

Parent Council Meeting via Skype

Alternative Certification Model Presentation

Tuesday 27th April 2021 – 6.00pm – 7.30pm

The meeting was chaired by:

Steven Quinn, Renfrewshire Council's Director of Children's Services [SQ]

In attendance from Renfrewshire Council:

Julie Calder, Head of Service (Curriculum and Quality), Children's Services [JC] and Secondary Head Teachers.

Also in attendance were:

28 Parent Representatives [Secondary]

David MacDonald, Chair of the Parent Council and the Renfrewshire representative on National Parent Forum Scotland [NPFS]

Minutes taken by:

Michelle Stewart, Children's Services

SQ welcomed attendees and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to provide information on the Alternative Certification Model [ACM] being delivered in Renfrewshire this school session.

The ACM was developed by the National Qualifications Group following the cancellation of exams across Scotland.

The meeting took the form of a presentation from SQ followed by discussion and questions.

SQ committed to providing an FAQ document for all parents/carers following the session, which is in part informed by the questions and answers at this meeting.

SQ provided a presentation on the ACM and how it is being delivered in Renfrewshire.

The model is based on demonstrated attainment therefore assessment evidence is required from all pupils. This will take the form of 2-4 pieces of evidence dependant on the subject. Evidence is currently being gathered, under controlled conditions.

JC outlined the quality assurance framework that is in place. The focus is on ensuring that pupils get the results that they deserve through a robust inter-authority process which ensures grades are subject to rigorous checks by subject specialists across Renfrewshire Council.

SQ asked the group for their views on how provisional grades should be shared with pupils.

Suggestions included:

- Share all provisional grades at once to avoid the potential for additional pupil anxiety which may be caused by waiting on individual grades at different times
- Letter by post
- Letter at school to take home at the end of a school day

SQ thanked all for their comments and advised that the next stage would be to consult with Head Teachers and pupils.

Questions and answers from the session are summarised below. Questions are in bold, answers in plain text.

If the assessment and moderation days are 1st and 7th June [the in-service days set aside to enable assessment and moderation activity] does this mean that all the 'demonstrated attainment' evidence will be gathered by then?

No, not necessarily. Assessment will be ongoing until sufficient evidence is gathered to inform provisional grades.

The in-service days are additional time set aside to allow teachers to ensure that national standards have been properly applied during the assessment process.

Assessments may still take place after 7th June.

Each school will provide specific details to parents/carers and pupils on their assessment arrangements.

Please contact your child's school directly if you have any queries.

So any assessments after 7th June will not be moderated?

All provisional grades will be subject to moderation therefore it will continue beyond 7th June if necessary.

Are timescales in place?

There is a clearly structured plan to ensure that all deadlines are met. Individual schools will share their specific arrangements with all parents/carers.

Are pupils aware that provisional grades will be shared with them by 25th June in advance of their final grades being provided by the SQA on 10th August?

By now, all pupils should be aware of this.

Will Vocational Qualifications e.g. Skills for Work and National Progression Awards, be assessed and moderated in the same way as all other subjects.

Yes.

All courses delivered by school staff will be subject to the same moderation.

Will there be an opportunity for pupils to appeal?

Yes.

We are awaiting further information from the SQA on what exactly the appeals process will look like.

What will assessment arrangements be in schools?

Schools are best placed to determine approaches to assessment that fit the needs of their pupils. A range of approaches, under controlled conditions, will be used to ensure pupils are able to demonstrate their skills, knowledge and understanding of courses studied.

All schools will be working within a robust quality assurance framework and will work with each other to ensure national standards are consistently applied.

Will there be provision for alternative assessment arrangements for pupils who need additional support?

Of course.

Any pupil who is entitled to additional support will get it.

How can you ensure results are consistent?

In Renfrewshire we have a robust quality assurance process in place to ensure that all results are fair.

The HM Inspectorate are carrying out a review on the consistency of the quality assurance processes across all 32 local authorities and the independent school sector.

What happens if a pupil is self-isolating?

We will do everything that we can to ensure that pupils who are self-isolating get the support they need to complete assessments.

Is it safe to assume that each 'leaving date' for 6th years will vary across each school?

Yes.

When will results be shared with pupils?

Provisional grades will be shared no later than 25th June.

The SQA will not change any provisional results. They will check for any administrative errors that may occur when schools enter the data into their system.

The SQA will provide final results on 10th August.