

# S4 2023 'Checklist': A plan for success



**Welcome to S4.** This is a brief guide to the year for students and their families. It's designed to be stuck up somewhere for all to see, and to be used, written on, checked off as things are done.

*S4 can be one of the most exciting years in school. For some students it's your final year before you start an adult life. For some you're taking the first steps towards a chosen career. For many it's also the first taste of national exams. We want you to do well, but also to realise that it's a first step. If you follow the advice below you will do well. And next year, once you've got the hang of things, you'll do even better.*

## Key dates– subject to change

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|--|---|
| • 17 <sup>th</sup> August                    | Welcome assembly, students plan key dates (issued on Teams and to families) |
| • 22 <sup>nd</sup> August                    | Parent information evening 'how to help', plan a routine together           |
| • 29 <sup>th</sup> September                 | Tracking report, families discuss progress, plan next steps,                |
| • By October                                 | 'additional arrangements' for exams   |
| • 3 <sup>rd</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> November | Prelims   |
| • 8 <sup>th</sup> December                   | Progress report, students make a 'success plan' and discuss with families   |
| • 16 <sup>th</sup> January                   | Parent consultations in person, plan next steps with teachers               |
| • 25 <sup>th</sup> January                   | Course choice presentation, deadline soon after, plan for next year         |
| • February                                   | Students produce revision plan, families help                               |
| • End March                                  | Estimates to students, plan revision  |
| • April                                      | leavers event   |
| • 22 <sup>nd</sup> April:                    | SQA exams start, study leave, immersion days.                               |
| • 24 <sup>th</sup> to 28 <sup>th</sup> June  | Work experience (tbc)   |
| • 6 <sup>th</sup> August:                    | results day   |

## Checklist for students:

- 1. Organising:** Now put key dates and reminders in your planner / device
- 2. Organising:** Routine for home practice, topic organisers for each subject, assignment deadlines, study support programme
- 3. Practice:** Regular homework or revision. 'Little and often'.
- 4. Fixing:** Always do something to correct feedback.

## Checklist for families:

### 5. How families can help

- a. Make a routine...** regular routines, including lots of sleep, are essential. Agree the routines now to prepare for examinations ahead.
- b. Check...** weekly on work progress. Look at Assignments and calendars on Teams. Discuss reports, success plans and revision plans. Help prioritise and manage work.
- c. Friends...** should be part of any routines.
- d. Outdoors / exercise...** helps relax. If we're stressed, or having an argument, walk round the house before...
- e. Chunking...** break any task into small bits. Make a list. Just do one bit first.
- f. Social media / devices...** There is strong evidence that we cannot multi-task. We do less well if we're on social media whilst studying or trying to sleep. Devices should be part of the routine.
- g. Get help** see the suggestions below

### 6. How school helps

- Ask your teacher; they are the expert; they know how to help.
- Use the study support sessions, revision materials, websites...
- Ask your pupil support teacher, or Mr Hayes.
- Students' 'success plan' showing next steps, you MUST then fix them.
- Revision planner: given out in February for students to complete.

### What study support is there?

- Teams—the key platform used by all teachers for students ipads and computers at home.
- SQA Website (Past Papers and Exam Timetable) [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)
- SQA App: My Exams and My Study Plan. Download both, enter the dates of prelims/final exams, work out how long you want to spend studying and it creates a training plan for you. Utterly brilliant resource—highly recommended.
- <https://www.e-sgoil.com/> Scotland's national online school provides good study sessions
- BBC Bitesize  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/education>
- Scholar support for Scottish Examinations  
<http://scholar.hw.ac.uk/> Great help for a range of subjects—particularly Maths and Science
- And look out for all the extra study classes offered by faculties: drop in sessions, extra classes, and so on:  
<https://boroughmuirhighschool.org/pupil-support/assessment-calendars/>

### What other support is there?

- <https://www.themix.org.uk/> Excellent general advice for young people.
- Headspace App: A wonderful app to encourage meditation and mindfulness—for a moment of calm! <https://www.headspace.com/>
- App block: There are a few apps which block access to apps during study time. A good one (not controlled by parents/carers) is AppBlock <https://www.appblock.app/>
- Young Scot Website: <https://young.scot/> is full of advice and links to resources,
- Aye Mind: [www.ayemind.com](http://www.ayemind.com) has some terrific links to resources for wellbeing and stress
- Growing teens with confidence  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah\\_jayne\\_blakemore\\_the\\_mysterious\\_workings\\_of\\_the\\_adolescent\\_brain?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/sarah_jayne_blakemore_the_mysterious_workings_of_the_adolescent_brain?language=en)

### What can I do after S4?

Pupils may choose to leave, go to college, study part time or stay here. They may study at Level 6 (Highers) or Level 5 (awards such as National 5). Teachers take into account evidence such as the prelim before making recommendations to help students choose a course in S4.

### What next? How do I choose pathways in the Senior Phase (S4-6)?

It is useful to think of S4-6 as **three years of opportunity**. You will study and achieve at a variety of different subjects at **different levels**. Some will take the route of 6 National 5s, 5 Highers and then onto Advanced Highers and University. Some will take a more diverse route building up a number National 4s, 5s, Highers, Advanced Highers and other qualifications (online learning, college courses, University courses...) throughout the three years. What matters is that you achieve an excellent pathway that suits you.

Our senior phase is **more than just qualifications**! There are many other opportunities for work experience, volunteering, short courses, vocational training, and leadership opportunities...

And, of course, our pupils may not stay at Boroughmuir High School. There is lots of support available for college, apprenticeships and job applications. All we ask that is that a pupil aims for excellence—and that is a positive destination of their choice.