

People Directorate

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Our Ref: Your Ref:

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Dear Parent/Carer

Parent Update Letter

I am writing to update you on some key matters as we approach the end of term.

COVID-19 Update

We continue to follow the measures we have had in place since the beginning of the session. In the period from August to present, there have been 6 confirmed cases associated with the school, which has resulted in a total of 48 young people and staff self-isolating as close contacts. Since the October break, attendance has remained steady at around 90%. The vast majority of students continue to support the wearing of face masks in school and I am grateful to them for their support. Since September we have supplied around 5000 disposable masks to young people. I would appreciate your help in continuing to encourage your child to provide their own reusable face covering next term as these are more environmentally friendly and help reduce the financial costs of providing face masks.

Please be assured that all staff in school are aware that this is not a time for complacency and we will continue keep these measures in place to ensure the safety of everyone in school.

SQA

Last week the Deputy First Minister announced the cancellation of Higher and Advanced Higher exams. In October it was announced that there will be no exams for National 5 courses this session. Since the beginning of this term, our staff have been planning for the possible cancellation for exams and identifying the key pieces of evidence that would be used to produce provisional grades. Higher and Advanced Higher Prelim assessments will go ahead as planned, commencing Thursday 14th January.

SQA have recently announced that N5 provisional grades should be submitted by 28th May 2021 and I expect the date for Higher and Adv. Higher will be around the same time. At present, we are still awaiting information from SQA on their validation and moderation approaches and it is hoped that this will be published within the next few weeks. An overview of the SQA quality assurance model can be found at the end of this letter and a Parent Information Evening will be held in January (details of the date and time will be shared with you). In the meantime, please visit www.marr.sayr.sch.uk/sqa-assessments--prelims.html for further information on the H/Adv H Prelim timetable and N5 January Key Assessment dates. Young people have been kept up to date with SQA matters through their discussions with class teachers and virtual Assemblies.

Fundraising

Our Senior Leadership teams have been the driving force behind school fundraising efforts and have shown great organisation and creativity in ensuring 'Covid safe' activities. Events have included the Sponsored Walk, Children in Need Day, South Ayrshire Foodbank collection, the Night Before Christmas Campaign and Christmas Jumper Day. In addition, a group of staff are also participating in Decembeard – raising funds for Bowel Cancer UK – and the 12K's of Christmas, a fun and active challenge in the lead up to Christmas Day. Total fundraising for the session so far stands at almost £6000 and 1000 items donated to the foodbank. I am truly grateful for your ongoing support.

Christmas Activities

Throughout this week, House Captains have been leading a range of activities to help bring some much-needed festive cheer. Please encourage your child to complete the challenge sheets or quiz and enter into the prize draws. Our annual reward afternoon takes place tomorrow and students can wear their Christmas Jumpers again. In a change to previous years, students will remain in their period 5 class for the afternoon (rather than moving around classes) and class teachers will arrange the reward activity.

Virtual Christmas Concert

The Music department have been working with students to produce a recording of our Christmas Concert, which will be available to view on Monday. A link to the video will be shared with you via Groupcall email and the Xpressions app.

In his recent letter, Mr Swinney has suggested that contact tracing may still take place up to 7 days after the last day of term, which for us is Tuesday 22nd December. Public Health have confirmed that we will not be contacted on Christmas Day or between 29th December and schools returning on 6th January. Myself and Mrs Anderson will be the points of contact for the school during this time (24th, 26th, 27th and 28th) and will monitor the inbox of the school email address. Should you need to get in touch with us, please email marr.mail@south-ayrshire.gov.uk.

Please continue to follow the school twitter feed @MarrColOfficial for regular updates on the wider life of the school.

Once again, thank you to all parents and carers for your continued support during this challenging time. I hope that you are able to enjoy the festive break and look forward with hope for the opportunities 2021 may bring.

Yours faithfully



George Docherty
Head Teacher

SQA - Key Dates, Evidence and Quality Assurance

The SQA have advised that subject-specific guidance for teachers and lecturers will be published for all subjects, on a rolling basis, throughout January 2021. This will advise on the types of evidence that can be used to determine a provisional result for each learner.

Below is an overview of how the **National 5** quality assurance model will work in session 2020-21:

November 2020 to March 2021

Teachers and lecturers use guidance and assessment materials to help gather learner evidence

January to April 2021

SQA requests, reviews and provides feedback on samples of assessment evidence from each school and college.

March to May 2021

Schools, colleges and local authorities will work through SQA feedback and carry out their own quality assurance of the provisional results. By 28 May 2021 Schools and colleges submit quality assured provisional results.

June 2021

SQA carries out national check of provisional results and may follow up on any issues with schools, colleges and local authorities. These processes are in place to ensure that a National 5 awarded in the north of Scotland is of the same standard as one which is awarded in the south of Scotland, and everywhere in between. Most of the support will be provided before the school submit your child's provisional results to SQA. This should reduce the need for schools to resubmit provisional results following SQA review in June. If your child's provisional results need to be adjusted to reflect their evidence, this will follow discussion between their school or college and SQA.

Fairness for your child

SQA is developing an equality impact assessment as part of this quality assurance model which aims to ensure fair and credible results for all National 5 learners. Schools, colleges, local authorities and SQA are committed to working together to support teachers and lecturers in providing their provisional results in 2020-21. We are discussing the appeals process for 2020-21 and will keep you informed of progress.

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