



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



16 April 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Update – 16 April 2021

I write to update you as follows:

THE ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL

- ❖ **Gathering evidence to submit grades to the SQA**
- ❖ **Supporting Young People through the process**
- ❖ **Moderation**

PATHWAY PLANNING

- ❖ **Developing the Young Workforce Opportunities**

THE ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION MODEL

Gathering evidence to submit grades to the SQA

Background

This session, young people have experienced an extended period of remote learning (January to March 2021). During this time, teachers and pupils have concentrated on new course content (knowledge and skills) and consolidating understanding through formative assessment. In April/May and, if required, early June, our young people will complete assessments to capture key pieces of evidence to support demonstrated attainment.

It is essential that we support each young person in a fair and consistent manner as they work through their 2021 National Qualifications.

Support for Schools from Aberdeen City Council:

All teaching staff across Aberdeen City Council have been supported to follow the SQA general and subject specific guidance when gathering demonstrated attainment evidence to support teacher professional judgement on provisional results. They have considered instruments of assessment and resulting evidence which has a high predictive value. This has been done, where appropriate by staff working in teams across the city.

Support for Schools from Scottish Qualifications Association (SQA)

The SQA has provided guidance on how schools gather evidence of demonstrated attainment to inform teacher judgement and the submission of provisional grades. Secondary schools across Aberdeen City have followed both general and subject-specific guidance, referencing the following SQA documentation:

[National courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates](#)

In addition, on 18 March 2021 the following advice was published.

*“The amount of key evidence required to determine provisional results in National 5 to Advanced Higher courses varies between subjects. It is not the **quantity of evidence** but the **quality of evidence**, in relation to its **predictive value**, that will support you in determining provisional results this session.*

Bridge of Don Academy Approach

Each young person will have the opportunity to complete assessments which will take place in class time throughout May. The purpose will be to gather evidence so that teachers can submit grades based on this demonstrated attainment of young people in each of their National Qualifications. Because they take place at the end of the course these assessments should provide the best opportunity for young people to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, staff may use other supplementary evidence including classwork and smaller class tests from across the session as described below.

Type and quality of evidence

- ❖ SQA 2021 Papers, Practice Papers (which cover more course content/skills, have appropriate level of demand) and coursework assessments will have a higher predictive value.
- ❖ Class tests which sample key aspects of the course and which have been completed under assessment conditions, can be used as supplementary evidence.
- ❖ Performance evidence such as live recordings (video or audio) may be used in gathering demonstrated attainment.
- ❖ Classwork and work completed during remote learning is unlikely to form a strong evidence base on its own but may supplement other evidence.

Support for Young People

As advised by the SQA, whilst in remote delivery, our class teachers have concentrated on learning and teaching to secure knowledge and understanding. Our

young people have also benefited from formative assessment feedback during remote learning.

Through our tracking of pupil engagement and our pupil support meetings we identified where young people had not engaged with remote learning. Where this was the case, the following supports were put in place:

- ❖ Offer of individual meets and support by class teachers
- ❖ Deployment of a wider wellbeing team to provide individual support based on tracking information
- ❖ Referrals to specialist services when required
- ❖ Contact with parent/carers by Heads of House or Support for Learning staff to put in place arrangements to address barriers identified
- ❖ Signposting to materials to help parents support their child with remote learning.
- ❖ In-school provision agreed on a case by case basis

Phase 1 Return to School Plan

Young people completing National Qualifications with a high level of practical activity were invited into school from 22 February.

The Phase 1 Plan has been highly effective in allowing pupils to complete practical coursework and demonstrate their attainment. Staff have managed to capture coursework assessments prior to the Easter holidays in subjects with a high level of practical activity.

Phase 2 Return to School Plan

Based on subject specific tracking information young people were invited into school where there was a concern with non- engagement.

Communication

It is vital that our young people have a secure understanding of how they can demonstrate their attainment and the requirements for each National Qualification. All young people had a presentation during their two in school sessions in March: for those not in attendance on those days this was made available through Google Classroom. An enhanced version of this will be presented during PSE for all pupils in S4 to S6 in week beginning 19 April 2021. The presentation describes our school's approach.

HT Updates provide parents/carers with all relevant information from the SQA and the Scottish Government and detail how, as a school, we implement plans to meet the needs of our learners. The Alternative Certification Model has also been presented to the Parent Council.

Personal and Social Education (PSE) time

During this term all PSE time in S4 – S6 will be devoted to supporting young people with organising and preparing for assessment related to National Qualifications. Initially young people will be issued with a calendar detailing when assessments will take place during this term. From this they will be able to create their own individual schedule of assessments. In subsequent PSE classes they will be able to access support from their Head of House with organisation, preparation, planning and revision for assessments scheduled each upcoming week. This will be an important way for us to monitor young people's wellbeing and preparedness as they progress through this challenging time.

Practice Assessments/Feedback

Given that our young people have been in remote learning, it is essential that they have the opportunity to settle back into school on a full-time basis and that we check understanding prior to the completion of scheduled assessments in May. Our young people will benefit from completing smaller pieces of assessment within class time and they will receive feedback to help them identify next steps in learning. This work will also allow staff to see gaps in individual pupil knowledge/skills and if there are any common knowledge/skill areas where consolidation and further revision is required.

Study skills/revision support

Prior to the Easter holidays, each pupil in S4 – S6 had a presentation on study skills and revision. This was also posted in Google Classroom for ease of access later. This revision advice allows for purposeful study and clarity for each pupil on how to achieve success and demonstrate their attainment. Young people have also been signposted to nationally available study support materials and will be advised by teachers on topics and approaches for subject specific revision.

AAAs

Prior to the Easter holidays, each young person in receipt of Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAAs) and their parent/carer will have received a letter detailing their AAAs.

Health and Wellbeing Support

Throughout lockdown, tracking pupil health and wellbeing has been a key priority. Staff have worked diligently to offer support to our young people and to keep them connected with school and their learning.

Notifying Young People

In June 2021, each young person will receive a letter/report detailing their provisional grades which will be submitted to the SQA.

Moderation

Aberdeen City Council are committed to ensuring that schools are rigorous and fair in their approaches to capturing evidence of demonstrated attainment for each young person. This citywide guidance will help ensure that all stages of moderation are consistently implemented to ensure that everyone can have confidence in our approach.

All teachers presenting pupils for National Qualifications have received additional training to support their understanding of the national standard. This took place during the February In-service Days.

Teachers will mark and cross mark pupil evidence within school or across schools in Aberdeen to ensure judgements are accurate and in line with national standards.

During the May In-service day there will be a further opportunity for staff to meet to discuss and moderate assessment evidence.

All information entered in the SQA data base will be checked for accuracy by senior leaders in school.

In-Service Days

In addition to Friday 4 May 2021 two additional days have been granted by the Scottish Government to support these quality assurance approaches in all schools. In Aberdeen they are:

- ❖ Friday 28 May 2021
- ❖ Friday 4 June 2021

We understand that this is an anxious time for pupils and families. We have planned carefully to support our young people through this process and to reach their potential. It has been wonderful to welcome our young people back into the school this week and build on the positive relationships we have to reassure, support and guide them and we will continue to do this in the weeks ahead.

PATHWAY PLANNING

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) Opportunities

The following were posted in Year Group Google Classrooms.

- ❖ Engineering Modern Apprenticeships
- ❖ Apprentice Calibration Technician opportunities
- ❖ Entier's Chef Apprenticeship
- ❖ Ready, Steady, Study – NESCol
- ❖ Learning from Lawyers Virtual Session

Young people also have access to My World of Work to find out more information about careers and pathways available to them.

Further DYW opportunities can be found using the following link -
<https://bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk/wp/archives/7969>

Contact with School

When emailing 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

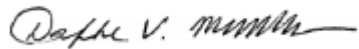
Crathes House	Mrs Napier
Drum House	Miss Smith
Fyvie House	Mrs Marshall

Year Heads

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

I hope that you all continue to be well and, as always, please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs D McWilliam
Head Teacher