

Parents and Carers of all Secondary School Pupils

Date 26 March 2021
Our ref PC/S&LL/LF/AH

Dear Parents and Carers,

Alternative Certification Model for the Senior Phase

As you may already know, the Scottish Government confirmed that National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher exams will not go ahead in the 2020-2021 school session. Instead of exams, teachers will assess in schools in line with the Scottish Qualification Agency's (SQA) guidance. This is called the Alternative Certification Model (ACM). Supporting this there will be robust checks (quality assurance) carried out at school and overseen by the education authority and SQA. The provisional result/grade will be shared with young people once the quality assurance process is complete. This will be between 14th and 25th June.

Meanwhile, staff in schools are working hard to finalise their plans, in line with authority and SQA advice. The main aim is to support young people to do their very best in their internal assessments and to continue teaching and learning in school. That means that arrangements will be different this year than in other years, for example there will be no formal exams with exam leave, as assessments will be carried out during the normal school day. Supports for young people with additional support needs will of course, be made available and processes will be shared well in advance of assessments taking place.

Please also note that on 16 Feb 2021, the Scottish Government announced that there will be two exceptional in-service days in all secondary schools across Scotland to provide extra time for teachers to prepare for ACM. **In Edinburgh, these will be 25th May and 9th June. All secondary school pupils, not just those in the senior phase will not attend school on those days.**

I realise that this is already a very challenging time for young people and that adapting to and overcoming the issues presented by the pandemic has only been possible by our concerted efforts. As soon as I have any more information on the subject of ACM I, or your school, will pass it on but in the meantime, please see below some links which I hope will be helpful.

To stay up to date on 2021 National Qualifications visit www.sqa.org.uk/NQ2021

The SQA have also produced a booklet with information on the Alternative Certification Model for learners and parents. This can be found at https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/NQ-2021-what-you-need-to-know.pdf

SQA Learner and Parent information can be found at <https://blogs.sqa.org.uk/2021/>

Yours sincerely,



Lorna French
Service Manager (Schools & Lifelong Learning)