



Fraserburgh Academy Senior Prelims 05 Jan 2021 – 22 Jan 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

Our second set of Senior Phase (S4, S5 & S6) prelim exams are due to take place over the period Tuesday 05 Jan 2021 to Thursday 21 Jan 2021 but due to the current Global Covid pandemic there will be significant changes to both our prelim exam diet as well as future SQA exams and I will address many of these issues within this letter.

National 5 Exams

Earlier in 2020, the Scottish government made the decision that there will be no National 5 exams in 2021, but a full SQA exam diet of Higher and Advanced Higher exams, therefore in keeping with this decision **we will not have prelim exams for any National 5 courses** and only prelim exams for our Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

Exam Leave

As a result of our learners missing so much school time earlier in the year, we have decided that **we will not have exam leave** for these prelim exams and that we will continue with our normal timetable and will expect all S4, S5 & S6 learners to attend timetabled classes as normal.

However, to support our learners to allow them time to study and ask questions of staff, we will suspend our normal Learning and Teaching programme for S4, S5 & S6, this ensuring that no one misses out on coursework but still gives an invaluable opportunity to catch up on work missed or ask for help in a supported study environment.

National 5 Evidence

Again we are being asked to produce provisional estimate grades for all our National 5 courses, therefore during the period when Learning and Teaching has been suspended, staff will take the opportunity to obtain appropriate evidence which we may use to base provisional estimate on.

SQA guidance is clear that we are to use two to four pieces of evidence, and learners in National 5 courses may well find that they will have in-class assessments during this time, but the suspension of the Learning and Teaching programme will mean that they will be able to give these assessments a greater focus and teaching staff will advise classes of any assessments prior to sitting them.

It is important that all learners studying National 5 courses understand that any class test, unit assessment etc. could be used as evidence for their final provisional estimate grade and it is crucial that learners give all such pieces of work their fullest attention producing their best work.

We appreciate that for those sitting exams and assessments that this time can be an intense period as they may have more than one exam or assessment on any given day, but as well as being an indicator of learning progress, prelim exams are an invaluable preparation for the proposed final SQA exams currently planned for May / June 21.

At time of writing this letter, it is still the intention of the SQA to have an exam diet in 2021 for Higher and Advanced Higher courses but with the current levels of uncertainty is evident that prelim exams take on a level of importance that perhaps learners have not attributed to them in the past.

Evidence from unseen exam standard assessments are a vital part of the estimate process, therefore it is in the best interests of all if learners give these prelim exams and assessments their full focus and attention as if we do eventually have to provide estimate grades for Higher and Advanced Higher courses it is hugely beneficial to base our estimates on actual quality exam standard evidence, this we can get from our two sets of prelims.

Additional Assessment Arrangements

Some learners will have Additional Assessment Arrangements put in place by our Additional Support for Learners faculty and exact details of this support can be confirmed with their class teachers.

Exam timetable

The exam timetable has been completed and is currently out for consultation with our Faculty Head's and it will be issued well in advance of the end of term.

Reports

The results from these exams and assessments will be communicated home through a learner report, and it is expected that these reports will be issued during week commencing 08 Feb 2021.

The results of these exams will inform our learners, home and school of progress and from these results we will consider course progression and what levels of mentoring our learners may require and we will contact home to discuss as appropriate.

I appreciate that despite the change to using teacher estimates to make the final SQA awards, that it was a difficult and emotional time for many of our learners and should you wish to discuss any aspect of our prelim exam process then please do not hesitate to get in touch with me here at the Academy.

Kevin Buchan

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