

Braes High School

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Dear Pupils, Parents and Carers

As previously advised, we are keen to maintain communication with our young people, and parents/carers as to the developing situation relating to SQA procedures this session. Given the fluidity of the current situation, schools will continue to liaise with SQA, and adapt processes as further communications and timescales emerge. However, we are very keen to provide as much assurance and clarity for our pupils as possible, and therefore have been consulting with our young people, parents/carers and school staff. Consequently, we can make clear the following principles, to provide as much surety and clarity as possible:

- Each subject department has been, and is, considering and identifying how best to provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their ability in courses.
- On their physical return to school, pupils will not have a Prelim Examination Diet in the manner originally planned for January 2021.
- Instead, across their subjects, for the remainder of the session, pupils will participate in a continuous and holistic assessment.
- This will comprise of a range of assessments allowing pupils to demonstrate their attainment, eg. formal style mock exams, exam assessments in class, exam style questions, end of unit tests, coursework components and a variety of other evidence types.
- Pupils will be given good notice of any forthcoming assessments to allow time for preparation.
- Faculties and departments across the school will liaise to ensure any 'pressure' of deadlines/submissions/assessments is kept to a minimum

SQA have been very clear that pupil focus at the moment should be on engaging as fully as possible with all class work, homework and learning tasks set by teachers. Yesterday they confirmed that the final date for schools to submit provisional grades for pupils has moved from 28th May 2021 to **18th June 2021**. Between now and this point, departments across the school will focus on completing courses with young people, and giving pupils opportunities to demonstrate their attainment, in the holistic and continuous manner described above.

Released in the last communication was our alternative certification model. This outlines our approach to evidence collection and communication, and also provides further information which compliments this letter. As they have done throughout the session, pupils should seek support whenever it is needed. This predominantly should be done through their class teacher but pupils can also contact their Pastoral Head or the Faculty Head of the department(s). A small number of pupils in our focus groups identified that they found it difficult to study after a day of learning remotely. I would encourage all pupils to use their breaks in the day to step away from their screen, but to also utilise the four core periods a week (Core work dependant) to revise for assessments. During the rest of this week pupils will be provided with a reminder of study skills, structure and tips that can be used during this time via their PSE teams. A number of pupils in our focus groups also highlighted that they found revision better when they had structure to their study. I would encourage all pupils to continue to follow a revision plan and prepare as they normally would for assessments.

As always I appreciate your continued support with regards to this process and if you have any questions, concerns or feedback with regards to SQA and the approaches we are taking this year at Braes High School please feel free to contact me at – kevin.smith@falkirk.gov.uk.

Finally, I would like to close by again reminding all pupils and parents that what is absolutely certain, is that Braes staff will be supporting young people to maximise their potential again this session, providing opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their attainment. Therefore all pupils should continue to engage as fully as possibly with online learning, completing all tasks set by the teacher and asking for support as soon as it is required. Regardless of what happens at a national level moving forward, our whole school community is fully prepared to have a robust and equitable system in place which will ensure all pupils have the highest chance of success.

Kind Regards

Kevin Smith

Depute for Ochil house and SQA Coordinator