



### Senior Phase Assessments 2020-21

Dear Parent / Carer

I write to you to update you on our plans for Senior Phase assessment this session at Harris Academy.

As you will already no doubt be aware SQA took the decision in early October to remove all National 5 coursework and final examinations for session 2020-21. All National 5 results this session will be provided by individual teachers based on evidence of work completed during the academic session. SQA is supporting this process by publishing subject specific guidance and assessment resources including SQA devised National 5 question papers and marking instructions from this week. A form of quality assurance will be built in to support the process which is being consulted on at present.

Higher and Advanced Higher courses have had modifications made to coursework and/or duration of the final examination. SQA very recently announced the dates for the H/AH examinations which will take place from Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020 (dates inclusive). The timetable can be viewed at the link noted below:

[https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files\\_ccc/exam-timetable-2021.pdf](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/exam-timetable-2021.pdf)

As a result of COVID guidelines we, along with schools across both Dundee City Council and nationally, will **not** be holding a Formal Assessment (Prelim) examination diet this year. SQA recently communicated to schools: -

*'Given current public health advice and to maximise learning and teaching time, it is important to stress that there is no expectation that schools and colleges hold a formal diet of prelims for National 5..... Centres can adapt assessment approaches, such as splitting a question paper component, to fit delivery within class periods'.*

Our alternative assessment model has been designed to provide three separate opportunities for assessments to take place in a more formal manner during the remainder of the academic session. These examinations will take place in classrooms during **normal timetabled double periods** with young people who require assessment arrangements supported, in some cases, out with the timetabled classroom.

The planned dates for our Assessment Blocks are as follows:

**Block 1 N5, H & AH (3 weeks)** – weeks beginning 23<sup>rd</sup> November 30<sup>th</sup> November & 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**Block 2 N5, H & AH (3 weeks)** – weeks beginning 16<sup>th</sup> January 23<sup>rd</sup> January & 1<sup>st</sup> February

**Block 3 H & AH only (2 Weeks)** – weeks beginning 22<sup>nd</sup> February & 1<sup>st</sup> March \*

**Block 3 N5 only (2 Weeks)** – weeks beginning 26<sup>th</sup> April & 3<sup>rd</sup> May \*

**\*NB Block 3 dates are to be fully confirmed on receipt of SQA's deadline for submission of National 5 results and H / AH estimate grades.**

During each Assessment Block departments have been allocated a maximum of two occasions where they can choose to hold assessments. The timetable has been constructed so that pupils are not overburdened with assessment and, in most cases, young people will only sit one examination in one day with a maximum of two in one day.

Early returns from departments suggest that some departments will **not** take up the opportunity to use Assessment Block 1 as they have recently completed assessments in class time. We are encouraging departments to assess out with the Assessment Blocks if it suits their course delivery and provides young people with the best opportunity of success. Our young people will be informed of when assessments are scheduled by their individual teachers and will receive an overview timetable of when assessments are taking place. All assessments will take place under SQA guidelines with any improper conduct reported to the SQA Co-ordinator in the first instance.

In previous years when Formal Assessments have taken place, we have put on hold any new learning during the assessment period for all subjects. **This will not be the case this year.** New learning will continue in all subjects when assessments are not taking place. This will help to ensure that our young people have the best possible chance to cover the entire course content in every subject given the significant and on-going challenges we face with COVID related absences from school.

Class teachers will inform young people of exactly when any planned assessment is taking place including which specific double period will be used linked to our timetable column structure – again to ensure that young people are not overburdened with assessment. We will notify parents/carers and pupils of the final arrangements via our school website, Twitter feed and school messaging service by the end of this week.

I trust this information is helpful and would wish every one of our young people the very best of luck in all upcoming assessments.

Yours sincerely,



Michael D Stewart  
Depute Head Teacher  
SQA Co-ordinator