



FOUNDED 1893

2nd April 2020

Dear pupils, parents and carers

I am writing to you to provide you with the information we currently have regarding SQA processes for certification this session. I appreciate that this is a very difficult time for our senior students, and I hope that this letter reassures you that we are doing all we can to ensure that their achievements are recognised and rewarded.

SQA have yet to release details of what they have referred to as their “alternative certification model”. We will of course share these details when they finally arrive. You will appreciate that some of the information set out below may change in line with the SQA guidance, but it is accurate at time of writing and has been prepared in conjunction with council officials to state the position in City of Edinburgh schools.

SQA certification for session 2019-20

The SQA will ask teachers to provide an estimated grade for each pupil in each course, in line with their advice. These estimates will be submitted to SQA in late April. The SQA will then award final grades, taking into consideration the school’s estimated grades and other factors (e.g. prior achievement in National 5 if being presented for Higher this year in the same subject).

The SQA have stated that results will be issued no later than 4 August, as planned, and they have encouraged pupils to sign up online for the *MySQA* service, to access their results electronically.

The SQA’s Post-Results Service will continue to run as usual for the current session: this is the process where you can (via the school) query a final grade, if it seems lower than expected and the school has evidence to support a higher grade.

SQA Coursework

The latest SQA advice, issued on 24/03/20, states that schools are no longer required to submit coursework for marking in Higher or Advanced Higher courses. Any coursework completed thus far can however be considered by teachers as supporting evidence for an estimated grade.

For National 5 courses, most of the coursework has already been submitted to SQA, but any remaining National 5 coursework which was due to be picked up from school for marking will no longer be collected.

Estimated grades

We are still waiting for definitive advice from SQA regarding estimated grades for this session. An estimated grade is usually based on a range of evidence, which includes formal assessments, coursework, practical or performance elements and a teacher’s professional judgement of pupil progress. We know that sometimes a pupil who performs poorly in an assessment earlier in the school year can then significantly improve in the final examination, and we will look for evidence to recognise where pupils have made such improvements.

We are aware that there has been some call for pupils to be allowed to sit a “second prelim” or other formal assessment online, during school closures, to generate additional evidence. We are not setting any such tasks for our pupils. We do not wish to add any further pressure to young people who are already stressed about the current situation; nor would any such online task meet the SQA’s stringent guidelines for administering assessments.

You will appreciate that estimated grades are still in the process of being agreed by teachers and Curriculum Leaders, therefore we have no information to share at this point. As soon as we receive the next SQA update, we will confirm the next part of the process.

I hope that you find this information useful and that you have a relaxing Easter holiday.

Yours sincerely

Bryan Paterson
Head Teacher