

Dear Parent/Carer

SQA Update

I am writing to provide you with an update based on the latest information we have received in relation to National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher examinations in 2021.

Part 1: News about National 5 results

On 7 October 2020, the Deputy First Minister announced that for 2020–21, National 5 results will be based on teacher and lecturer judgement supported by a robust set of checks — or quality assurance — which will be carried out at school level, by the local authority and also SQA.

The National Qualifications 2021 Group in Scotland (see below) has overseen the development of the quality assurance process which will support teachers in providing your child's provisional results for session 2020–21.

Provisional results will be based on teacher's professional judgement of your child's evidence. The results will be finalised following various layers of quality assurance, including sampling by SQA senior subject specialists.

Here is how the National 5 quality assurance model will work in session 2020–21:

- **Stage 1: November 2020 to March 2021** — *Teachers use guidance and assessment materials to help gather learner evidence.*
- **Stage 2: end of January to beginning of April** — *SQA ask for samples of assessment evidence from each school, then review and provide feedback.*
- **Stage 3: end of March to 28 May** — *Schools and local authorities will work though SQA feedback and carry out their own quality assurance of the provisional results.*
- **Stage 4: by 28 May 2021** — *Schools submit quality assured provisional results.*
- **Stage 5: June 2021** — *SQA carries out national check of provisional results and may follow up on any issues with schools and local authorities.*

These processes are in place to ensure that a National 5 awarded in the north of Scotland is of the same standard as one which is awarded in the south of Scotland, and everywhere in between including at Braes High School.

Most of the support will be provided before we submit your child's provisional results to SQA. This should reduce the need for us to resubmit provisional results following SQA review in June. If your child's provisional results need to be adjusted to reflect their evidence, this will follow discussion between the school and SQA.

Fairness for your child

SQA is developing an equality impact assessment as part of this quality assurance model which aims to ensure fair and credible results for all National 5 learners. Schools, local authorities and SQA are committed to working together to support teachers in providing their provisional results in 2020–21.

The national group are discussing the appeals process for 2020–21 and will keep you informed of progress. To stay up to date on 2021 National Qualifications, visit www.sqa.org.uk/NQ2021.

Part 2: News about Higher and Advanced Higher results

On 8 December 2020, the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, confirmed in his statement to the Scottish Parliament that there will be no exam diet for Highers and Advanced Highers in 2020-21.

This decision has been made in light of the emerging inequity of learning opportunity for young people across Scotland which has become apparent due to the ongoing COVID pandemic.

The Scottish Government and SQA will give more detail as to the assessment mechanisms in the near future. They have however intimated that the basis of the assessment judgements will be similar as to those outlined above in the National 5 procedure and protocol.

Please be assured that we are working very hard to ensure that the young people at Braes High School have their achievements positively recognised and as soon as we receive more information then we will be in touch.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone

***The National Qualifications 2021 Group** consists of representation from the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES), Colleges Scotland, Education Scotland, the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), School Leaders Scotland (SLS), the Scottish Council of Independent Schools (SCIS), Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the Scottish Government, National Parent Forum of Scotland, and from this week, the Scottish Youth Parliament.*