs Cruickshank  
S5 and S6: Mr Jamieson

Yours sincerely



Mrs D McWilliam  
Head Teacher

## Reporting and Parents' Evening Calendar 2022 – 23 – Parent and Carer Information

Year Group	Interim Report – no teacher comment Purpose and Dates	Full Report – includes teacher comment Purpose and Dates	Parents' Evening Purpose and Dates
<b>S1</b>	Settling in Interim Report including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework in each subject area.</li> <li>• <b>Issue Date 11 November 2022</b></li> </ul>	End of Session Report for each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum for Excellence level achieved.</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework.</li> <li>• Progress and next steps comments</li> <li>• <b>Issue Date 2 June 2023</b></li> </ul>	Meet your child's Teachers and follow up on Interim Report if you have questions about the effort, behaviour, and homework.  Teachers may also use this appointment to inform you about courses although this is on the school website. <b>30 November 2023 Face to Face in person</b>
<b>S2</b>	Interim Report for each subject including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum for Excellence level achieved.</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework. Teacher</li> <li>• <b>Issue date 22 December 2022</b></li> </ul>	End of Session Report for each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum for Excellence level achieved.</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework</li> <li>• Progress and next steps comments</li> <li>• <b>Issue Date 19 May 2023</b></li> </ul>	Progress including Curriculum for Excellence level achieved Next steps to meet full potential and discussion of potential pathways in the subject beyond choices already made for S3.  <b>8 February 2023 Face to Face in person</b>
<b>S3</b>	Interim Report for each subject including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum for Excellence level achieved.</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework – please be honest with your assessment of this.</li> <li>• <b>Issue Date 14 October 2022</b></li> </ul>	Final Report Progress and recommendations for Senior Phase (S4) for each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum for Excellence level achieved.</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework.</li> <li>• Progress and next steps</li> <li>• Recommendation</li> <li>• <b>Issue Date 26 January 2023</b></li> </ul>	Follow-up to the final Report Issued on 28 January to discuss progress to date including effort, behaviour, and homework and to offer advice on course choice for Senior Phase – S4.  <b>22 February 2023 Face to Face in person</b>
<b>S4- S6</b>	Interim Report 1 for each National Course <sup>4</sup> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target Grade (can be amended)</li> <li>• Working Grade.</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework</li> <li>• <b>Issue date 6 October 2022</b></li> </ul> Interim Report 2 for each National Course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estimate Grade</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework</li> <li>• <b>Issue date 24 April 2023</b></li> </ul>	Full Report for each National Course (following assessment period including prelim exams): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results of assessments</li> <li>• Next steps to meet target grade</li> <li>• Effort, Behaviour and Homework.</li> <li>• Recommendation – although this is part of the separate course choice procedures.</li> <li>• <b>Issue date 27 February 2023</b></li> </ul>	To discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• progress to date with national courses and next steps to meet target grade.</li> <li>• Discussion of reasons for working grade and what needs to be done to prepare for assessment(s) in January.</li> </ul> Parents/carers choose <b>one</b> of the following options <b>9 November 2022 Online</b> <b>17 November 2022 Online</b>

<sup>4</sup> Please note that reports for courses undertaken at college and other schools may come at different times.