**Strathaven Academy English Department**

# Senior School Handbook

# NB: Contains important information for all SQA English candidates and their parents/carers: 2019-2020. It is imperative that all National Qualification pupils and their parents/guardians read and are aware of the information given below.

Welcome to English in the Senior School. You are now embarking upon the assessed and examined portion of your academic career and will progress through the Nationals over the next session/s.

You will begin at National 4 or 5 level and can progress through National 5 Literacy, National 5, Higher National 6 to Advanced Higher National 7 depending on your success level at each stage.

The responsibility for your learning and your success rests with you. Your attitude towards your studies – a positive attitude and a strong work ethic - will ensure a productive year and provide the motivation required to reach your potential.

Your teacher/s will be there to guide you along the way and to help you manage the course, in what we hope will be a productive year for you.

You will be encouraged to achieve your personal best, to work **independently** and develop study skills as well as to reflect on your strengths and to set personal targets.

Courses in the Senior School **must** be supported by independent study at home. Regular homework will be set, marked and returned by your teacher and home study tasks will also be suggested. You must, however, be setting your **own** study tasks based on your own knowledge of your strengths and development needs.

It is crucial that you meet deadlines – you are expected to take responsibility for your own learning, to manage class and department deadlines and to plan ahead so that you can keep up to date and benefit from the feedback provided from these tasks. Pupils who fall behind and who are struggling to attain, may require to be moved to a more appropriate level of class and/or course.

English is a skills-based subject – you will receive regular feedback on your progress and will be expected to reflect on feedback and set yourself targets. Not every pupil, however, makes the necessary progress to pass within one session. It is vital that you speak to your teacher and parent about your progress and that you alert your teacher to any difficulties you are facing.

You will be loaned essential course texts. However, if you wish to write on and annotate texts we would ask you to purchase your own copy. Good quality used versions can be purchased cheaply online. All loaned texts and textbooks **must** be returned on, if not before, the day of the exam.

Pupil progress and the results of assessments will be communicated to parents at the Parent Consultation Evening and through the Interim /Final Reports. Any concerns the classroom teacher has about the progress a pupil is making will be communicated early to parents by letter. Letters will be sent where pupils fail to produce homework, coursework or fail to come prepared to class. We request parental support in ensuring that this does not happen.

**Coursework**

**National 5 and Higher Portfolio (30%)**

You will need to produce two written texts - one broadly creative and one broadly discursive.

**Broadly creative**

a personal essay

a reflective essay

an imaginative piece

**Broadly discursive**

an argumentative essay

a persuasive essay

a report for a specified purpose

The written texts must be no longer than **1, 000 words at National 5** level and **1,300 words at Higher** level.

You must record your word count (excluding footnotes and any references). Those who exceed the maximum will be penalised.

While the teacher can have a supporting role, you should take the initiative in the planning, management and completion of the task.

**Reasonable assistance** may be provided prior to the formal assessment process taking place.

The term ‘reasonable assistance’ is used to try to balance the need for support with the need to avoid giving too much assistance. If you require more than what is deemed to be ‘reasonable assistance’, you may not be ready for assessment or it may be that you have been entered for the wrong level of qualification.

It is **acceptable** for the teacher to provide:

an initial discussion with you on the selection of the topic leading to an outline plan

oral or written suggestions for improvements to a first draft

Once work on the assessment has begun, you should be working **independently**. There are no restrictions on the resources to which you may have access, for example, spellcheckers and dictionaries.

Teachers, or another third party, should **not** provide specific advice on how to re-phrase or improve responses, or provide model answers specific to the your task. It is not acceptable for the teacher to provide key ideas, to provide a structure or plan, to suggest specific wording or to correct errors in spelling and/or punctuation. This would go beyond reasonable assistance.

The final writing of both texts will be conducted under some supervision and control.

This means that although you may complete part of the work outwith the learning and teaching setting, teachers will put in place processes for monitoring progress to ensure that the work is your own, and that plagiarism/malpractice has not taken place.

**At Strathaven Academy** you will be monitored by way of the progress log which you should keep in the blue plastic wallet along with plans, notes and all marked drafts. This will remain in school as evidence that the work you have done has been your own at all stages.

The SQA’s statement regarding the role of tutors and others at home who may seek to intervene in a student’s folio work once the formal assessment begins is very clear:

*“The portfolio-writing is a final summative assessment and when a candidate begins the process of drafting their pieces of writing this must be under the direct supervision of their teacher or lecturer. At this point, no other person can be involved in the discussion or review of the candidate’s work.”*

At National 4 level you will be expected to have completed assessments and the Added Value Unit by **Easter 2019**.

At National 5 and Higher level you will be expected to have completed final drafts of Discursive essays by **Christmas** and final drafts of Creative essays by the end of **February**.

At Advanced Higher level you will be expected to have completed Dissertation and Portfolio Writing by **Easter**.

**Sources/Bibliography**

Any direct quotations from source material used in discursive writing must be clearly acknowledged by the use of quotation marks.

Specific details of sources **must** be given — e.g. dates and writers of newspaper articles, specific web pages, titles and dates of publication of books; it is not acceptable to say, for example, ‘various newspaper articles’ or ‘environmental websites’ or ‘the internet’.

Unacknowledged use of others’ material such as copying and pasting from the internet or any other source, or re-wording or summarising information from another source without acknowledgement, is plagiarism and this carries severe penalties.

**Template**

You **must** submit both pieces as one document on the template which can be accessed in the Submitting Coursework section of the SQA National 5 or Higher English page

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/47410.html>

**Malpractice**

The SQA is taking a tougher stance on malpractice.

**Intentional plagiarism**

Most pupils know that the following activities are cheating:

♦ buying an essay from an internet site (also known as an ‘essay bank’ or a ‘paper mill’)

♦ getting someone else to do the work for them

♦ giving false information about a source used in coursework

**Unintentional plagiarism**

Pupils may not be aware that the following activities are also classified as cheating:

♦ copying and pasting from the internet without citing the source

♦ copying directly from a textbook without citing the source

♦ omitting quotation marks from quotations

♦ paraphrasing without including reference to the source of the paraphrase

♦ copying sections from a friend

♦ having a friend or relative dictate something to them

♦ copying pieces produced in earlier academic years — not realising these could be included in their final coursework submission

**The principal rules for compiling and submitting Coursework**

The main rules on plagiarism and collusion that you really need to understand are:

1 Coursework should be in your own words, unless you are quoting

from a referenced source. If you are asked to explain what you mean by a

certain phrase or paragraph, you should be able to do so.

2 Always credit work that is not your own, regardless of where the ideas came from.

3 You should not let anyone other than your teacher see your coursework. In real life, it may be considered good practice to share information, but in coursework assignments this is not acceptable. It can lead to being accused of collusion, which could mean that your essay will not be accepted by the school for submission or a penalty is applied to your award.

4 If you require, other pupils, friends, family, or teachers/lecturers should only help you to understand. They should not tell you what to write, or show you their own work (or the work of someone else).

5 There are serious risks associated with using essay banks, essay-writing services etc — these are services that are available from the internet and offer to provide coursework materials for a fee.

6 Setting expectations is an important step in helping you to understand

the academic standards required. It is important that you understand

that, when you sign the authentication statement on the flyleaf, that you are

confirming that the work is your own and that any ideas or words belonging to

someone else are correctly acknowledged.

7 You should have read the SQA booklet *Your Coursework* (issued

annually to centres) and be fully conversant with the penalties for plagiarism

and collusion.

Where to find this guidance

* <https://www.sqa.org.uk/files_ccc/CourseworkAuthenticityAug09.pdf>
* <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/SQA_Your_Coursework_2017-18.pdf>

**A note about tutors**

Learning on a one-to-one basis can have a significant impact on a confidence and understanding but should parents choose to engage a tutor we would ask that what the SQA have said about the portfolio be borne in mind. Not all tutors are experienced English teachers or SQA markers and may not be aware of the risks they pose to a candidate’s results.

It is therefore **strongly advisable** that tutors concentrate on working in conjunction with the school, supporting your child in improving on areas highlighted by the class teacher and especially on enhancing the skills which are essential for success in English.

Pupils studying at Advanced Higher level should not require the support of a tutor.

**Key Steps to Success**

Making progress in English depends upon you:

* Attending class every day
* Participating in each lesson – engaging with tasks, listening, taking high quality notes, asking for help/advice when things are not clear
* Meeting all deadlines
* Keeping up with all homework tasks - it is an important life skill
* Maintaining a **personal** revision schedule; there is always something to do
* Engaging in regular reading especially of quality journalism from broadsheet newspapers/websites
* Preparing thoroughly for any assessed talks – group as well as solo- remembering that grades are based on quality of *content, structure* and *delivery.*
* Checking over all corrected work to identify strengths and areas of weakness that need to be addressed e.g. common spelling errors.
* **Being organised** – you must keep all notes and help sheets and corrected work together for studying purposes. An A4 lever arch file and dividers will help keep information organised.
* Adhering to SQA rules regarding completion of coursework

**What parents can do to support their child/ren**

Learning is effective when all 3 parties - teacher, parents and pupils - work well together. By supporting at home what happens in school, parents can significantly aid the learning process.

* Research indicates that positive parental attitudes to homework can have a marked impact on performance so take an interest in what your child is doing. Encourage them.
* Actively encourage your son/daughter to read every day – suggested booklists are available on the English pages of the Strathaven Academy website.
* Discuss what they are reading at school/home with them – what they liked or didn’t like and why, how the text made them feel, what it reminded them of or made them think about, the theme/purpose, the tone or attitude expressed by the writer
* Discuss topical issues in the news
* Encourage them to spend time on coursework and to think about it as early as possible. You could provide them with access to resource materials and discuss their coursework with them. You must not, however, give direct advice on what should or should not be included.
* Encourage them to discuss their strengths and weaknesses and to come up with positive next steps
* Encourage them to talk about what they are learning in English
* Allow them to practise and prepare solo presentations with you as the audience! Provide them with constructive feedback about how to improve
* Encourage them to see failure not as negative or disheartening but as an essential part of the learning process
* Praise the process of learning. Reward for effort not just result.
* Ensure your child is an active learner: they should be **doing** not just reading
* Encourage your child to regularly review what has been learned so far – there is never ‘nothing to do’.
* Encourage your child to look at how much they are improving on their own previous results NOT in comparison with other pupils.

The English pages on the Strathaven website provide useful information about courses, suggested booklists and a host of resources designed to support pupil revision at home.

We look forward to working with you and your child over the coming year and to meeting you at the Parent Consultation Evening later in the session.

In the meantime, should you have any concerns or questions please do not hesitate to contact Faculty Head, Mrs Bradshaw, on 01357 524040.

**Please complete and return the acknowledgement slip below**

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**Pupils**

Please sign to acknowledge that you have read, understood and accept what is required of you in the Senior School

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parents**

Please sign to acknowledge that you have read, accept and support what is required of your son/daughter in the Senior School

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_