

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to you in order to provide information regarding SQA and Stirling Council policy on Exceptional Circumstances and Post Results Service for this year's SQA exam diet.

Exceptional Circumstance Consideration.

An **exceptional circumstance** return can be made for pupils where circumstances affected a young person's performance in a SQA exam. An exceptional circumstance can also be requested immediately after an exam if the performance has been affected. For example, due to illness or bereavement. Please contact the school before or immediately after an exam if you feel this may be the case. A doctor's note may be necessary in these circumstances.

Where the school makes an exceptional circumstance submission we will collate evidence from that pupil for **the whole course**, including pre and post prelim examination evidence. The SQA will consider the quality of the pupil work and will compare it to the estimates from the school in that subject at that level. A decision will be made and the pupil result will appear on the pupil's SQA certificate in August. The SQA's decision may differ from the school's estimate.

If your child is too ill to attend an exam we would ask that you:

- Contact the school on the morning of the exam or prior to the exam if the illness is evident then. The school will then collate your child's work for the exceptional circumstance submission.
- Any doctor's letter should be submitted to the school at the latest **5 days** after the date of the exam.

In any other exceptional circumstance please inform the school with the supporting documentation as soon as you can, this will allow the school to make the submission swiftly.

All material for exceptional circumstance submissions **must** be with the SQA **10 days** after the date of the examination.

The Exceptional Circumstances Consideration Service supports pupils who have been unable to attend an externally-assessed timetabled examination, or whose performance in the examination may have been fundamentally affected as a result of an incident beyond their control.

By making an Exceptional Circumstances request, the Head Teacher (or SQA co-ordinator) confirms that:

- The pupil has an open entry for the qualification, has completed all non-question paper components, and has had an estimated grade submitted to SQA
- The exceptional circumstance fundamentally affected performance during the externally timetabled examination
- The request is made within 10 working days of the timetabled examination. The SQA coordinator may liaise with their SQA liaison manager if further clarification is required.
- The school holds detailed documentation supporting the submission
- The school has obtained, holds and can provide SQA on request, the written consent of the pupil to submit the request and the accompanying personal data to SQA
- If Exceptional Circumstances are been applied, then the Post-results Service is not available to pupils.

Post Results Service

The new SQA Post Results service does not operate in the same way as the previous SQA Appeals system where candidates could submit evidence of prior attainment to be considered. In the Post Results Service, any application is claiming that SQA have made an error in their marking

procedures. In cases where there is compelling evidence, the school would make a request for a Post Results Service Marker Check to SQA and the school would cover all related costs. The SQA have rigorous quality assurance procedures in place to ensure that all scripts are consistently marked to the highest standard and that the final mark is correct. However, schools can, if they believe there is compelling evidence that supports a marking error being made by SQA, request the SQA to review the marking of a group of or an individual pupil's script(s). This will entail the script having its marking checked and the overall marks re-totaled.

For a request to be considered by SQA, the centre must satisfy the following conditions for each subject for which it is submitting a request on behalf of a pupil:

- The pupil must have been advised beforehand that submission of the request has three potential outcomes; namely that the pupil's exam grade could be upgraded, downgraded or remain the same.
- The pupil, having been advised of the said outcomes, must have given his/her consent to a request being submitted on his/her behalf.
- The Head of Centre (or the school's SQA Co-ordinator) must have given authorisation for a request under the Post Results Service to be submitted on the pupil's behalf
- The request must be filed by the centre within the respective SQA deadlines

Stirling Council Guidance

The following criteria must be applied consistently when considering submitting a request:

- A pupil's grade is *markedly at odds with the totality of assessment evidence* gathered during the year. The expectation is that there will be *compelling evidence from all aspects of assessment* : i.e. class and unit assessments, coursework and prelims

and

- Their grade is out of line with the performance of other pupils with similar profiles

and

- There is *clear and compelling evidence* that there is a reasonable possibility that an error has occurred with the marking or totalling of marks in the pupil's examination script

Each request for a marking review must be based on all of the above criteria. A request should not be submitted on compassionate grounds or, for example, because entry to Higher Education is conditional upon a particular award. Neither can a request be submitted because the pupil or others have offered to pay any charges arising.

A review of marking/clerical check should **not** be requested where:

- A pupil's final grade is in line with the estimate submitted to SQA and the expectation of the school based on performance throughout the course
- A pupil is one or two marks off an improved grade but their final grade is in line with their estimate
- A pupil's original estimate is found to be overly optimistic in the light of the actual performance of the class cohort in the examination

There is no supporting evidence of the pupil's attainment submitted to support the Post Results Service marking review.

Only in extremely unusual circumstances will a school request a marking review, an example of which may be a whole subject area receiving grades the school has compelling evidence of SQA error.

Requesting a marking review **does not involve submitting supporting evidence that the pupil could have done better, it only reviews the script from the day.**

It is important to acknowledge that as a result of a marking review, if grades are changed, they can be changed down as well as up. As this has the potential to adversely affect your child's grade, you will be asked for your permission prior to a marking review being requested, without this permission the school will not proceed with the request. It should also be noted that **parental request does not guarantee a marking review.**

There are very tight deadlines set by the SQA for Post Results Services. If you have a concern that an SQA marking error has occurred you must contact the school by 23rd August as all submissions must be with the SQA by 29th August 2017. Please note that all concerns for priority marking review requests (for candidates with a conditional offer for university or college) should contact the school by 14th August as all submission must be with the SQA by 18th August 2017.

I hope that you find this information useful and informative. If you would like to discuss this any further please do not hesitate to contact myself directly.

Yours faithfully,

Ally Macleod

Depute Head Teacher

SQA Co-ordinator