

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following my letter of early January, I would now like to take the opportunity, as promised, to clarify decisions on the curriculum regarding the transition to a new Broad General Education and Senior Phase. Due to the timing of my arrival in school as Head Teacher (in the middle of the school year), I wanted to ensure that I had provided the opportunity for discourse with partners before making key decisions on the curriculum. These are decisions which it is now necessary for *all schools* to make. Regardless of context, this openness to discussion and consultation with all key partners will remain ongoing as we move forward as a school.

It was clear that by next year our current S1 would move into a newly-structured, 3-year Broad General Education with Nationals in S4. The key question for us was to evaluate what the best experience for our current S2 would be during these transitional times. Following detailed discussions and evaluation during our recent In-service days, our Extended Management Team are universally of the opinion that our current S2 will be best served by moving into a *new S3* which forms part of a genuine Broad General Education.

This means that our current S2 will move forward ***without conventional course choice this term***. They will move into a new S3 experience which includes:

- **personalisation and choice** (including selecting two subjects from Music, Art, Design and Engineering (old Technical) and HE to allow specialist input pre-National course choice; and the extension of our School of Sport into S3);
- **rigorous specialist subject input** to prepare for Nationals (specialist input by rotation in individual Science and Social Studies topics);
- **changes of class groupings in key areas** to facilitate this specialist input where possible to ensure a 'fresh' experience as pupils move forward from S2 and prepare to choose Nationals for S4;
- **provision of literacy, numeracy, physical activity, health and wellbeing, science, modern languages, social studies, technology, religious, moral and philosophical education and creative arts input for ALL pupils into S3, in line with governmental expectations;**
- **crucial extra time with some National content input to inform decision making** *before* making course choice decisions in January. This should address historical issues over some pupils taking **the wrong courses** when choosing in March of S2 and 'carrying' 1-2 subjects which they are not enjoying or progressing well in by the end of S3;
- **course choice of up to 7 Nationals in January of S3 to begin just after Easter;**
- **all 7 Nationals will have 4 periods each, facilitating rigour and focus with pupils experiencing courses as 1-year outcomes (as designed) and with the pace and challenge which should better prepare them for study in S5;**
- **the choice of up to 7 Nationals to alleviate some parental concerns over 'narrowing' too much prior to S5/6;**

- **brand new courses, such as Engineering Science and Leadership, are in the pipeline so your child should benefit from new, rich experiences.**

The enclosed curricular rationale document provides more detail on planned period allocations and pathways. These are dependent, as ever, on staffing and budgetary considerations in terms of what we can guarantee. We have also included some exemplar 'Learner Journeys' which illustrate some examples of what young people may achieve as they move through the system from the more 'academic student' (journey A) to a pupil who may require a greater balance between the 'academic' and 'vocational' (journey C). These may help you to see the genuine, wider personalisation and choice available as your child moves through different stages.

Please contact me or the relevant member of SMT/Pupil Support at any time if you wish to discuss any issues regarding *your child's* progression. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you of two information evenings for S1 and S2 parents, where I will talk through our model and be available, along with our wider subject teams, to answer any specific questions that you have:

- **S2 Information Evening: Monday 4 March, 7pm, Theatre**
- **S1 Information Evening: Tuesday 28 May, 7pm, Theatre**

I appreciate you taking time to consider the detail provided here. I also wish to stress that change is the law of life in education and that, in the 21st Century, reviewing qualifications and structures in place for almost 30 years should have, ultimately, positive effects for your child. It is also important to remember that **our new S3 is not simply an extension of the current S2** but rather a revised stage with increased rigour and focus to inform good choices for SQA National study. Furthermore, with 7 Nationals available, your child will enjoy greater focus but still with genuine breadth in terms of qualifications achieved by the end of S4 and a host of sporting, enterprise and wider electives that were previously unavailable.

Finally, regardless of broad decisions made on the curriculum in any school, our focus remains on instilling values and ensuring that pupils experience quality learning and teaching which will educate and enrich. We will always seek, in working with you, to make individual decisions as your child progresses to ensure that they leave school equipped with **choices** and the opportunity to move forward to **positive destinations** (be that university, work or college). In a climate of continuous change, this desire to empower pupils through education that provides genuine choices and opportunities will remain a welcome constant.

Yours sincerely,



Scott Pennock,
Head Teacher

