



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



14 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Update – 14 January 2022

I write to update you on the following:

- Prelim Examinations
- SQA 'Your Exams' Booklet
- SQA 'Your National Qualifications 2021-2022'
- Learner Booklets
- North East Scotland College
- Course Choice Procedures
- School Reports
- Pathway Planning – Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Opportunities
- Severe Weather
- Contact with School

Prelim Examinations

The prelim diet for courses being delivered here at Bridge of Don Academy will take place over the next two weeks from Monday 17 January until Friday 28 January inclusive.

Study Leave will be given for the two weeks: this means young people study at home for their exams and only attend school for those exams, assessments or if requested to do so by their teacher to complete work. They can also come into school to study but should be prepared with work and materials and, with the agreement of teachers work in classrooms, the library will not be available. They must be aware that we do use many classrooms for the exams and so these are not always available.

Rooms and seat numbers for each exam have been posted in the S4 to S6 Google Classrooms and will be updated on a regular basis where necessary.

Assemblies have been held for all S4 to S6 pupils, either in the Assembly Room or in PSE classes, where information has been clearly communicated about the standards and expectations set out by the SQA for pupils undertaking exams for SQA courses. As an SQA Approved Centre, we are required to delivered courses and undertake assessment procedures to these standards. The expectations for candidates are

made clear by the SQA in their [Your National Qualifications](#) and [Your Exams](#) publications which are issued to all pupils and reinforced in school through assemblies and PSE.

S4 to S6 pupils have been issued with an extract from the SQA's most recent *Your Exams* booklet which reaffirms the clear messages conveyed this week in school. These points are reproduced below, and I would urge you to ensure your child is familiar with the standards and expectations - and the consequences for breaching the code of conduct - with particular attention to the SQA's list of prohibited items.

The list 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, which unfortunately 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 must hand it over to the exam invigilator **before** the start of the exam.

Our SQA invigilators speak very highly about the conduct of our pupils during the exam diet, and I see no reason why this session should be any different.

SQA 'Your Exams' Booklet

A copy of the SQA's *Your Exams* booklet which was published in February ahead of the cancelled exams for 2020 is available to view [on the school website](#). A new copy is expected to be published for this year's 2022 diet.

Arriving for your exam

You should be outside the exam room at least 10 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 National Qualifications 2021-2022'

Pupils should now have been issued with a copy of the SQA's document *Your National Qualifications 2021-2022*, which can be viewed/downloaded at this address. https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/Your-NQ-2021-22.pdf

This has been discussed during PSE with particular attention drawn to the sections on *Plagiarism*, *Collusion* and *Language & Writing*. We would encourage you to read the document and reinforce the points made by the SQA.

Learner Booklets

Please find below the link to the Learner Booklets for Nationals 4 and 5, Higher and Advanced Higher. These booklets contain useful information for each subject giving details of what learning young people should be revisiting as well as other useful information such as websites or resources they can access. This is a great resource provided by class teachers to enable you, parents/carers, to support your young person at home in preparation for their assessments and estimate exams.

If anyone requires a hard copy of this document pupils should speak to their Guidance teacher.

Click this link to access the [Learner Booklets](#) from the school website.

North East Scotland College

Limited face to face teaching will resume on Monday (17 January 2022). NESCol are still required to try and manage numbers on campus to maintain the effectiveness of the mitigations in place. Priority has been given to groups who are required to attend for practical elements of courses or to meet support needs. Their approach is in line with Scottish Government guidance for the sector and follows the cautious optimism expressed on Tuesday at Holyrood about the path ahead.

All pupils will receive information, via Blackboard, confirming these arrangements and so it is important to check to see which courses are continuing online or indeed face-to-face. Further details can be found in Google Classroom.

The transition link course scheduled to start on Monday 17 January 2022 will go ahead on campus, as planned.

In addition, all school links courses (on campus, remote, and in school) will be cancelled on **Tuesday 1 February 2022** to enable all College staff to take part in a Professional Development Day and therefore all pupils should remain in school.

Course Choice Procedures

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.

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, is available on Google Classroom and the School website.

S3 moving into S4

All young people have studied 9 subjects in S3. In addition, they have also continued with core PE, PSE and RMPS. 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 and there will be a parents' evening on Wednesday 23 February 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 31 January.

Deadlines for returning course choice forms:

S2 into S3 – **Thursday 10 February**

S3 into S4 – **Friday 25 February**

S4/5 into S5/6 – **Friday 25 February**

Next week the finalised course choice booklet with lots more information for families and young people will be available on the school website.

School Reports

The school's calendar for reporting and parents' evenings can be downloaded from the school website [here](#).

Pathway Planning – Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Opportunities

DYW opportunities are regularly available on Google Classroom and the school website for young people to see. This week the following have been posted:

- Interested in STEM Career?
- RubberAtkins School Leaver Apprenticeship opportunity
- RGU Art Portfolio Sessions

Lots more DYW opportunities can be found [here](#).

Founders4Schools January 2022 sessions

Founders4Schools is running a series of four 'subject choice for careers' sessions on Tuesday, 18 January, covering Maths, Humanities, STEAM and Business. More information and booking [here](#).

Skills Development Scotland webinar for parents/carers

Skills Development Scotland is hosting a webinar 'How to have meaningful career conversations with your young person' for parents and carers on 27th January at 6.30pm. Register [here](#).

AAB's 2022 Apprenticeship Programme

AAB's 2022 Apprenticeship Programme is now open for applications, with opportunities across the organisation's Audit, Business Advisory and Payroll teams. Closing date is 1 March 2022, with training beginning in the summer. More info and applications [here](#).

Severe Weather

We have in place policies to ensure learning can continue when we have periods of bad weather.

All classwork and homework are posted on Google Classroom as assignments so parents/carers can see this using Google Guardian. If you need more help with the Google suite of resources, you will find the Google Support site under the *Parents* menu on the front page of the school website. You can also access it using this [link](#).

In severe weather conditions, emergency closure or other emergency circumstances, parents and pupils can receive up-to-date information via:

- The School Information Line
Tel: 0870 054 1999
PIN code 011020
- Aberdeen City Council's School Closures website
<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/school-closures>

If we have an emergency during the school day and must send young people home early, we will contact parents/carers using Groupcall. Before we send young people home, we ask teachers to check that they have been able to contact home and will be able to get into the house. If any young person has not been able to do this, we ask them to wait in school until we or they have made contact.

We have separate arrangements for our more vulnerable learners who travel to school by taxi whereby one of our support team will telephone parent/carer directly.

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

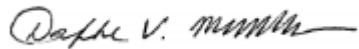
Braemar House: Miss Howard
Crathes House: Mrs Napier
Drum House: Miss Smith
Fyvie House: Mrs Marshall

Year Heads

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

I know that times continue to be challenging for many of you and would encourage you to contact us here at school if you think we can help. I wish you all well in 2022.

Yours sincerely



Mrs D McWilliam
Head Teacher