Dear Parent/Carers,

It is with much pleasure that I write to you for the first time as the new Principal Teacher of Mathematics at Newbattle. I am delighted to be joining the school at this time, and excited to be part of a strong school community which is focused on ensuring that all learners have the opportunity to get the best start in life.

Prior to starting at Newbattle, I was the Curricular Leader of Mathematics at Trinity Academy in Edinburgh, and Principal Teacher of Numeracy at Musselburgh Grammar School.

We have a great team within our department – and I’m thrilled to lead staff forwards alongside Mr Ahmed over the months and years which follow. I’m ambitious about what we can achieve as a team, and want to assure you at the outset that ensuring the best outcomes for your child will always guide our thinking.

**Staffing**

Following the review of applications and interview process conducted by Mr Davidson, Mr Ahmed and myself I can confirm that Michelle Adams and Olivia Myers have been selected as the preferred candidates for positions which were advertised within our department.

Michelle Adams will join us from Vale of Leven Academy in West Dunbartonshire, where she has worked since the start of August 2020. Prior to this, she worked at Clydebank High School for her NQT year.

Olivia Myers will join us from Irvine Royal Academy in North Ayrshire, where she is currently completing her NQT year.

We are delighted to be adding to our staffing within the department, and look forward to welcoming Miss Adams and Miss Myers in due course.

**Partnership Working – La Salle Education**

I’m delighted to announce that we have joined in partnership with La Salle Education – who provide sector leading support for Mathematics departments across the UK and are at the cutting edge of supporting staff with excellent learning and teaching practice, founded on research about ‘what works’.

As part of our focus on recovery in August, we will be launching the ‘Complete Maths’ platform to all learners at Newbattle High School which will be free to access for all learners. This platform will allow our departmental staff to focus on the grains of understanding required for success in the subject and set low-stakes assessment to allow us to track how well pupils are doing. This will also allow us to see where there are areas for development required.

Further details will following after the summer break, however I am delighted that we can bring this resource to Newbattle for staff and pupils to explore and use.

**SQA Grading 2021**

As a department team, we appreciate that it is currently a very anxious time for learners within the Senior Phase regardless of their level of study. Equally, we know that as parents and carers that you will be keen to know how best to support your child and also the process which we will follow as a department when making decisions.

With respect to how best to support your child, we would strongly encourage your child to sign up for our Easter Revision classes, the details of which have been posted on their Google Classroom. As you can imagine with the current social distancing requirements, spaces are limited so if they are interested please let us know as soon as possible. Transportation support can be provided where required.

Also, after the Easter break we will be running Masterclass sessions and details of these will be shared with learners after the break. We are hopeful that nationally the social distancing requirements of 2m within the school will have been relaxed at this stage and can accommodate more pupils at this time.

With regards to the grading process for young people in Mathematics, a range of work has been undertaken an authority level in Midlothian to ensure that we are being fair, equitable and robust in making our grading judgements. This has included, but is not limited to, cross authority working with East Lothian on assessment construction, marking team meetings to ensure consistency is applied to all candidates during the marking of evidence and moderation of both the process and the outcome.

For those pupils completing National 3 and National 4 courses, work is continuing within lessons to support completion of the courses this session using any flexibility where the SQA allows for this.

As per the SQA guidance issued, our decisions for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher will be founded on evidence which has been produced by each candidate and we will be looking to use the best evidence available with *high* predictive value to base the grading on.

Prior to the school closure period, many pupils had the opportunity to sit assessments which offered evidence of demonstrated attainment in a smaller proportion of the course.

Further Assessments will take place in April and May and will be split into 3 or 4 parts, depending on the course studied. Details of dates and times for these assessments will follow in the form of the whole school assessment calendar which will be issued to you in due course.

Given the school closure period, to support our learners we will be making some adaptations to course content to ensure that learners are assessed on what they have been taught.

The assessments will cover all content of the course – unless indicated below :-

● National 5 Mathematics – Quadratics and Trigonometric Equations will be removed, due to insufficient time to complete these topics and assess learners for grading

● N5 Applications of Maths – No Changes.

● Higher – Trigonometric Equations, Wave Function, Exponentials and Logs and Trigonometric Identities will be removed, due to insufficient time to complete these topics and assess learners for grading. Option A has been chosen for our pupils.

● Advanced Higher – No Changes. Option B has been chosen for our pupils.

This will be done in line with the SQA’s position on the required course coverage contained within ‘National Courses: Gathering Evidence and Producing Estimates’ (SQA,2020) where the SQA state

*“A piece of evidence that covers course components worth 70% of the course award, such as a prelim, may be a better predictor of a candidate’s achievement in course assessment than a piece with a smaller weighing. Evidence does not need to cover the entire course specification….”*

Where required Grade Boundaries for the awards for candidates will be adjusted in line with historical trends of performance for previous cohorts, taking into account any improvements in departmental practice which would explain an improving trend.

To ensure equity and fairness, Alternative Assessment Arrangements are applied to all controlled evidence gathering assessments. Also, to avoid ‘implicit bias’ we cross mark by questions and not class. (For example one teacher will mark Higher Qu 1 – 5 Paper 2 for all candidates)

There may be occasions where young people miss formal assessment opportunities due to various reasons. We will support students to take assessments at an alternative time and place.

As all SQA Mathematics assessments were 100% on the final exam. The estimate will be based 100% on school based assessment. There is no other element to the Mathematics certification.

Mr Ahmed and myself will quality assure the estimates through professional discussion with staff members, collaboratively analysing and verifying that the estimates are a reflection of demonstrated attainment, based on evidence, applied consistently across the department.

In order to achieve this we will be working through the following process:-

1. Department work through the evidence in whole cohort spreadsheet containing all the assessment data, support and make suggestions to these grades, specifically checking the story behind the borderline cases.
2. PTC (Mathematics), PTC (Numeracy) & Experienced SQA staff: Sample spreadsheets to double check estimate grades meet all conditions of ‘fairness’ and ‘equity’. Any changes will be discussed with the class teacher & PTC.
3. Year by Year: PTC checks the estimates against recent attainment trends to check validity of estimates based on ‘demonstrated’ achievement.

Finally, checks will be undertaken by myself, Mr Davidson or other senior leaders to ensure the validity of the results for all pupils in Mathematics prior to submission.

I am hopeful that this outline of our support available, robust process which we are undertaking and adaptations to course content where appropriate will provide you with reassurance and clarity about how your child will be graded in Mathematics.

Should you have any concerns during this grading window, please contact me using [p.goodall@mgfl.net](mailto:p.goodall@mgfl.net) where I will be happy to support.

In closing, I look forward to the prospect of a greater deal of normality in the coming months, and I would like to wish your family a very safe Easter break. To keep up to date with all of our latest news, please follow us on twitter @newbattlemaths

With kindest regards,



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| https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/6/6c/Newbattlehs.png | **Mr Paul Goodall** **|** *PTC Mathematics and  Numeracy*  NEWBATTLE HIGH SCHOOL  **** [p.goodall@mgfl.net](mailto:p.goodall@mgfl.net) **|** **** 0131 561 6700 **|**  [www.newbattle.org](file:///C:\Users\Davidm87\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\AS2QD22I\UrlBlockedError.aspx)   Newbattle Community Campus**|**Newbattle Way**|**Easthouses**|**Dalkeith**|**EH22 4SX |