

Dear Parent/Carer


### Gathering Demonstrated Evidence to inform Predicted Results National Qualifications 2021

This session, our young people have experienced an extended period of remote learning (January to March 2021). During this time, teachers and pupils have concentrated on new course content (knowledge and skills) and consolidating understanding through formative assessment. In April/May and, if required, early June, our young people will complete assessments to capture key pieces of evidence to support demonstrated attainment.

It is essential that we support each young person in a fair and consistent manner as they work through their 2021 National Qualifications. The purpose of this document is to provide clarity on the approach to collecting evidence of demonstrated attainment and to detail the adjustments made for candidates in 2021, given the pandemic. This is based on SQA advice.

#### SECTION A: SQA ADVICE FOR GATHERING EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT PREDICTED RESULTS

The SQA has provided guidance on how schools gather evidence of demonstrated attainment to inform teacher judgement and the submission of provisional grades. As a school, we have followed both general and subject-specific guidance, referencing the following SQA documentation:

[National courses: guidance on gathering evidence and producing estimates](#)  (320 KB)

This document provides general guidance on gathering and judging assessment evidence with a clear focus on the quality rather than quantity of the evidence.

*“We (SQA) developed this guidance to support centres with estimates, which are normally part of our awarding processes for National 5 to Advanced Higher. While this guidance is not specific to session 2020-21, it contains general information and principles which may be helpful to centres when gathering evidence for provisional results.”*

#### **SQA News 18 March 2021:**

*“The amount of key evidence required to determine provisional results in National 5 to Advanced Higher courses varies between subjects. It is not the **quantity of evidence** but the **quality of evidence**, in relation to its **predictive value**, that will support you in determining provisional results this session.*

*Please refer to our [subject-specific guidance on gathering evidence](#) for details of the evidence requirements for each course. This guidance is available for each subject and level at [www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects](http://www.sqa.org.uk/nqsubjects)”*

All teaching staff at Grove Academy are following the SQA general and subject specific guidance when gathering demonstrated attainment evidence to support teacher professional judgement on provisional results. In particular, they have considered instruments of assessment and resulting evidence which has a high predictive value. This links to the quality not quantity advice from SQA regarding key pieces of evidence.

### **Timing of assessments (key pieces of evidence)**

Careful consideration has been given to the timing of gathering key pieces of evidence. We asked ourselves the following questions - Are pupils ready? Has there been an opportunity to consolidate their learning on key skills and knowledge? How do we know they are ready to sit assessments which will be weighted as key pieces of evidence? Do we need to put in place additional supports where it is clear that pupils are not ready? For example, reduce the core curriculum (PSE) and use this time for additional preparation time during the phased return to school in March

### **Course Coverage**

The SQA has advised that schools gather assessment evidence later in the course as this is when there is more course coverage. "Evidence does not need to cover the entire course specification, but the more course content that is covered, the better the predictive value is likely to be."

In using instruments of assessment which cover more content, including SQA Papers, it will be necessary to split these assessments up. Despite this, these papers will still have a high predictive value and weighting.

### **Level of Demand**

The instrument of assessment has to contain questions or tasks which allows for the gathering of demonstrated evidence (A-D).

### **Bias**

To avoid implicit bias, assessments will be cross marked by staff within each department and will be subject to quality assurance and moderation by staff from other schools in Dundee and our Learning Partners across Scotland. This will ensure fairness for all candidates.

### **Type and quality of evidence**

- SQA 2021 Papers, Practice Papers (which cover more course content/skills, have appropriate level of demand) and coursework assessments will have a higher predictive value.
- Class tests which sample key aspects of the course and which have been completed under assessment conditions, can be used as supplementary evidence.
- Performance evidence such as live recordings (video or audio) may be used in gathering demonstrated attainment.
- Classwork and work completed during remote learning is unlikely to form a strong evidence base on its own but may supplement other evidence.

## **SECTION B: SUPPORTS AND ADJUSTMENTS FOR CANDIDATES IN 2021**

### **Remote learning/tracking of engagement**

Grove Academy has provided extensive and effective remote learning provision. As advised by the SQA, whilst in remote delivery, our class teachers have concentrated on learning and teaching to secure knowledge and understanding. Our young people have also benefited from formative assessment feedback during remote learning.

Through our tracking of pupil engagement and our Course choice engagement, we have identified where young people have not engaged with remote learning. Where this is the case, the following additional supports have been available:

- Offer of individual meets and support by class teachers
- Deployment of a wider wellbeing team to provide individual support based on tracking information
- Contact with parent/carers by House Teams to put in place arrangements to address barriers identified
- Our Grove Academy Learning Portal containing materials to help parents support their child with remote learning.
- In-school provision agreed on a case-by-case basis
- Distribution of laptops to pupils with no access to IT hardware
- Provision of wi-fi hubs to pupils with no internet access at home

These interventions have proved effective in getting pupils back on track and engaging with their learning. Additional steps will be required for identified learners when we return to school on 19 April.

### **Phase 1 Return to School Plan**

Young people completing National Qualifications with a high level of practical activity were invited into school from 22 February.

The Phase 1 Plan has been highly effective in allowing pupils to complete practical coursework and demonstrate their attainment. Staff have begun to capture coursework assessments prior to the Easter holidays in subjects with a high level of practical activity.

### **Phase 2 Return to School Plan (since 15 March)**

Young people have returned to school in two streams due to physical distancing mitigations and have had face to face teaching and learning in all their SQA subjects in the Senior Phase over the course of a week.

### **Phase 3 Return to School Plan (From 19 April)**

Young people will return to their regular set timetable for 2020/21 on a daily basis without 2m physical distancing, but still with the other mitigations in place (i.e. face coverings, hand sanitising, etc.).

## **Communication**

### **Virtual Parents' Meetings**

We shall be holding Virtual Parents' Meetings on the following dates:

S5/6 Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

S4 Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April.

The virtual parents' meeting will allow you to have a 5 minute conversation with each of your child's teacher to discuss their progress, their current working grade (which will become their Provisional Grade in June) and their next steps to ensure that grade or improve it. These Parents meetings will be held just before the start of the Assessment Window, giving pupils the impetus to focus on their learning and thus demonstrate what they have learned.

You will receive early next week a text with your unique security code to access the Virtual Parents' Meeting Website (**SchoolCloud**). The website can be accessed on the Internet from any location. You will then have the opportunity to make appointments with your child's teachers. Please note there will be a limited number of appointments for each teacher during the meeting (29 appointments). If you are unable to get an appointment with any of your child's teachers, please contact your child's Guidance teacher to arrange a separate meeting.

### **Practice Assessments/Feedback**

Given that our young people have been learning remotely until recently, it is essential that they have the opportunity to settle back into school on a full-time basis and that we check understanding prior to the completion of key assessment pieces. Our young people will benefit from completing smaller pieces of assessment within class time and they will receive feedback to help them identify next steps in learning. This work will also allow staff to see gaps in individual pupil knowledge/skills and if there are any common knowledge/skill areas where consolidation and further revision is required.

### **Key Pieces of evidence**

Each young person will have the opportunity to complete the secure SQA 2021 Assessment Papers in April/May 2021. These assessments will take place in class. The SQA Exam papers will be split and completed during class time, as recommended by SQA.

### **Assessment Calendar**

Pupils and parents/carers will receive, in writing, a calendar detailing when each SQA 2021 assessment paper will take place. Each subject and level will be included in this communication. This calendar will be issued next week. Each class teacher will also ensure each pupil has a clear understanding of when these assessments will take place. Every effort has been made to spread assessments as far as possible. Where possible, no pupil will have more than two assessments on any one day.

### **Other supporting evidence**

SQA papers, coursework and practice timed class assessments completed later in the session, hold greater weighting and provide a good evidence base in terms of demonstrated attainment. That said, staff will consult other supplementary evidence including classwork and smaller class tests from across the session.

## **AAAs**

We are currently working to ensure that each young person in receipt of Additional Assessment Arrangements (AAAs) and their parent/carer will receive a letter, by email, detailing their AAAs. During each assessment, a cover sheet will be signed by the pupil confirming that they have received their entitlement to AAAs.

## **HWB supports**

Throughout lockdown, tracking pupil health and wellbeing has been a key priority. All staff have worked tirelessly to offer support to all of our young people and to keep them connected with school and their learning. Any further concerns should be shared with your child's Guidance Teacher.

## **SECTION C: MODERATION**

As a school, we are committed to ensuring that we are rigorous and fair in our approach to capturing demonstrated attainment for each young person. As such, we are working with the Local Authority and SQA on the rigorous moderation procedures.

All staff will be undertaking work with the SQA Understanding Standards materials and the SQA Academy course, to ensure they understand the Standards required for grading at each NQ level, be it N5, Higher or Advanced Higher. We shall be working predominantly with our Dundee Learning Partner, Morgan Academy, other schools in Dundee and Angus and with our learning partners further afield (In some subjects) to ensure that these Standards are applied correctly, fairly and honestly. In almost every department in Grove Academy, we are lucky to have experienced SQA appointees who are well versed in understanding and applying SQA Standards. In June 2021, each young person will receive a letter detailing their provisional grades which will be submitted to the SQA for final checking. The SQA is the Awarding Body and they will issue the Final Grades on Results Day, August 10<sup>th</sup>.

I appreciate that I have shared a lot of detailed information with you and your young person. As an added support, we shall be running a virtual Parent Information Session on SQA Assessment Procedures 2021 on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April at 4pm** via Microsoft Teams. If you wish to ask any questions this event, please email the school [groveacademy@dundeeschools.scot](mailto:groveacademy@dundeeschools.scot) with your name and your question. Here is the link:

[Click here to join](#)

We shall also share a voiced-over PowerPoint with the SQA procedures with our Senior Phase pupils on **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> March**. In addition to the above points, please encourage your young person to ask their teacher if they have any questions about their progress and how they will be assessed next term.

Stay safe and well!

Graham W Hutton  
Rector