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Dear Parent/Carer

As students begin their final preparations for the diet of national examinations there are some practicalities which students and parents/carers should be aware of. This will help ensure that the exam period is as productive as possible, and problems are minimised.

## **STUDY LEAVE**

We would once again like to offer the opportunity of study leave for students. Study leave is offered on the understanding that parents ensure students use their study leave time effectively, working from home to prepare for examinations. Study leave may be withheld from pupils who, due to serious lack of application, have failed to make satisfactory progress in their courses over the session and require being in school to catch-up. **Should you wish your son/daughter to benefit from study leave it is essential that we receive your permission. This should be done by completing the relevant section on the return slip.** The dates of this leave are detailed below.

### **Monday 30 April 2018 returning to school on Tuesday 5 June 2018**

Subject teachers may request that students return to school during study leave for additional tutorials, to complete outstanding work, or in preparation for further study.

On any given day during study leave students may work at home, or in school. Those who choose to work at home should go directly to their exam venue, and return home directly from that venue. Those who choose to work in school should sign in and then go to the designated study room for that date and time. Students must not abuse the privilege of study leave by wandering around the school/community prior to or after an examination. Students who complete their exams in advance of the end of study leave should use the time constructively in preparing for the next stage in their education or career. Teachers can provide advice to pupils who wish to prepare for further qualification in a particular subject.

**Normal school dress code** applies during the examination period. This is a formal and important occasion and should be reflected in the students' dress. Dress code also assists invigilators in ensuring that everyone in the exam is entitled to be there, and library staff in ensuring that only authorised students are permitted into the

schools secure zone. The invigilation team, and library staff appreciate the support they receive from parents in this regard.

Please note that **unattended bags** represent a security issue on campus. Pupils bringing any bags to school during their exams must store them securely in a locker, or leave them at the front of the exam hall – they must not be left in corridors in social spaces, or obstructing doorways. Mobile phones must not be stored in bags in an exam value, even if you are confident they have been turned off.

## **VENUE AND INVIGILATION OF EXAMINATIONS**

Examinations will take place in within the school and will be invigilated by the same team who supported the students during their prelim examinations. Each invigilator has been through the process of “vetting” carried out by Disclosure Scotland, and relevant details (held by the school) about individual student’s medical conditions and health will be provided to the Chief Invigilator to ensure that she can carry out her duties with due regard to the health and safety of all students. The vast majority of examinations are scheduled such that pupils can still use school transport if they wish, but is the responsibility of students to ensure they make suitable travel arrangements where this is not the case.

## **EXAMINATION PREPARATION**

The night before, or the morning of a major exam can be stressful! This can result in students arriving ill-equipped for the exams. Even senior students can benefit from a friendly face running through the list of possible items that they may need for their exam (for example **students should ensure they bring blue/black pens, a ruler and when necessary a calculator, HB pencil and eraser**). It can also help to have a copy of the exam timetable displayed so that everyone in the household can support and encourage students as they prepare for their exams. Students should be aware that minor adjustments to start times have been made locally for some exams compared with the times published on the SQA website, and should ensure that they arrive in good time for each exam, waiting quietly outside the exam hall. Again, although obvious, it is worth reminding candidates that it is important to eat properly during the exam period (including a healthy breakfast), and to get enough sleep. Staying up the night before an exam “cramming” is usually counterproductive. Copies of Aberdeenshire Council’s “Dealing with Exam Stress” leaflet are available from the school and library.

## **CONDUCT OF CANDIDATES IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM**

### **Prohibited items**

The following items **may not** be brought into the examination room.

#### **Mobile phones**

The SQA state that under no circumstances can mobile telephones or any other electronic communication devices be taken into the examination room. If it is essential for your child to take their phone with them, they must hand it (switched off), to the invigilator prior to the examination starting. Please note that candidates bringing any “valuables” to the exam hall do so at their own risk. Neither the school nor the invigilation team accept any responsibility for any valuables at any time during the examinations, although will provide a

communal tray which will be stored out with the exam hall. **Any candidate found in possession of prohibited equipment during the examination may have their entry for the examination cancelled.**

### **Calculators**

Class teachers will inform pupils whether a calculator can be used in their examination papers. Sharing of calculators is not permitted. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that their calculator does not contain

- inadmissible facilities such as a computer algebra system (CAS)
- inadmissible stored data or text
- any form of hand-held computer.

**Other prohibited items include** Smart watches, MP3 Players/iPods, pencil cases, calculator cases, notes or books other than those expressly permitted by the SQA for a given exam. Food and drink is not permitted within the exam venue except by prior agreement with the SQA coordinator or chief invigilator. Where bottled water is permitted the label must be removed from the bottle. Students are not permitted to leave personal items, including litter or empty bottles, in the exam hall once their exam is over.

## **LATENESS AND ABSENCE**

While it cannot always be guaranteed, if for any reason, a student is late for an examination, he/she should report to the examination without delay, where they will be advised by the invigilator team if they are permitted to enter late. If possible the school office should be informed, and an indication of the students expected arrival time given. If your son/daughter is ill and unable to sit an examination please inform the school by telephone before the start of the examination, and provide the school with a medical certificate covering the dates of the absence as soon as possible.

## **MALPRACTICE**

While the conduct of our students is normally of an exceptionally high standard, malpractice is a serious matter, and all students must be careful to comply with the regulations of the SQA, local policy and instructions of their invigilation team, or SQA coordinator. Candidates may forfeit marks or have an award in the current diet of examinations — *in any or all of their subjects* — cancelled if they are perceived to , or attempt to, gain an award by any form of deceit, or if their conduct is contrary to any of the following conditions.

Candidates must not:

- ♦ take into the examination room any prohibited item
- ♦ communicate **in any way** with another pupil during an examination
- ♦ intentionally cause a disturbance in the examination room
- ♦ submit work which is frivolous, abusive or otherwise offensive
- ♦ cause disruption in an exam or while leaving an exam

Students who have any query or problem (not relating to the content of the exam paper) during an examination should quietly raise their hand, and wait for an invigilator to respond. Pupils must remain seated in the examination room until dismissed by the exams invigilator.

## INDIVIDUAL TIMETABLES

Due to local circumstances the timing of many exams have been changed from those detailed on the SQA website. Copies of the individual student exam timetable showing these local adjustments will be issued separately. These should be carefully checked.

### Arrangement For Pupils Leaving School

Students leaving school should collect a **Leavers Form** from their Guidance Teacher. It is vital that all equipment and text books etc., are returned to their class teachers and to the library and that this is confirmed by the class teacher's/librarian's signatures on the Leavers Form. Only once all items have been returned and confirmed by signatures, will the form be authorised by your son's/daughter's Guidance Teacher and then finally by a member of the Senior Management Team.

### Arrangements for Students Returning for further study

Students planning further study in session 2018-2019 at Alford Academy must return to school on **Tuesday 5 June** when timetabled activities and classes will resume.

### Examination Results

The SQA will deliver examination results to the student's nominated address (as shown on the timetables) on **Tuesday 7 August**. Students who also wish to access their results by text message or email first thing on the 7 August should sign up with [www.mysqa.info](http://www.mysqa.info), **prior to 17 July 2018**.

We greatly appreciate your support in discussing the contents of this letter with your child.

On behalf of the staff at Alford Academy, we wish your son/daughter every success and thank you for your assistance in helping him/her prepare for these important examinations.

Yours sincerely

Mr Struan Gardner (Depute Head Teacher/SQA Coordinator)

Encl Study Leave Reply Slip



Pupil's Name \_\_\_\_\_

MEL Class \_\_\_\_\_

## STUDY LEAVE

As parent/carer of the above named pupil, I acknowledge receipt of the information about the **SQA Examinations Diet 2018**. It is my wish that my son/daughter.

a) takes advantage of the leave to study at home

Tick

☐

*Or*

b) does not take advantage of Study Leave and attends school each day during the period of Study Leave

☐

I acknowledge that my son/daughter has received and returned a signed entry confirmation report which they have checked for accuracy in terms of

- entries (subjects and levels)
- the name to be printed on the result certificate

## EXAM TIMETABLE

As parent/carer of the above named pupil, I acknowledge my son/daughter has received the individual pupil timetable, and confirm that my son/daughter will attend the exams indicated.

Tick

☐

I confirm that the address shown on this timetable is the correct address for the issue of my son/daughters SQA certificate.

☐

Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return Reply Slip on or before Friday 20 April 2018.**