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To Parents/Carers of Students in S4, S5 and S6

Dear Parent/Carer

Scottish Qualifications Authority Examinations 2017

1. Study Leave Dates

National Qualification examinations at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels begin in the near future. To assist students prepare for examinations they have been granted a period of study leave.

The last day for pupils in S4, S5 and S6 to be in school will be Friday 28th April. Study leave for S4, S5 and S6 will therefore begin on Tuesday 2nd May. New S5 and S6 pupils should return to school on the first school day after their last exam.

Current S4 pupils who are not sitting exams and are planning to return to S5 will begin their new timetable on Monday 15th May. Those pupils in S4 that are leaving school at the end of May or are exceptional entrants to college will follow a personalised programme combining work experience and activities to support them with planning for the future. These will involve a number of our partners such as 'Skills Development Scotland'. More detail about this programme will be issued in the near future.

A generic copy of the S4/S5/S6 examination timetable, with times tailored to Mintlaw Academy is now available on the school website. It is important that all pupils study it carefully and are aware of the date, and time for each of their examinations.

2. Study Leave Arrangements

I encourage you to ensure that your son/daughter uses study leave in a productive manner. The time is provided for revision and pupils should plan their revision using the study planner that they were issued with at the end of last term, a copy can be found on the school website. Each subject should be revised thoroughly before the examination.

As far as possible students should study at home during study leave, however study rooms in school will be available for students who need accommodating before, between or after exams. These rooms will be identified by notices on the Social Area doors, the main doors and the exam noticeboard.

For health and safety reasons, students who are in school at the start of the day but not for an exam beginning first thing should sign in at the school office, in school uniform. On exam days if pupils choose to stay in school they can either make use of the study rooms or sign out of school at the office in order to go home to study.

3. Exam Days

Pupils attending school for examinations or to meet teachers must wear school dress code.

All pupils have been issued with a booklet 'Your Exams 2017 – what you need to know'. This has advice and information to help pupils fulfil their potential in the exams. On the back cover of this booklet there is a

tear off card for pupils to record their personal details and Scottish Candidate Number (SCN). They should complete this card and bring it to every exam. If, for any reason, a pupil does not have a copy of this booklet they should see Mr Oldham, SQA Co-ordinator, as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of pupils to bring the necessary equipment such as pens, pencils and calculators for each examination. A pen must be used for any extended written answers. Some spare stationery items will be available for emergencies only. Pupils should be sure to bring only what is permissible for each exam, and to carry them without a pencil case. **Mobile phones 'smart' watches, i-pods and mp3 players are strictly forbidden in the examination room.**

Pupils should arrive in school in good time before the start of an exam. A minimum of 15 minutes before the start time is recommended to give time to double check the exam room and seat number.

4. Absence from an exam

If your son/daughter misses an examination because of exceptional circumstances please contact the school immediately. Whenever possible, absentee evidence will be submitted to the SQA for consideration. A medical certificate is also required in the case of illness and must be submitted to the school as soon as possible after the exam(s) missed.

5. Exam Results

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act we must inform you that Mintlaw Academy and the SQA retain on computer file your son/daughter's name, address, date of birth and Scottish Candidate Number in order that his/her certificate can be posted out in August.

The SQA will deliver examination results to students' homes on Tuesday 8th August. We urge all pupils to sign up for 'My SQA' (www.mysqa.info). They will need their Scottish Candidate number and an email address. Once enrolled in 'My SQA' pupils will receive their results by text or email before 9.00am on Tuesday 8th.

Please be aware that the post results service replaces the appeals system and this service applies to all qualifications available. Please contact the school in the first instance should you wish to discuss your son/daughter's results in August.

Work Experience for Transitioning Pupils

Info for Parents of Exceptional Entrants to College & School Leavers: Arrangements May to June 2017

If your son/daughter has indicated that they intend to leave school, or has applied to go to college as an exceptional entrant in August, as of Monday 15th May 2017 (when the school timetable changes) they will no longer have timetabled classes.

During the period from 2nd May (when exam leave begins) to 30th June (when summer holidays begin), to ensure your son/daughter is appropriately prepared for the transition of leaving school, we ask that they organise an extended work experience placement for **3 days each week (Monday to Wednesday)**.

- If your son/daughter is studying **two National 5 qualifications with final exams (or less)**, they are encouraged to arrange the three day extended work experience from **Tuesday 2nd May until Friday 30th June 2017**.
- If your son/daughter is studying **three National 5 qualifications with final exams (or more)**, they are encouraged to arrange the three day extended work experience from **Monday 15th May (after SQA exam diet has finished) until Friday 30th June 2017**.

If your son/daughter has indicated that they intend to leave school at the end of S4 to go onto further education, training, or employment, they will be able to collect a leaver's form and officially leave school after 31st May 2017.

Please note, if your son/daughter has any outstanding units to complete for any subjects at National 3, 4 or 5 level, they will be expected to attend school on a Thursday and Friday to complete this work during May 2017. Guidance Teachers will be in touch to arrange this if pupils do not arrange times to come in and do so on their own.

We have a wealth of employment opportunities on our door step and therefore encourage pupils to seek a **Self-Found Work Placement**. Many placements are offered to pupils from organisations who are known through family and friends. However, if it proves difficult to find a placement then your child should speak to their Guidance Teacher who will support them with this.

A Parental Permission Form and Self Found Work Experience Form are will be issued to your son/daughter in school and must be completed in full along with the relevant sessions by the employer. Your son/daughter should return these forms to **their Guidance Teacher by Friday 21st April**. Incomplete forms will not be accepted and will be returned to pupils for completion.

It is important that, when selecting a work placement provider, pupils are able to make the necessary travel arrangements to ensure attendance during their placement week. In the past we have had pupils select organisations that are unfeasible, or too costly to get to, and in turn have missed out on the work placement opportunity. We take the health, safety and well-being of our pupils very seriously; this still applies when they are on their extended work experience placement. Our work experience unit work closely with placement providers to help ensure a safe and secure working environment is provided. A Health and Safety Workplace Assessor will always visit the premises to carry out a risk assessment.

Pupils Returning To School for S5 and S6

Induction into the 'new' S5 and S6

New S5 Tuesday 6 June: Induction for S5 students

New S6 Tuesday 6 June: All pupils should go to the Social Area at 8.40 am for our S6 Induction Day.

Pupils not attending the S5 or S6 Induction Day will be deemed to have left Mintlaw Academy and will be removed from the school register. Please let the school office know if your son/daughter plans to return but is unavoidably unable to make the induction day. Principal Teachers of Guidance will meet individually with any such students on their return to school.

Looking forward – The S5 and S6 Contract

To promote a sense of partnership between pupils, parents / carers and the school and as a condition of their return, all S5 pupils will be given an S5 contract to sign. S6 students will be given the opportunity to negotiate and agree a provisional S6 contract during induction. Both contracts must be signed by parents / carers and the pupil in order for him / her to continue into S5/6. Any pupil failing to adhere to the agreed contract during the school year may be asked to leave school.

I do hope you find this information useful. If you have any further queries please contact your child's Guidance Teacher in the first instance. I realise that the 'run up' to the SQA examinations can be a stressful time for all and hope that the above information reduces this by providing some clarity in this process. In conclusion, both personally, and on behalf of Mintlaw Academy, may I take this opportunity to wish your son/daughter every success in the upcoming SQA examinations.

Yours sincerely



Mrs L Duthie
Head Teacher