

Parents Evenings 5TH February 2014

Parent Questions/Suggestions

The Broad General Education covers S1, S2 and S3

The Senior Phase covers S4, S5 and S6

- **Employers to suggest course combinations that suit them e.g. for an electronic apprenticeship someone needs x,y,z. This could guide the combinations the school makes available.**

The school website has a link to Skills Development Scotland's website. There is extensive information on this site about careers and the qualifications that students need. We will advise and guide students on the best course combinations for a particular career.

There will be a Careers Convention on 20 February from 11am until 3.30pm. The focus will be on vocational careers with over 37 employers in attendance. A list of exhibitors will be issued very soon. All pupils are entitled to a Careers Interview from Skills Development Scotland, with pupils in the senior phase getting priority.

We are pleased to meet with local employers to discuss what they are looking for from our school leavers.

- **Will the universities entrance policies change as a result of these changes in schools?**

Universities have been discussing and making changes to their curriculum and admissions policies for several years. Search 'Name of University Curriculum for Excellence' will take you to the relevant page. You can view the paper from Edinburgh University by following the link below:

http://www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.112286!/fileManager/University%20of%20Edinburgh%20CfE%20statement%202013.pdf

- **Will Colleges and employers accept the new National qualifications?**

Yes most colleges are revising their entry requirements to reflect the changes to the SQA National Qualifications, for example, to do a computing course at the City of Glasgow College you could be considered with one Higher and three National 5 qualifications. Employers are the same.

- **Explain Choice Booklet.**

We are currently producing information on all of the National courses and qualifications that we will teach in Sgoil Lionacleit. We will post them on our website for download by parents.

- **My child is half way through construction. Science and Construction is in the same column, will she have to drop it if one science is compulsory?**

Science will not be compulsory for S4 pupils who have already studied a Science in S3 and covered the mandatory Science curriculum. However pupils could resume their studies in Science at a later point in the senior phase

- **What happens if someone changes their mind in S4/5 what they want to do and hasn't started the subjects from 3rd year.**

A student at the end of S3 after the Broad General Education should be more informed about their skills and abilities and what they are good at and what they would like to study as a career. If they take 6 qualifications in S4 and find that they want to change, then it is unlikely they will want to change more than one. I would encourage students to keep their options open in S4 then and do: Maths, English, a Science, a Social Subject, a Language and a Creative or a Technological subject. These could all be extended to Higher level. All pupils will get an interview with their Head of House to discuss their choices and to ensure that they are picking the most appropriate subjects and the subjects that they are good at.

- **Is Higher Computing going to be offered next year? (distant learning)**

Computing is a subject that could be delivered by distance learning. We will discuss with other schools doing computing to see if it is possible. The best option might be to combine with the National class if numbers permit.

- **Clash with History & Graph Communication in some column, expects to cover both @ National 5 and Higher.**

Depending on numbers wishing to do the subjects it might be necessary to move one of these subjects to a different column to suit as many candidates as possible. Candidates should write their preferences on the form and draw attention to a clash. We would wish pupils to be able to take their best six subjects in S4.

- **Skills for Work (SfW) Certificates, are they recognised by colleges?(recognised qualification) Will pupils get any certificate or qualification after completing the Skills for Work courses?**

All SfW courses are offered at SQA Intermediate or National levels. They attract UCAS points like all other SQA courses and contribute towards a student's overall qualifications. They will get a certificate showing the course studied and whether they passed.

- **Explain format – Languages for life and work.**

Our Languages for Life and Work Awards develop learners' language and employability skills, through studying one language in practical and relevant contexts for life and work.

- **Are the rotations subjects geared towards child's individual strengths?**

We will try to have a system where we can play to a child's strength as you say by giving more of one subject and less of another. However we are sometimes constrained by which teachers are available.

- **What subjects will be on offer S1-S3? What subjects are taught over 1 year?**

Mathematics, English, Social Subjects, Science, Technical, Music, Physical Education, Home Economics, ICT and the core subjects of PSE, RE/RME, Tutor will be taught in S1, S2 and S3. There will be a choice of language in S3 that will build on the work done in S1, S2. There will

be choice of Skills for Work (SfW) course in S3. The SfW course will be a one year course though it will be possible for a pupil to continue this in S4.

- **Advanced Higher – Any Choice combination? Do columns matter?**
Columns don't matter with Advanced Higher. Teachers will timetable it when most pupils are free to come. This is the approach that has always been taken to timetable Advanced Higher.
- **School profile is geared towards CV for college basis.**
The school profile is a positive statement of a young person's latest and best achievements. It is drawn from the young person's ongoing dialogue with staff about learning and assessment information. As such, the profile can acknowledge and validate a young person's achievements and be a starting point for a CV.
- **In the first 3 years would there be opportunity for Maritime studies? (Navigation, Sea Safety, Boat Handling) in C8 (via outside providers)**
We are currently looking to introduce a course in Local Food production. This will be delivered by our own staff with help from the community. Our location would justify a short course in maritime studies, which could be taught in a similar way. Castlebay Secondary School teach a course in Maritime Studies with Lews Castle College.
- **Are there opportunities for video link learning in the National level section e.g Spanish, Navigation?**
In previous years we have enrolled senior students for an online Personal Effectiveness and Study Skills with Lews Castle College in Stornoway. We have also had senior students taking part in Open University courses. We need to ensure we can sustain any course that we offer to our pupils but I would be pleased to talk to any training provider about what they could offer the school. I have heard of a trial course in a Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies that will be taught from Stornoway that will be accessible to pupils in other schools. It will be interesting to see how this works. The local authority are still working to introduce reliable ICT links between Sgoil Lionacleit and the other centres.
- **Do students have to have a full timetable in year 5/6, if so why? Re replacement?**
Yes. Students following a full curriculum have a better success in achieving more qualifications.
- **Can there be the option for pupils in 6th year to have free periods and focus on what they want to progress towards? What are the possible college course options?**
We would wish to timetable activities like Work Experience rather than large blocks of Study Time. University selectors and employers like to see pupils using their initiative to organise work experience or other relevant courses of study. Competition for places is fierce and our students need to show that they have much more than the basic entry requirements. Pupils should look at doing courses that widen their experience. They could do charity work, do work experience or do other National courses that interest them that they dropped earlier.

- Does school give info on supported study classes to parents directly or only via pupils?**
 We will send details of all Supported Study Classes to parents by e-mail as well as by letter. Parents should regularly check the website for information regarding the school and its activities.
- Gave an example of able pupils being allowed to do Higher Music in 4th Year – how does that work on limited number of periods in the S4 block (5ppw)?**
 Some pupils have excellent performance skills in music from studying and practicing at home. In some cases they exceed the standard of performance required for National (Intermediate) courses and we will present them for the Higher course. They spend most of their timetabled music lessons doing the theory parts of the Higher Music course.
- What is Energy course?**
 The Intermediate 2 Energy Skills Course has been designed to provide a basis for progression into further education or for moving directly into training or employment within the Energy sector. Candidates will explore a variety and range of industries and career opportunities which exist within the energy sector. They will also become familiar with key words and terms used in the sector, and will develop an awareness of the impact of the energy sector on the environment. Personal development of employability skills will be the main focus across the Course with each Unit aiming to enhance such skills. The development of teamwork and practical skills and carrying out test procedures are also given a high profile. The mandatory Units in this Course introduce the various energy industries based in the UK and develop practical skills by building a small scale solar hot water system and wind turbine. Candidates will also review their employability skills and strengths and weaknesses which will be used to help select the most appropriate career for them within the energy sector. See website for more information in course choice booklet.
- Re-introducing streaming – how set will those class set be?**
 In some subjects in S1, S2 and S3 classes are loosely set accordingly to ability. Most classes in S1, S2 and S3 are mixed ability. The plan to have S4, S5 and S6 pupils together for many subjects in the Senior Phase recognise that different pupils progress at different rates.
- Skills based learning (like IB)?**
 A lot of the new courses have an emphasis on practical work, for example in Administration and IT students spend most of their time developing practical skills in the subject. In N4 knowledge and understanding accounts for only 10% of the overall course mark with the balance weighted towards practical skills. Parents should refer to the 'Nationals in a Nutshell' on the Parent Forum website for a more detailed breakdown.
- What are National 5 Grade boundaries? What is an A,B,C,D etc? What is a fail?**
 The SQA decide the grade boundaries after each examination, for example over 75% would get an A; over 60% a B; over 50% a C and so on. Sometimes the pass mark and grade boundaries will vary and in some examinations to pass with a C grade candidates had to get 55%. A grade D is allocated to candidates who get roughly between 45% and 50%. Less than 45% would be a Fail.

National 4 is either a Pass or a Fail, based on the candidate's success in the units that make up the course. They too are awarded on a Pass or Fail basis.

- **Where will National 5 Maths fit in?**

Pupils in S5 and S6 will all go to Mathematics and English together. Some will study Higher, National 5 or National 4 based on their qualifications and experience in S4.

- **More explicit subject information in each column.**

We are currently making up a booklet of information on each course that will be posted on our website. Pupils can also ask their teacher for information about a subject. The website for the National Parent Forum has information sheets on all National Courses go to: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/NPF/nationals-in-a-nutshell/>

- **What if there are no options in more than 1 column for pupils in 6th year.**

We will ensure that there are appropriate course options for all pupils.

- **Pathway – get them on it but what if they don't know.**

A pupil in S4 who is not sure what he or she would like to do should opt for courses in each of the curricular areas: Mathematics, English, a Social Subject, a Science, a Language, a Creative and Expressive or a Technological one. They can then do Highers in the subjects that they are best at. If they are better at some subjects than others then that should influence their choice too.

- **Staff reduction in the school, how will this impact on Education & Choices?**

The change to a 3 + 3 model will ensure that we make best use of our available teaching resource. We will seek replacement teachers when vacancies arise for most subjects. However, the school has an overall staffing figure, set by the local authority and the staffing for the school must remain largely in line with this figure. Choosing to have an extensive range of different subjects may impact on other aspects of the school such as our class sizes.

- **Could German be taught by e-learning?**

Sgoil Lionacleit is the only school in the region that has taught German from S1 to S6. This has led to difficulties to cover the subject during the vacancy. The fact there was only one application for the post, and that came from outwith Scotland, is a worrying development. Though Germany is seen as an important in terms of its economy the SQA have reported a decline in the number of pupils taking German qualifications. The local authority have given an undertaking to cover the subject for a further 18 months to ensure pupils who have embarked on certificate SQA courses can see them through to a conclusion. We will explore other avenues like e-learning to teach this subject. However our efforts to find a teacher, including e-learning, were unsuccessful. S2 pupils who have studied German and wish to change to French may do so. We can offer pupils some more time for French by allocating the rotation period on a Wednesday to French for pupils who wish to change.

- **Why can present 3rd year not continue with 8 subjects? (Discretion)**

We think that pupils concentrating their efforts on the best 6 subjects in S4 will yield the best outcome for them. The National courses are designed to be done over one year. They can progress 5 of these subjects to Higher level, resume study in one the subjects they dropped or to start a different subject altogether. There is no discretion to have a number of pupils doing 8 subjects in S4.

- **Are these reductions in number of subjects at S4 happening all over Scotland? 6 subjects, not 8, 6 subjects feel very small.**

Yes this appears to be the preferred model in many schools big or small. Head Teachers report the ability to offer a wider range of subjects to senior pupils than they did before. Pupils will study the 8 curricular areas until the end of S3, with most subjects covering level 4 Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. This is beyond the broad general education specified by the government. Level 4 CfE in most subjects is equivalent to an Intermediate 1 course of study.

Dr Bill Maxwell HMIe and Chair of the Curriculum for Excellence Implementation Group wrote in February 2012 to Directors of Education: "As you know, one fundamental change being introduced through Curriculum for Excellence is a shift away from what has essentially been a three phase model for delivering the 12 to 18 curriculum (S1/2, S3/4 and S5/6), towards a two phase model. This two phase model comprises a three year period of 'broad general education' in the early years of secondary school, characterised by flexible provision designed by the school and focused on the experiences and outcomes identified in national guidance, followed by a 'senior phase' beginning in S4 in which the learner will build up a portfolio of qualifications, building directly on their previous achievements within the broad general education."

- **What does contextualised learning mean?**

In the case of Construction Skills it would be learning onsite. In science it might be giving an application for a concept or model. Putting the activity in context.

- **Is there scope for double language in S3?**

Not on the current choice form though it is recognised that taking a second language in S3 would keep options open further up the school. The problem is introducing a second language may overcomplicate the timetable and lead to difficulties timetabling all the agreed subjects for S1 and S2.

- **Would Chemistry and Physics be available if a pupil wanted to do them up to a Higher level?**

Chemistry and Physics are basic sciences and they will always feature in the curriculum.

- **How do you prepare pupils in S3 for the rigorous assessments/testing required in N4/N5?**

Pupils will experience a number of assessments in S3 some written tests or talks all designed to prepare them for their qualification year in S4. They will do timed tests and practical tasks to make sure they work accurately and effectively. All candidates will have to do SQA assessments. The assessment may be verified by SQA. We envisage holding formal assessments under exam conditions towards the end of S3

- **Why is French still being pushed as a language when Spanish is more widely used and also German when Mandarin is far more beneficial? Is it not time languages were reassessed totally?**

We will review the languages we offer to make sure we meet society's needs.

- **Will there be more ICT involvement as I don't think there's currently?**

ICT was withdrawn from S2 curriculum. It will be reinstated this year along with ICT for S3.

This will prepare pupils for courses in Administration and IT or Computing Studies or general ICT skills as part of the broad general education.

- **Will a child be able to opt out of a subject in area 6/7 to concentrate on another subject?**

There will be adequate time afforded to each subject for every pupil to achieve their best possible grade. The evidence is the more subjects a pupil takes the better the grades the pupil will get. Some pupils who drop a subject to concentrate on the remaining ones do not succeed as you'd expect.

- **Would it be possible to move Hospitality to Block E for S4, S5 and S6 pupils because seems to be quite a few wishing this option?**

Yes we can consider this provided it suits most pupils. It may mean we have to move Health and Food Technology to perhaps Block F.