



BRIDGE OF DON ACADEMY

Be Caring Be Honest Be Respectful Be Your Best

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To All Pupils In S4, S5 & S6

Prelim Exam Diet – January/February 2018

Bridge of Don Academy's prelim exam diet is scheduled to take place in the two weeks from Monday 22 January 2018 until Friday 2 February 2018 inclusive. A copy of the prelim exam timetable is attached.

Study leave will be given for S4 to S6 pupils from **Monday 22 January until Friday 2 February**.

The provision of study leave for prelim exams varies between schools, with sound arguments for and against. The following points have all been considered in relation to our decision to allow a two week study leave period.

- In previous years, pupils who performed considerably better in the prelim compared to their final exam may have had their prelim paper submitted as an appeal to be awarded their estimated grade, but unfortunately the SQA no longer accept an appeal on these grounds. Performance in the prelim exam, however, is still used to determine whether or not pupils are eligible to sit the final exam in May, in accordance with the national guidelines and school policy. It may also be used, along with other evidence generated under teacher supervision, to submit an estimated grade to the SQA before the main exam diet.
- It is generally accepted that pupils benefit from the experience of sitting an exam under the same formal conditions as those in May/June by becoming familiar with the SQA's rules and exam supervision by official SQA invigilators.
- The timetabling of a prelim exam diet has a serious impact on the accommodation available for classes within the school. A single exam paper, for example, may have a number of pupils who require to sit the exam in a separate classroom as a result of having additional assessment arrangements recognised by the SQA. In some cases, this involves the pupil having either a reader or a scribe, which forces them to have a room to themselves. We would not have the accommodation required for prelim exams if all S4 to S6 classes were to remain in school during the exam diet.

I should like to remind you about assemblies in school, led by Mrs McWilliam, where advice and guidance was given with regard to study and work ethic, underlining the importance of planning your time sensibly and wisely.

The current economic climate makes it extremely competitive for young people securing jobs or places in further/higher education, as well as local industry. You must maximise your opportunities by performing as well as you can in your exams.

Pupils have also met with mentors prior to the Christmas break and should be making best use of their time to prepare for upcoming exams.

There will be an assembly on Thursday next week for S4 and S5/S6 to recap the code of conduct for pupils undertaking formal examinations. The following points in particular should be noted ahead of the assembly:

- Official SQA invigilators are employed to supervise and manage the exams and their instructions must be followed with respect, first time, every time. Decisions taken by an invigilator, including disciplinary action, will not be overruled by the Head Teacher.
- Invigilators are not allowed to give help or explain the wording of questions.
- Pupils must check the main entrance noticeboards in advance of the exam to confirm rooms and seat numbers.
- A list of items the Scottish Qualifications Authority ban from being taken into the exam room includes: mobile phones, MP3 players (or similar), calculators with inadmissible data, pencil cases, notes and books. Anyone found with any of these in the exam room will be awarded zero marks for the exam, even if a mobile phone is switched off.
- If you are ill on the day of the exam, contact the school as soon as possible and provide a medical certificate within five days.
- In the event that you are likely to be late for an exam, for example due to transport failure or late school bus, you should phone the school office as soon as possible.
- When you have finished the exam, you are not permitted to simply 'hang around' the school by congregating in the canteen or other parts of the building. You may remain in school to study silently in a designated area or you can choose to go home.

Other issues to be aware of will be discussed at assembly and can also be found on the school website under the 'Pupils > Exams' section.

Finally, staff are here to help with any problems you may have in subjects or simply to offer advice on how to get the most from the time available. The school is available should you prefer to study here but, as with attendance for exams, you must continue to abide by the school dress code. You must also sign in at the office on days you do not have an exam, in order to comply with health and safety requirements. You are also advised to check that your teachers are available, should you wish to see them, in case they have been given other classes to cover during the times they would normally have your class.

We all wish you well in your prelim exams and hope you can be satisfied that your grades are a result of doing as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jamieson
Depute Head Teacher