



Head Teacher: Mr George Cooper BA (Hons)

Bearsden Academy

St Andrew's Way

Bearsden

Glasgow G61 3AX

Tel: 0141-955 2344

Fax: 0141-942 5949

Email: office@bearsdenacademy.e-dunbarton.sch.uk

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Dear S3 pupils, (soon to be S4!)

I hope that this letter finds you and your loved ones well. I have missed seeing all of you at school and engaging in the daily business of school life as we know it. I know that you will be missing that too. Friendships and connections are so important at times like this.

I have been delighted to see how you are engaging with on line learning and I know that this will also be new and difficult for you to manage in the context of your home as the new classroom, but that's ok. It has been a difficult time for all, and we can support each other as we move forward. We may not have seen one another for several weeks, but as my year group, you are in my thoughts and you are my priority.

I want to reassure you that, along with teachers in school, I am focused on a number of key priorities for you at this time. Most pertinent is the next step in your learning journey to the Senior Phase as you transition to S4, and begin to engage with National Qualifications courses. This is a very exciting time for you, as you have arrived formally and successfully at the end of your Broad General Education! I know that you have been working hard with your Guidance teachers to complete your S3 Profile. Having this opportunity to use the S3 Profile as tool to reflect on your progression within the three years of the Broad General Education platform will prepare you well for understanding your strengths and areas for development as you move forward. I am very proud of all of you and all you have achieved so far. I know that you are ready for this next step. I have seen that leadership within all of you.

Another key priority that your teachers are working on is the early launch of your National courses which will be experienced in a different way for you at the moment, but also for your teachers. They have been learning in new ways too. Those courses will begin significantly earlier than normal, making good use of what would ordinarily be 'study leave' time. Those of you with older brothers and sisters will know how difficult this has been for them during this period when they would normally be preparing for exams. I know that you will be supporting them too.

As we move forward together, please remember that in your own self leadership of daily learning, you can make those little adjustments that support you to engage in this new normal for now. Don't forget to take time to plan your day by reviewing the tasks set, and the time available to complete. Try also to build in those little rewards of time and relaxation which support your emotional strength and wellbeing, and make time to support your family too. Sometimes that is as simple as making your parent a cup of tea as they try to support you while juggling numerous other things. Or maybe read to a younger sibling. They will remember that forever. Please also try to complete the tasks set by your Guidance teachers for PSE as they release each stage of the S3 profile tasks and the exciting new opportunity through Youth Philanthropy Initiative. I know you will have been disappointed not to continue with this and I am delighted we still can!

And finally... (it's just like Assembly!) Please see attached to this letter a collation of common questions, some of which are directly related to young people in their examinations year, but others more relevant to you. Please don't forget that I am here for you. Make time to let me know how you are by completing the survey on Show My Homework. Tell me about the wonderful leadership that I know many of you have been displaying recently and let's celebrate it! Like your Guidance teachers, I am only an email away.

Yours Sincerely,

Alison McCloy
Depute Head Teacher

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I need to do any further work for S4 courses?

No. The SQA have stated clearly that there is no requirement for you to complete any more prelims or mock exams, or homework tasks for the purpose of determining an estimate grade.

Will my S4 grades be based solely on my prelim performance?

No. Your teachers will review all the evidence that is available to them to assess whether you have met the course aims. They have a strong understanding of your performance and know how you compare to other learners in each department, and in previous years.

Your teachers will take account of any available work that you have completed throughout the course. Using their professional judgement and their knowledge of your work and your progress so far, they will make an estimate of the grade and band you would have achieved under normal circumstances. Estimate grades will be based on your demonstrated and inferred attainment of the required skills, knowledge and understanding for each course at National 4 and National 5.

The SQA will examine the data provided to ensure consistency — both across the country and in comparison with previous years, before making a decision on the qualifications you are to be awarded.

Why can't I come in to school to collect work or to hand work in?

Social distancing rules, designed to protect all of us and society as a whole, mean that this is not possible at present. We will, therefore, maintain contact with each other online and work hard to support anyone who is having difficulties.

When will I get my results?

Everyone at Bearsden Academy and our SQA colleagues are working to ensure that you will receive your results no later than Tuesday 4 August. SQA strongly recommend that you sign-up to MySQA to receive your results by text and/or email. If you have already received your results through MySQA previously, you will continue to do so, and we recommend that you review your profile to make sure your contact details are up to date.

When will my S4 courses start?

Very soon indeed! Look out for further updates in the coming days, and we will make really good use of the time leading up to the summer holidays to make the best possible progress on your S6 courses.

I'm revisiting subjects that are unfamiliar to me, what if I find the new work difficult?

Further information will follow on how and when you can continue to maintain contact with your teachers. They are working hard to prepare tasks with full awareness of the fact that you are not together in the classroom, so tasks will be designed with this in mind.

I have a concern or question and would like to someone to talk to; what can I do?

Your Year Head and Guidance teachers are very much still here for you. We have continued to support pupils throughout this time and would be happy to hear from you, especially if you have concerns, queries or just want to catch up. We miss our interactions with you more than any other aspect of our working lives. Send us an email and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

I am feeling low and would like to speak to someone about it, what help is available?

We would encourage you to talk to family and loved ones about any issues or concerns that arise. Keep in touch with friends through social platforms, have a daily video call or chat through WhatsApp – there are many ways to keep in touch. Staying active and exercising regularly can have a really positive impact upon our mood, as can relaxation or even thinking of creative (socially distanced) ways to help others in your community.

As mentioned above, your Year Head and Guidance teacher are still here for you, and would be more than happy to hear from you. In addition to this, East Dunbartonshire Council can now provide a telephone based counselling service available to pupils aged ten and above. Young people can call Lifelink on 0808 196 3700 between 09.00 to 16.00 from Monday to Friday. The

service can support young people with a wide range of difficulties including grief and loss, anxiety, low mood, anger and relationship and family issues.

We hope that you find this information useful, and very much look forward to hearing from anyone who requires clarification, support or advice.