**Head teacher weekly update**

**Friday 14th May 2021**

Dear Parent / Carer,

We are now in week four of the 10-week summer term. I am delighted to report that the vast majority of our pupils are settling back into school life and are working hard in lessons. We are certainly enjoying having them back and the school is a happier place now that it is full of young people again.

**Here is the news for week 10-14 May 2021:**

1. **Covid restrictions**

Despite the recent announcement of the relaxation of Covid measures from Monday, Scottish Government guidance for schools has not changed. Therefore, the same protection measures are still in place – face coverings, hand sanitisation, table wipe downs, limits on visitors to the school, no events of over 50, year group door entry, staggered breaks and lunches etc. When we get notification that some of these can be relaxed, I will be pleased to let both pupils and parents know!

On a related point, the school is going through a huge number of disposable face coverings each day. This is costly and not environmentally friendly – we are seeing far too many dropped in classes, corridors and in the school grounds. Pupils should come to school with a cloth face covering each day (thank you 😊).

1. **Lateral flow tests**

All pupils, S1-6, can collect a consent form from the office, take it home to be signed, and then collect lateral flow test kits from the school.

For those taking part, these tests are administered at home, twice per week. Top-up kits for those who have previously handed in consent forms are available each Tuesday and Friday at break.

The Scottish Government has recently got in touch and asked us to issue a survey on the use of these test kits to both pupils and parents. Mr Munro, DHT, has been overseeing the test kit distribution and will send this survey out to parents in due course.

1. **Parent Council**

Unfortunately, the planned meeting for the 17th of May has been postponed. Another date will be sent out in due course.

Thank you for your understanding.

1. **Assessment period three – practical week**

Today marks the last day of the practical assessment week. My thanks to all pupils in S4-6 who were involved in this, and to the staff who ran these assessments.

I am pleased to say that for a few weeks S4-6 are getting a break from assessment. Teachers will take this time to have learning conversations about progress and guide pupils on what they need to do next. The end is in sight, and I couldn’t be prouder of these brilliant young people on how well they are coping with a very challenging situation.

The final round of assessments will be towards the end of the month and Mrs Cole will put out an assessment calendar nearer the time.

Finally, HQ sent parents a text this week with an update on the SQA situation. I have attached it to the bottom of this update.

1. **Primary transition**

We have plans in place for a two day visit for our P7s on the last week of term (this is of course subject to ongoing Covid restrictions). In the meantime, Mrs O’Malley DHT, along with a team of volunteer staff, has been welcoming the P7s up to JHS in their school bubbles on Wednesdays after school. So far, we have met pupils from Fordbank, Cochrane Castle and Howwood primary schools (and also those from non-associated primaries). Next Wednesday we will meet pupils from Kilbarchan and then Lochwinnoch primaries, followed by pupils from Auchenlodment and Thorn the week after.

1. **School improvement**

This week I met with a group of volunteer staff to discuss our school improvement plan for this session, and for the forthcoming session in August. Despite all the SQA matters and impact of Covid, the core business of the school must continue. We also spoke about new ideas for teachers to work collegiately next session to share good practice and capitalise on some of the gains we have made around digital learning.

I was heartened to hear my colleagues, who are working so hard to support the pupils through the SQA alternative certification model, speak so positively and with such enthusiasm about the new term and how we can improve on our learning and teaching in 2021/22. We are excited for the future in our school – and given all our staff, pupils and parents have been through - that’s such a lovely feeling.

With best wishes to you and your family,



Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher

**SQA** **UPDATE FOR PARENTS TEXT OUT THIS WEEK**

**BY RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**How will my child be assessed?**

We will ensure that we assess each young person in a fair and equitable way. The fairest way to decide National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher results for 2021 is to use evidence of your child’s knowledge and skills relating to each of their courses.

Pupils will therefore carry out assessments set by their school and teachers will mark this work which will be used to evidence what grades should be awarded at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

**How different are the assessments from the usual exams?**

In a ‘normal’ year there would be a one-off national exam for each course sat during an ‘exam diet’. Learners across Scotland would usually sit the same exam paper at the same time for most subjects to count alongside projects, folio work or practical assessment.

For 2021, each school will now plan their own assessments to test the knowledge and skills of learners in each subject area. SQA have supplied schools with a wide range of optional assessment resources which can be tailored for the learners.

This means that children in different schools may undertake different forms of assessment (e.g essay) under controlled conditions to evidence their level of learning in a particular subject.

Pupils will be tested on a reduced element of the course and each school will decide when it is appropriate to carry out assessments.

There are quality assurance processes in place to ensure fairness in marking learners work to the same standard across the country. Schools will carry out checks to ensure assessments are consistent and fair. A selection of assessment evidence will also be cross checked from every school by SQA.

**How will we make the assessments fair?**

Fairness for all learners means that teachers cannot assume or guess the knowledge of young people, but need to see demonstrated learning.

A strong set of quality assurance checks , such as sampling of pupil evidence by other teachers to ensure that national marking standards have been applied, will be carried out to support teachers’ decisions.

The HM Inspectorate are carrying out a review on the consistency of the quality assurance processes across all 32 local authorities and the independent school sector.

**How will assessments be arranged in my child’s school?**

Schools are best placed to design assessments that fit the needs of their pupils. Assessments carried out under controlled conditions, enable pupils to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding of courses studied.

All schools will be working within a robust quality assurance framework and will work with each other to ensure national standards are consistently applied.

**Will Vocational Qualifications e be assessed and moderated in the same way as all other subjects.**

Yes.

All courses delivered by school staff, (e.g Skills for Work courses and National Progression Awards) will be subject to the same moderation.

**What are the timescales for assessment?**

Individual schools will share their specific arrangements with all parents/carers.

**What support is available for pupils with additional support needs?**

Where additional support requirements have been identified these will be met by the school and there should be no changes to previous arrangements.

There are many different types of support available and schools will ensure appropriate allowances and resources remain in place for your child.

If you have any concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact your child’s school.

**Will all assessments take place before assessment and moderation days on 1st and 7th June?’**

No, not necessarily. Assessment will be ongoing until sufficient evidence is gathered to inform provisional grades.

The in-service days are additional time set aside to allow teachers to ensure that national standards have been properly applied during the assessment process.

Assessments may still take place after 7th June. Each school will provide specific details to parents/carers and pupils on their assessment arrangements.

Please contact your child’s school directly if you have any queries.

**Will assessments after 7th June be moderated?**

All provisional grades will be subject to moderation therefore it will continue beyond 7th June if necessary.

**What happens if a pupil is self-isolating?**

We will do everything that we can to ensure that pupils who are self-isolating get the support they need to complete assessments.

**When will we know what the provisional grades are?**

Learners will be told their provisional grades by their school. In practical terms, learners will know their grades by 25th June 2021 at the very latest.

The SQA will not change any provisional results. They will check for any administrative errors that may occur when schools enter the data into their system.

The SQA will provide final results on 10th August

**When will pupils know their provisional grade?**

Schools will share provisional grades with students by 25th June.

**What is the leaving date for sixth year students?**

The leaving date will vary across each of our schools. Your school will let you know the leaving date if they haven’t already done so

**What will SQA do with the provisional grades?**

SQA will check that there are no clerical errors between the school and the SQA system. There is no algorithm or filter applied to amend grades submitted, simply a check and balance that the data is complete as supplied by the school prior to certificates being sent.

**How will my child receive their results?**

Learners will receive their paper certificates by post on 10th August 2021. Learners who sign up for the text and/or email results service at [www.mysqa.org.uk](http://www.mysqa.org.uk) will also receive this on results day.

**Can my child Appeal their result?**

Yes

The appeals process is still being reviewed by SQA. We will share this information once it is available

**Where can I get more information?**

To stay up to date on the Alternative Certification Model and National Qualifications for 2021 visit [sqa.org.uk/NQ2021](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95157.html?utm_source=NPFSnewsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nq2021&utm_content=NQ2021)