

St Modan's High School

A Curriculum for Excellence

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Carers



Bringing learning to life in the way education is delivered for all 3-18 year olds

Taking a fresh approach to what, how and where young people learn

**Raising standards, improving knowledge and developing skills for learning,
life and work**

Closing the gap between the lowest and highest performers

**Nurturing young people as successful learners, confident individuals, effective
contributors and responsible citizens**

This booklet has been produced to provide St Modan's parents and carers with clear answers to frequently asked questions relating to A Curriculum for Excellence and should be read in conjunction with our 'Curriculum for Excellence - Leaflet for Parents'. We hope you find it helpful and that it gives you a better understanding of Scotland's new and improved Curriculum, including the positive impact it is already having on the education of our young people

The Need For Change

The world is changing fast. It is suggested that today's young person may have 10-14 jobs by the time they are 38. We need to prepare learners for jobs that don't exist, using technology that hasn't been invented to solve problems we can't yet imagine. CfE and how it's delivered aims to equip young people with knowledge, confidence and skills, giving them a competitive edge in a global job market. Colleges, universities and employers all favour radical change and have been fully involved in shaping Scotland's new curriculum

Full Implementation

S1-5 Pupils have already been following the new curriculum. The process of implementation has been a gradual one to ensure that pupils, parents and teachers are fully ready to make the most of the opportunities the new curriculum provides. The final phase has already begun - All S4 pupils are now presented for Nationals and S1-3 now covers a broad, deep, general education until the end of S3, when subject choices are made for presentation in up to 7 Nationals at the end of S4 (including core English, Maths and French or Spanish). New Highers are offered in some subject areas this session but by June 2015 the old Higher and Advanced Highers will be phased out and new courses introduced for all pupils.

Section 1 – The Curriculum

1) What subjects will my child do in S1-3?

Pupils cover all CfE curricular areas in the Broad General Education (S1-3):

- o Expressive Arts
- o Language and Literacy
- o Health and Well Being
- o Sciences
- o Maths and Numeracy
- o Social Studies
- o Religious and Moral Education
- o Technologies

Towards the end of S2 pupils will be invited to identify areas of the curriculum for greater specialisation and choice in S3 whilst maintaining the principles of the Broad General Education to the end of S3

2) What are Experiences and Outcomes (Es and Os) ?

The coursework covered in each curricular area is based on a set of **Experiences** and **Outcomes** (Es and Os) at a number of different levels which describe the expectations for learning and progression from nursery to the end of S3 . An "**Outcome**" represents what is to be achieved. An "**Experience**" refers to the nature and quality of the learning in developing attributes and capabilities and in achieving active engagement, motivation and depth of learning

More information on Es and Os can be found at...

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/myexperiencesandoutcomes

3) Does it take the same time to work through levels in each curricular area?

The number of Es and Os in each curricular area differs and this fact is usually reflected in the number of periods spent studying each subject. It is an expectation that subjects at secondary school provide all learners with the opportunity to cover almost all of the Es and Os to, at least Third Level (with extension where appropriate into Fourth Level) by the end of S3. Every learner will progress at a different pace within the levels of the broad deep general education.

4) How will I know what progress my child is making?

All pupils receive an interim report, full home report and a parents' evening every year. This will provide parents/carers with information about their child's progress at various points throughout the year. Teachers will offer feedback on areas of strength and development needs for each learner.

In addition, pupils in S1 to S3 will be encouraged to develop their own Profiles, which offer a snapshot of progress from the pupil's point of view. Profiling encourages pupils to reflect on their skills, attributes, achievements and consider long-term learning pathways. Each pupil should have a completed Profile by the end of S3.

Furthermore, parents/carers can gain useful insight into their son/daughter's progress through the student planner, class jotters and discussion with their child about their learning experience. However, at any point should a parent/carer require more information, they should contact their child's PSD teacher.

Section 2 – Nationals

5) What is a National?

'Nationals' is the name given to the new qualifications in Scotland that have replaced Standard Grades, Intermediate and Access courses. Nationals will be completed in the Senior Phase, from S4 to S6, at Levels 3, 4 or 5. At the end of this leaflet you will find information which compares different levels of qualifications using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

6) Why is my son/daughter doing 7 Nationals when previously pupils were presented in 8 Standard Grades?

The S4 Year Group in session 2014-15 are the last group to sit 8 qualifications. Thereafter all pupils will concentrate on 7 courses in S4, including Core English, Maths and French or Spanish. Reducing the number of subjects done to certification level in S4 offers learners greater depth and breadth of study in their chosen subjects therefore preparing them more fully for qualifications in the Senior Phase. This more comprehensive insight into each subject will support learners in the transition to study at S5 and beyond, particularly as the new qualifications are specifically designed to support progression between Nationals and Highers. In addition, the expectation is, and always has been, five subjects in S5 so employers, colleges and universities still expect this.

7) When will I know what level my child will be presented for in Nationals at the end of S4?

At St Modan's, we will present learners for National qualifications at different levels; for the majority of learners in S4 this will be National 4 or 5. Many National courses will be taught in mixed National 4/5 classes to allow learners every opportunity to work to their full potential. Decisions about presentation levels will be confirmed in S4 to allow pupils to settle well into National courses and complete enough work to allow staff to present all learners at the most appropriate level so that all pupils are challenged to maximise their fullest potential. Normally levels will be agreed with pupils, and communicated to parents shortly after Christmas.

8) Is there enough time in one year for my child to prepare fully for the National exams?

Absolutely, as all National qualifications build on prior learning and are a natural progression from the BGE. The BGE promotes depth of understanding and quality learning and the Nationals build on this deep learning experience. Emphasis throughout the BGE is on developing skills and demonstrating application of knowledge, understanding and attributes that will equip learners, not only for qualifications, but also for life and work beyond school.

9) Do all courses end with National Exams?

No. National 3 and 4 (and some National 5) qualifications are assessed at different points throughout the course by class teachers. Teacher assessment is already common practice in courses undertaken by pupils. To ensure that the same high standards are maintained across the country staff will use SQA assessment materials and quality assurance procedures and pupil coursework will be moderated locally and nationally. Employers and further education establishments have said that schools should develop young people with better skills. National 3 and 4 courses focus on high quality learning with a greater focus on skills development so that less time is spent preparing for end-of-year examinations. For these pupils this will lead to improved overall attainment and better skills.

Section 2 – Nationals (continued)

10) Will there be any compulsory subjects for Nationals?

At St Modan's English (including Literacy), Maths (including Numeracy) and a Modern Language (French or Spanish) will be compulsory for all S4 pupils. In addition, S4 students will have core non-certificated subjects for a total of 4 periods per week, including PE, RE. Health & Wellbeing (Skills for Learning, Life and Work) will permeate all areas of the curriculum and, at times will be delivered through extraction. All subjects are required to contribute to the development of Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Well-being and ICT.

11) What are Skills for Learning, Life and Work (SLLW)?

Skills for learning, life and work are the skills that learners develop throughout their education to prepare them for their adult, social and working, lives. These skills enable young people to reach their full potential and to meet the challenges of learning, life and work in the 21st century. SLLW includes the development of pre-vocational, enterprising and employability skills, personal skills, high levels of cognitive skills and the opportunity to put learning into a practical context. This is NOT practical skills training for any single job but the development of a wide range of skills to equip young people with transferable life skills like communication, team-working, resilience, problem-solving, self-confidence and more

12) Will it still be possible to do two sciences or two languages in S4?

Yes. After English, Maths and French/Spanish your child will choose from a series of options for the remaining four subjects at their course-choice around February of S3. Courses, as always, will be dependent on staffing and pupil uptake (i.e. if only small numbers choose a subject, then this subject is unlikely to run). It will be possible for a pupil to choose two subjects from a particular curricular area if this is the best progression pathway taking into account their skills, interests and ambitions

Choosing three subjects from a total of seven for Nationals in S4 is not recommended. This is not a compulsory set of qualifications for any University course or career and would limit future pathways. Where reference is made, by university admissions services, to 3 sciences, Maths is considered a Science. Further information about career or university/college requirements can be found by accessing *SDS*, *UCAS* or *college/university websites*.



Section 3 - Meeting Learners' Needs

13) Under CfE how will the school meet the needs of my child and ensure he/she is supported and challenged appropriately?

At St Modan's we continue to provide all pupils with high quality learning experiences in a variety of contexts. A great deal of work has been done and continues to be done to develop new resources for all learners in line with the Es and Os for each curricular area. All teachers make every effort to differentiate materials to ensure they are providing work that is appropriate for every learner. Class teachers also embed active learning strategies in their lessons to support and challenge all learners to achieve their potential. A number of interdisciplinary activities currently take place eg. Africa project, Elizabethan Experience etc which challenge learners to recognise how skills are transferred between subjects, making learning meaningful and relevant. In addition, through SMART activities pupils are supported and challenged to experience learning in different contexts and environments.

Our PSD structure allows us to fulfil each pupil's entitlement to personal support. PSD teachers will continue to build relationships with their class as they move through the school and will offer all their pupils a great deal of personal support under the GIRFEC principles.

14) Will my child continue with all their subjects into S3?

All learners follow a broad, deep general education to the end of S3 but the nature of the curriculum changes somewhat as he/she approaches the end of S2. At this point pupils are invited to exercise a degree of specialisation by making choices for S3 across the curricular areas of CFE. In S3 pupils continue with the BGE but will have chosen to pursue greater specialisation in their chosen subjects within the context of maintaining a broad curriculum. By doing so pupils in S3 should cover most CFE Es and Os to at least Third Level by the end of S3 where Options are made for presentation in Nationals in S4. It is important to stress S3 pupils do not begin National courses in S3 and choosing a course in S3 is not an absolute requirement for selecting the same subject in S4. In addition, all CfE courses are skills-based, so even if a subject is not pursued beyond S3 the learner is developing a wide range of skills that can be transferred to other learning situations and the depth and breadth of learning across the BGE will offer a knowledge and understanding that could be vital if he/she returns to study that subject at a later date, i.e. by picking up a Higher or National 4/5 in S5/6.

15) What form might "specialisation" in S3 take?

Towards the end of S2 all pupils will be invited to identify subjects, across the curricular areas of CFE in which they would like to specialise more for S3. This will be done through a formal process of Specialisation and Choice whereby pupils will be supported, guided and interviewed to make appropriate choices. Parents will be involved in this process as well as PSD Teachers, Skills Development Scotland and others. Choices will be confirmed following a Parent Information Evening, Parents Night, Reports and more.

16) Where can I find more detailed information on the content of new courses?

Parent information on Nationals can be found on the 'Nationals in a Nutshell' web pages at

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/NPF/nationals-in-a-nutshell/>

Or more detailed info about all courses at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45625.html>

17) How can I be involved in my child's education?

At St Modan's, we appreciate fully the importance of the relationship between school and home and will continue to make every effort to ensure that parents/carers have opportunities to be fully involved in their child's learning and life at secondary school. The student planner is the first and simplest way for parents/carers to find information about school, but also see what work is to be completed as home-learning. In addition, class jotters and homework assignments offer another way to see the work that is being completed. Furthermore, there are interim and full reports, parents' evenings, the CfE Open Event, parental newsletters, Twitter and information on the school's website. Parents/carers are also always welcome to get in contact with school; initial contact with school should be with the PSD Teacher.

18) CfE documentation mentions "deep learning". What does this actually mean for my child?

Deep learning is "where the learner analyses new information and ideas and links these to previous knowledge with the goal of long term retention" (Education Scotland) Simply defined, "deeper learning" is the process of learning for transfer, meaning it allows a student to take what's learned in one situation and apply it to another.

This means that learners at St Modan's will be supported and challenged to develop skills in a number of areas through the BGE and to use these skills in many different situations. This is central to preparing young people for life-long learning beyond the classroom as confident individuals and responsible citizens.

19) What opportunities will be available for my child outside the classroom to develop their skills in different contexts?

At St Modan's, we make every effort to offer all of our pupils the opportunity to become involved in a wide range of activities ranging from clubs and school shows to sporting and other competitions. We also have an active Pupil Council and a comprehensive SMART programme that is available to every pupil at key points in the year. In addition, all PSD classes are regularly involved in delivering assemblies, preparing masses and supporting charity work. These opportunities, in conjunction with activities like Duke of Edinburgh, trips to Dalguise and foreign excursions, allow young people within our school community to develop skills in a number of different contexts.

Section 4 - Sustained Positive Destinations

20) How does the BGE articulate with the Senior Phase?

In addition to introducing the new National qualifications, the SQA has worked on revising the current Higher and Advanced Higher courses to reflect the values, purposes and principles of CfE. This change has been instigated to allow for a seamless transition from National 5 to Higher. The newly revised Highers will be phased in from August 2014, so when your child completes Nationals they will have the opportunity to move on to study Highers. Every effort is being made to offer learners a smooth progression pathway where each qualification reflects the skills developed previously and takes account of prior learning. By August 2015 all Highers and Advanced Higher courses will have been updated and old courses will no longer be offered

21) How will employers, colleges and universities know what to look for with the new qualifications?

Our new National Curriculum has been developed in partnership with universities, colleges and employers. Work has been underway for some time to ensure ALL employers, colleges and universities fully understand CfE and the new qualifications. The Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) is designed for employers, learners, and the general public to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications and how they relate to each other. Further information about the SCQF can be found at

<http://www.scqf.org.uk/>

SCQF Level	New National Qualifications		Current National Qualifications
1 and 2	National 1 and National 2	>	Access 1 and Access 2
3	National 3	>	Access 3 Standard Grade (Foundation level)
4	National 4	>	Standard Grade (General level) Intermediate 1
5	National 5	>	Standard Grade (Credit level) Intermediate 2
6	Higher (new)	>	Higher
7	Advanced Higher (new)	>	Advanced Higher

Acronym	Meaning
BGE	Broad General Education
CfE	Curriculum for Excellence
Es and Os	Experiences and Outcomes
GIRFEC	Getting it Right for Every Child
PE	Physical Education
PSD	Personal Support and Development
RE	Religious Education
SCQF	Scottish Credits and Qualifications Framework
SDS	Skills Development Scotland
Senior Phase	Fourth, fifth and sixth year at school
SLLW	Skills for Learning, Life and Work
SMART	St Modan's Alternative Radical Timetable
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority
UCAS	Universities and Colleges Admissions Service



Aspirations for our Young People through full implementation of A Curriculum for Excellence

successful learners

with

- › enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- › determination to reach high standards of achievement
- › openness to new thinking and ideas

and able to

- › use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- › use technology for learning
- › think creatively and independently
- › learn independently and as part of a group
- › make reasoned evaluations
- › link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations

confident individuals

with

- › self-respect
- › a sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- › secure values and belief
- › ambition

and able to

- › relate to others and manage themselves
- › pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- › be self-aware
- › develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world
- › live as independently as they can
- › assess risk and take informed decisions
- › achieve success in different areas of activity

To enable all young people to become

responsible citizens

with

- › respect for others
- › commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

and able to

- › develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it
- › understand different beliefs and cultures
- › make informed choices and decisions
- › evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
- › develop informed, ethical views of complex issues

effective contributors

with

- › an enterprising attitude
- › resilience
- › self-reliance

and able to

- › communicate in different ways and in different settings
- › work in partnership and in teams
- › take the initiative and lead
- › apply critical thinking in new contexts
- › create and develop
- › solve problems