



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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Head Teacher: Daphne McWilliam



27 January 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

Head Teacher's Update – 27 January 2023

I write to update you on the following:

- Calendar Dates
- SQA Prelim Exams and Assessments
- Further S4, S5 and S6 Study Support
- Course Choice for Session 2023/24
- Parent Council and 100 Club
- Summer Festival 2023
- Parking on Braehead Way
- Face to Face Meetings With School Staff
- School Catering: ParentPay
- HPV Vaccinations 8 and 9 February
- Severe Weather
- Contact with School

Calendar Dates

All S4, S5 and S6 return to classes:

Local Holiday:

In-Service Days:

S2 Parents' Evening (In Person):¹

S3 Parents' Evening (In Person):²

Last Day of Term:

Monday 30 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

SQA Prelim Exams and Assessments

The final scheduled prelim exams took place today. 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

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

² As Above

date. This is an important part of developing their confidence and their skills in preparing for a diet of assessment.

Secondly, they give young people a good indication about how close their efforts have brought them to achieving their target grades. Teachers will have begun their marking and preparing feedback to young people and reports for parents/carers.

These assessments 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 practise exam skills and demonstrate they have reached the required standard for the courses they are following.

It is never too early to begin planning for final assessments and a good place to start for all young people is with the [SQA Calendar for 2023](#). There are also a number of Apps which young people can use to support their studies [here](#) and as I have previously intimated [Past papers are provided by the SQA](#).

The prelims were set up to give all our exam candidates as close an experience as possible to how the final exams will operate in April/May, including the use of official SQA invigilators, many of whom were newly recruited last year. They have expressed their thanks to our young people for the way in which they conducted themselves over the two-week period, and to our staff for the efficient handling and preparation of the exam materials.

Further S4, S5 and S6 Study Support

See below for message from 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.

Link: [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 in S2 to S5 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.

A new support for young people and families is our [Google Site](#) which is now live. This is a replacement for our online course choice booklet. It contains all the same information about courses and pathways for young people from subject departments but in a more accessible format. There is also an 'Additional Information' section which provides key information to our learners about Pathways, Subject choice and DYW. Feel free to have a look around the site to familiarise yourself with the information that is being shared with pupils.

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 have undertaken estimate exams for the last two weeks and will start the course choice procedures when they return to school on 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 our [Google Site](#).

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 from 19.00 – 20.00 as follows:

Tuesday 31 January 2023

This meeting will be in person in the school Assembly Room and Mrs Cruickshank Depute Head Teacher will be delivering a short presentation on course choice and pathway planning. All welcome.

Future Meetings

Tuesday 28 March 2023: Virtual meeting

Tuesday 25 April 2023: Virtual meeting

Tuesday 30 May 2023: AGM in person

The only fund raising the Parent Council 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.

Summer Festival 2023

After being on hold for two years I am pleased to announce the return of this popular whole school event in June 2023. This is the final event in the inter-house programme where healthy competition and team spirit between the four houses -

Braemar, Crathes, Drum and Fyvie – is encouraged. At stake is the inter-house trophy, sponsored by [The Barber's Pole](#).

Pupils are encouraged to compete in the Athletics finals and inter-house sports to gain house points. In addition, we also reward participation with house points by organising a wide range of activities and events which will keep young people active and moving for the duration of the event. Final timings are to be confirmed but the Summer Festival is an (almost) all-day event and the curriculum is suspended to allow everyone to participate.

We ensure all the externally provided activities are free of charge to the pupils to make the day accessible for all. However, this has only been made possible through the generous support of local businesses through monetary donations, vouchers and/or raffle prizes. This sponsorship means we can provide the young people with exciting activities on the day and allows us to make the event bigger and better each year.

We also organise local food vendors to provide food stalls so young people can be outside but on school grounds for the duration of the event instead of going to the local shops or the canteen. We try to ensure these are reasonably priced but also healthy for our young people. Arrangements will be made to ensure that no family faces financial hardship as a result of this change to normal school meals provision.

If you know of, or work for a company or a business who might be interested in sponsoring this event, please contact the school office. All sponsors will be given recognition of their support in the programme of events and on social media.

There will be more information coming from the staff group who are working hard on the complex arrangements for this special event over the next few months.

Parking on Braehead Way

Thank you for your patience this week whilst the school and community car parks were relined which should make the areas safer for use by all.

Can I please remind all parents and carers that dropping off and picking up of pupils at the beginning and end of the school day should be via the community car park if this is essential – such as in the case of a young person with a disability. For all others we would suggest that “Park and Stride” is a better option. By dropping off or collecting your young person away from school grounds and encouraging them to walk, this will support their health and wellbeing and prevent congestion in our very limited car park which is also used to drop off and collect young people on the four school transport coaches.

I have also been asked by our local councillor to remind families to be respectful of local residents when dropping off and collecting young people by not parking across residential driveways.

During the school day if you are required to drop off or collect your child(ren) for appointments or because of illness we have a visitor section of the front car park which faces Braehead Way which you are welcome to use for the short time you will need.

Face to Face Meetings With School Staff

The details of how to contact your child(ren)'s Head of House are at the end of this letter. If you would like to meet in person, we ask that you use these contact details to make an appointment or to pass on important or urgent information.

School Catering: ParentPay

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

As you know school catering changed on Wednesday of this week. 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 for young people is via pin number rather than card

You should have received a letter detailing the account and pin number which will allow you to upload money to your child's account and the pin number will be required by young people to access their account to pay for their food. Enquiries should be directed to cateringsevice@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Although young people do not need their Accord Card to access catering, they will still need it to access free bus transport, libraries (other than the school library) and discounts available through the Young Scot website. These are all linked [here](#).

HPV Vaccinations 8 and 9 February

This will be for all S1s and a catch up for S2 – S6. Parents/carers of young people who will be getting the HPV vaccination will have received a pack by now. If you need further information, please contact the immunisation team by email gram.immsservices@nhs.scot

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.

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.

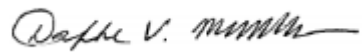
Pastoral Care

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daphne V. McWilliam", followed by a horizontal flourish.

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
S1	Settling in Interim Report including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effort, Behaviour and Homework in each subject area. Issue Date 11 November 2022 	End of Session Report for each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum for Excellence level achieved. Effort, Behaviour and Homework. Progress and next steps comments Issue Date 2 June 2023 	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. 30 November 2023 Face to Face in person
S2	Interim Report for each subject including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum for Excellence level achieved. Effort, Behaviour and Homework. Teacher Issue date 22 December 2022 	End of Session Report for each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum for Excellence level achieved. Effort, Behaviour and Homework Progress and next steps comments Issue Date 19 May 2023 	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. 8 February 2023 Face to Face in person
S3	Interim Report for each subject including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum for Excellence level achieved. Effort, Behaviour and Homework – please be honest with your assessment of this. Issue Date 14 October 2022 	Final Report Progress and recommendations for Senior Phase (S4) for each subject: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum for Excellence level achieved. Effort, Behaviour and Homework. Progress and next steps Recommendation Issue Date 26 January 2023 	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. 22 February 2023 Face to Face in person
S4- S6	Interim Report 1 for each National Course ³ : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target Grade (can be amended) Working Grade. Effort, Behaviour and Homework Issue date 6 October 2022 Interim Report 2 for each National Course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate Grade Effort, Behaviour and Homework Issue date 24 April 2023 	Full Report for each National Course (following assessment period including prelim exams): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results of assessments Next steps to meet target grade Effort, Behaviour and Homework. Recommendation – although this is part of the separate course choice procedures. Issue date 27 February 2023 	To discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progress to date with national courses and next steps to meet target grade. Discussion of reasons for working grade and what needs to be done to prepare for assessment(s) in January. Parents/carers choose one of the following options 9 November 2022 Online 17 November 2022 Online

³ Please note that reports for courses undertaken at college and other schools may come at different times.