



18th February 2019

Dear Parent / Carer

Assessing Young People's Progress - Guidance for Parents/Carers

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching. Here at Portobello High School teachers gather evidence on an ongoing and informal basis through asking questions, observing young people working together and making comments on their work. Learners may also assess their own work or that of their classmates using agreed success criteria.

Some assessment is more formal, such as projects, investigations, case studies and tests. For some time we have used standardised assessments, bought in from an external provider, as one of the ways of assessing young people's progress. However, as part of the Scottish Government's strategy to improve information about how young people are progressing and how well schools, councils and the Scottish Government are supporting their learning, we have introduced new national standardised assessments in S3. This year, students will be completing the assessments online in the **weeks commencing 25th February and 4th March** as part of normal lessons in English and mathematics. **Students will therefore need to bring their iPads, full charged, to school every day during this period.**

The assessment of young people's progress is based on teachers' views: their 'professional judgment'. In making these judgments, teachers draw on their professional knowledge and understanding of the learner; on the recently published benchmarks for subjects, which provide information about what young people should be able to do and demonstrate by the end of a Curriculum for Excellence level; and on a wide range of assessment information. The introduction of national standardised assessments will provide an additional source of nationally consistent evidence for teachers to use when assessing and reporting on young people's progress.

What do the new national standardised assessments involve?

- S3 students in all schools will undertake national standardised assessments covering some aspects of reading, writing and working with numbers.
- Assessments will be completed online and will be automatically marked by the online system, giving teachers immediate feedback to help young people progress.
- The assessments will be used to help teachers understand how well your child is progressing with his or her learning and to plan next steps. There will be no pass or fail.
- The system will be designed so that if a young person is struggling with the questions they will get easier, and if a child is doing well the questions will become more challenging.
- The standardised assessments will be as short as possible and will be age and stage appropriate. A time limit of 50 minutes for each assessment has been set. This is an absolute maximum, to ensure that no child feels an unnecessary time pressure when undertaking the assessments. We do not expect the majority of children to require the full 50 minutes.

- Your child will not be expected to take assessments covering reading, writing and working with numbers in one sitting.
- The assessments will, as far as possible, accommodate the needs of children who require additional support.

Further information

If you require further information about the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, please go to www.standardisedassessment.gov.scot/parents-and-carers or get in touch for help and advice.

Yours sincerely

J C Ziltener

Depute Headteacher