



**Head Teacher:** Barry Graham

13<sup>th</sup> February 2014

## Changes to the Curriculum – S1

Dear parent/guardian

As you know, the Scottish Government recently decided that our focus for pupils in S1 – S3 should be on a broad general education rather than on national exam courses. Across Scotland it has been agreed that all external qualifications will now be sat in the senior phase of education, S4 – S6.

This change in emphasis has given us an opportunity to redesign our curriculum so as to enrich the learning of all our pupils. By building on the school's existing strengths and successes, and following discussions with staff, pupils, parents and representatives of Education Scotland, we have created a new curricular plan which we will phase in, beginning with pupils in our present S1.

I have provided an overview of the number of courses which each pupil will study in the table below:

YEAR GROUP	CfE COURSE	OPTION CHOICE
<b>S1</b>	16 COURSES + Elective	No option choice
<b>S2</b>	16 COURSES + Elective	Option choice in March after S2 report cards
<b>S3</b>	11 COURSES English/Maths/Science/Modern Languages/PE + 6 choices + Elective	Option choice in March after S3 report cards
<b>S4</b>	6 COURSES English/Maths + 4 choices + Elective + Skills	Option choice after S4 prelim exams
<b>S5</b>	5 COURSES Free choice + Elective + Skills	Option choice after S5 prelim exams
<b>S6</b>	4 or 5 COURSES Free choice + Elective + Skills	

Further details

### Electives

Electives are optional courses which will run for one period per week.

Similar to the modules which have run successfully in the senior school for several years, electives will eventually be offered to pupils in all year groups. Electives are an innovative way to encourage pupils to work and learn together. Pupils will be able to choose from a range of electives on offer, from yoga to learning an additional language. These courses are designed by staff to be enjoyable while enhancing skills, knowledge and self-confidence.



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### Skills

Skills classes are going to meet 1 period per week and look at Skills for Life, Learning and Work, incorporating leadership and employability.

S1 – Our future S1 curriculum will be similar to our existing S1 model. Pupils will all study the full range of subjects. There will however be some changes to the number of periods devoted to each subject. Instead of a rotation half way through the year, pupils will follow the same timetable for the whole year. Pupils will not make subject choices at the end of S1.

S2 – Pupils will continue with a broad general education and will study all subjects throughout S2. There will be some choice of subjects at the end of S2 for study in S3.

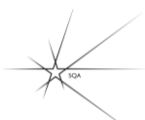
S3 – Pupils will continue with general programmes of study in English, Mathematics, Science, Modern Languages, PE and Religious Education. In addition to this, pupils will be able to personalise their timetables by making six choices of subject from four broad curricular areas. Pupils will complete a profile at the end of S3 which will summarise their achievements throughout their Broad General Education. This profile will help pupils make their option choices at the end of S3, when they will select six subjects to study for National Qualifications.

S4 – This is the beginning of the Senior Phase, during which pupils work towards their National Qualifications. Every pupil will study English and Maths, along with four other subjects, most likely chosen from the subjects studied during S3. These subjects can be studied at the following levels: National 3 (equivalent to Access 3/Foundation Level), National 4 (equivalent to Intermediate 1/General Level) or National 5 (equivalent to Intermediate 2/Credit level). There will be a further option choice at the end of S4 when pupils will select five subjects to study in S5.

S5 – Pupils will study five subjects, which could be at National 4, National 5 or Higher level. There will also be a choice of vocational courses, college link programmes and HNC courses on offer. At the end of S5 pupils will choose options for S6.

S6 – Pupils can choose up to five courses to study. These will be at Advanced Higher level, Higher level, National 5, National 4 or HNC level. There will also be the option to study Open University modules or Scottish Baccalaureate awards as well as any of the vocational courses offered in S5.

Throughout the Senior Phase, pupils will continue to study Religious and Moral Education, PE and Personal and Social Education. Pupils will also be encouraged to undertake a work experience placement during this phase.





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Working together to achieve more

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## Other changes

From June, the school day will continue to run from 9.15 – 3.50, but we are making a slight alteration to the internal school day. Mentor time in the morning will now last for 30 minutes (instead of 25min) and all other periods will last for 50 minutes. In response to feedback from pupils, we are also changing the structure of mentor time. Each week there will now be:

- 1 period for House Assembly
- 2 periods for mentoring
- 2 periods for PSE – which will incorporate the use of teaching techniques to enhance Emotional Intelligence within the school.

As our S1 pupils will no longer be required to make subject choices in March, we have decided to delay our second S1 reports. This will give teachers more time to assess their pupils and give you a full picture of your son's / daughter's progress in S1.

The new dates for S1 reports and parents' evening are as follows:-

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014 – S1 reports to parents**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June – S1 parents' evening**

If you have any further questions regarding our new curriculum structure please do not hesitate to contact the DHT for your son/daughter.

Cairn – Mr John Blair

Scaur – Mrs Yvonne Gall

Nith – Mrs Lesley Wilson

Yours sincerely

John Blair

Depute Head Teacher