



# **MACKIE ACADEMY SENIOR PHASE PATHWAYS 2017-18**

**“This is your world. Shape it or  
someone else will.”**

**Gary Lew**

## SENIOR PHASE MACKIE ACADEMY 2017-18

This booklet is the starting point for making decisions about your course choices in S4, S5 or S6 in 2017-18. For those in the current S4 or S5 the end point will be after you receive your results in August 2017 when choices will be finalised based on the results achieved in examinations. However, the more thought and time you put into the process now the greater the chance is that the choices you make will be realistic for the results you are likely to achieve in August 2017.

With the move to a senior phase of education it is important that you think about the following questions when deciding what to do next academic year:

Can Mackie Academy provide me with the choices I want to be able to achieve well in my future career pathway?

Is the learning environment at Mackie Academy complementing my own learning styles and therefore maximising my achievement?

Am I prepared for the demands of the Senior Phase?

For those of you moving into S4 the element of choice is perhaps more limited given that you are still within the age bracket of compulsory education but for those of you moving into S5 and S6 it is really important that you think carefully about the questions above.

The courses available at Mackie Academy give a wide choice, but it is important to understand that some courses may only run if there is sufficient demand for them. We will aim to make this decision as swiftly as possible once pupils have given an initial indication of the courses they wish to study.

All course information will be available on the Mackie Academy website under the "Information" tab and then in the "Parents and Carers" section. If you cannot access this information please contact the school office and we will ensure a physical copy of the relevant materials is sent to you in the post.

The aim of the learning experience at Mackie Academy is to prepare each young person to participate in life beyond school. It is important, that they develop personal qualities and skills which will continue to be of value and the school will provide experiences in addition to academic courses which are aimed at developing such skills and interests. All pupils are encouraged to develop this element of their study as they move through the senior phase and have greater flexibility in their timetable.

In general S4 and S5 pupils will follow a full programme of academic studies – six or seven options in S4 and five options in S5. However, where relevant, a degree of flexibility is possible if it aids the learning, attainment and achievement of an individual. The number of subjects chosen reflects what will be required of pupils if they choose to go into particular pathways post school e.g. Higher Education or work related learning. In S6 there is a greater degree of flexibility which reflects the different opportunities pupils may be preparing for when they leave school but we would expect pupils to study a minimum of three subjects.

The Senior School plays an important role in Mackie Academy and the wider community. As role models for our younger pupils we expect every pupil to take on responsibilities alongside their academic studies so that when they leave us – whether that is the end of S4, S5 or S6 – they are fully prepared for the demands of the modern world. Further details on this will be made available to pupils through the induction process in June 2016.

**"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world"**

Nelson Mandela

## WHAT MACKIE ACADEMY WILL DO FOR YOU

As part of the Home-School Partnership Agreement the school will:

- Help you to progress in subjects that you have already studied in the Broad General Education (S1-3) and experience new subject areas found only in the Senior Phase of the school.
- Help you to become clearer about your interests, aptitudes and career aspirations so that this can become a reality for you in the future.
- Develop your subject specialist skills, depending on your career aspirations, through as broad a choice of subjects and levels as we can offer.
- Help you to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing as key themes which are crucial to your success in the future.
- Allow and aid you to develop an ability to think critically, to plan and organise work and carry it through to completion, to judge the quality of your work and identify ways of improving it.
- Support you in developing increasing independence and responsibility alongside key qualities such as:
  - A respect for yourself and for others
  - A sense of responsibility towards others and to your environment
  - A commitment to learn
  - A sense of belonging to and a willingness to participate in the life of the school and its community.
- Staff provide support by helping you to identify your interests, strengths, needs and career aspirations. They will help you in the decision making process by looking at all the data surrounding your attainment so far so that you make the right choices for the future.
- By providing the range of courses and levels which we do, we expect you to accept that you have certain responsibilities relating to yourself, your relationship with others and to the life of the school.

As senior pupils at Mackie Academy the school has high expectations around how you can develop yourself as an individual and as a role model for the younger pupils.

- We want you to have high expectations of what you will achieve in your studies by setting yourself challenging targets, and not being satisfied by just doing enough
- We want you to give the commitment to your education that will result in you achieving the best you possibly can.
- We want you to persevere to achieve your goals; failure is acceptable as it is part of the learning process.
- Take more responsibility for your future; you reap what you sow.
- Think about how you can contribute to the community of Mackie Academy and how your behaviours reflect on that community.
- Set an example to younger pupils by modelling good behaviours and showing respect to them at all times.
- Work at maintaining positive relationships with pupils, staff and home where at all possible; this has a significant impact on your ability to succeed.
- Participate in the range of experiences which are offered to you – think about what you can learn from these experiences.

**“If you don’t design your own life plan, chances are you will fall into someone else’s plan. And guess what they have planned for you? Not much.”**

Jim Rohn  
American Businessman

## GUIDANCE ON MAKING SUBJECT CHOICES IN THE SENIOR PHASE

You should discuss your subject choices with as many people as possible – subject staff, guidance teachers, parents and carers, siblings, family friends – the more people you ask and get their opinions of the greater the chance you will make the right decisions. Every pupil in S3, S4 and S5 will be given the opportunity to have a 1:1 appointment with their guidance teacher and parent(s) present to discuss their subject choices in advance of making any final decisions.

You may wish to consider the following:

**If you have a clear idea of your career aspirations**, you should check which subjects at which levels you must study for particular pathways or for going straight into a particular career. This will then determine to a large extent which subjects you follow.

**If you are unsure what you want to do when you leave school**, you should keep all your options open and opt for subjects which will give breadth to your curriculum. Think about subjects which you are good at, enjoy studying and therefore, are likely to achieve well at. It is also worthwhile thinking about key skills which you may need to develop and how particular subjects may help you with these.

**If you are experiencing difficulty in deciding which subjects to do**, staff will be able to advise you, especially your PT Pupil Support and Attainment. At each stage of your education when considering subject options, you should keep in mind the principle of progression - always aim to go further than you did before. If you or your parents wish to have a wider discussion about career pathways then please liaise with your PT Pupil Support and Attainment who can direct you to the Careers Service through Skills Development Scotland.

**Consult the recommended entry levels** for the level of study in each of the subjects which you are considering. These recommended entry levels are identified by each subject team, based on professional judgement and experience of what is required to achieve success at that level.

### Number of Choices

S4 pupils will choose six subjects, two of which must be English and Maths. For the remaining four choices pupils can choose what best fits their needs. Whether a pupil is entered for National 2, National 3, National 4 or National 5 levels will be determined by the progression a pupil has made through the Broad General Education (S1-S3) as well as progress made in S4.

S5 pupils will choose five certificate courses although this can be reviewed for individual circumstances. All pupils study Personal and Social Education, Physical Education and have time devoted to the development of their enrichment programme and study skills.

S6 pupils will choose a minimum of three certificate courses although this number would only be anticipated where Advanced Higher study was a significant part of a pupil's curriculum. All pupils study Personal and Social Education whilst having a degree of flexibility around their study time and when they are required to be in school. This is part of the preparation for pupils leaving school and heading out into the world of work.

Enrichment activities will provide pupils with a broad educational experience sought after by employers and further/higher education establishments. This can include volunteering, first aid and mentoring.

**“Success or failure depends more upon attitude than upon capacity; successful people act as though they have accomplished or are enjoying something. Soon it becomes a reality. Act, look, feel successful, conduct yourself accordingly, and you will be amazed at the positive results.”**

William James  
Philosopher

## CHANGES TO NATIONAL 5 QUALIFICATIONS IN 2017-18

Following the Deputy First Minister's announcement in September regarding changes to assessment in National Courses, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) have been working with subject specialists from across the teaching profession and are now in a position to share some more information on what the changes will be for individual subjects.

The removal of units and unit assessments means that there is a need to strengthen the course assessments to maintain and protect the integrity, breadth and standards of National Courses.

For each National 5 course, the changes have resulted in one or more of the following:

- extension of the existing question paper
- extension / modification of the existing item of coursework
- a new question paper
- a new item of coursework

Further information on what this means for pupils in terms of the examination and coursework weighting for specific subjects can be found on our website at:

<http://mackie.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/senior-phase-pathways/>

It is really important that pupils and parents take this into consideration when looking at options in the Senior Phase as pupils should make choices based on their strengths as much as possible. It is important to look at how much of a course is examined through a written paper and how much of a final mark can be obtained through coursework or a practical assessment.

Further changes to Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications are planned for 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively.

## RECOGNISING POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENT (RPA)

Currently this system supports candidates who have been unsuccessful in gaining an A-D grade at National 5 by allowing them to gain National 4 retrospectively i.e. once the exam results are published.

Due to the removal of the units from National 5 qualifications from 2017-18 onwards this system will no longer operate. What this means is if a pupil does not get an A-D grade in their National 5 qualification they will gain no qualification at all at that time.

So what does this mean for pupils at Mackie Academy? It means that the school will keep doing what it is doing – tracking and monitoring pupils effectively so that when the time comes to make a decision about what level they are presented at it is the correct level for the pupil at that time to allow progression in the subject should they wish to continue with it the following year. The school has an excellent track record over the past three years regarding our levels of entry for pupils in the external examinations and we will continue to work in partnership with pupils and parents to ensure we get it right for every child.

## CHANGES TO THE GRADE SCALE AT NATIONAL 5

The Assessment and National Qualifications Group are currently looking at an extension of the grade scale to reflect the changes being made to National 5 qualifications. No decision has been made about this and the SQA are keen to reiterate that it will not affect standards for a pass at A-D grade at National 5.

**“When you go to the mountains, you see them and you admire them. In a sense, they give you a challenge, and you try to express that challenge by climbing them.”**

Edmund Hillary (first successful ascent of Everest)

## **MODERN LANGUAGES: THE SCOTTISH LANGUAGES BACCALAUREATE**

This qualification provides,

“a challenging and rewarding experience for learners in S5 & S6 who are able to cope with the demands of study at Higher and Advanced Higher level.” (SQA)

### Aims:

- To promote languages as a valued and important area for study and employment
- To raise the status and value of S6 and motivate learners in their last year of school
- To provide qualifications which are valued for entry to higher education
- To provide a bridge between school and higher education / employment
- To encourage collaboration between schools, further education institutions & employers
- To encourage greater coherence in study in fifth & sixth years
- To allow learners to relate and apply learning to realistic contexts
- To enable learners to compete in the international job market
- To develop the generic skills needed for learning, employment and life (SQA)

### The mandatory components are 2 Advanced Highers and 1 Higher in Languages:

- Two different Modern or Classical Language courses, with at least one at Advanced Higher.
- English at either Higher or Advanced Higher.
- An Interdisciplinary Project

### The Interdisciplinary Project:

Designed to develop skills that employers & universities are looking for such as communication & presentation skills, information management skills, independent thinking skills and collaborative working skills which are needed just as much as subject knowledge and specialist skills ( SQA )

### Possible Combinations we can offer at Mackie: (Some qualifications gained in S5 and others in S6)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Advanced Higher French<br>Advanced Higher German<br>Higher English<br>Interdisciplinary Project (IP) | 2. Advanced Higher German<br>Advanced Higher English<br>Higher French<br>IP  |
| 3. Advanced Higher French<br>Advanced Higher English<br>Higher Italian<br>IP                            | 4. Advanced Higher German<br>Advanced Higher English<br>Higher Italian<br>IP |
| 5. Advanced Higher French<br>Advanced Higher English<br>Higher German<br>IP                             | 6. Advanced Higher Italian<br>Advanced Higher English<br>Higher German<br>IP |
| 7. Advanced Higher Italian<br>Advanced Higher English<br>Higher French<br>IP                            | 8. Advanced Higher Italian<br>Advanced Higher French<br>Higher English<br>IP |
| 9. Advanced Higher Italian<br>Advanced Higher German<br>Higher English<br>IP                            |  |

N.B. A separate certificate is awarded in addition to the Scottish Qualifications Certificate

The Baccalaureate is worth 2 SQA unit credits & 16 SCQF points at Level 7.

It can be awarded at Pass or Distinction and graded A, B or C

Distinction = 'A' in one Advanced Higher, 'A'; in one other component, B in all others.

If you require any further information on this qualification please see Mrs Smith, Faculty Head of Modern Languages.

## WIDER ACHIEVEMENT AT MACKIE ACADEMY

It is important for a young person to think carefully about their academic options that they will study whilst in the Senior Phase. However, in the competitive market for Higher and Further Education, alongside job applications, it is equally important that our young people think about their wider achievements in school and outside.

The school speaks to our pupils on a regular basis about the “advert” that they are making for themselves:

What does it say about you?

How does it make you stand out from the crowd?

Are employers going to think that you are someone they want to interview for a post?

As pupils move through the Senior Phase more and more opportunities will become available to them which will allow them to gain experiences that develop valuable skills for the workplace. Opportunities are wide ranging but what we would ask pupils to consider are the top skills that employers are looking for and how well prepared they are in these key areas:

**Communication: 90%**

**Teamwork: 88%**

**Customer Service: 72%**

**Problem Solving: 67%**

**Computer Literacy and IT: 66%**

THE TOP FIVE SKILLS  
EMPLOYERS WANT IN  
THEIR EMPLOYEES  
(Aberdeen Chamber of  
Commerce)

If pupils know or believe that they need to develop their skills in one or more of these areas then wider achievement can offer the ideal vehicle for this through:

- Participation in extra-curricular school based activities
- Participation in community based activities
- Work Experience
- Self-led learning

All of the above often require our young people to take themselves out of their comfort zone which can be scary and / or challenging. However, if a pupil wants their advert to stand out from the crowd then wider achievement is something they need to consider alongside their academic progress.

Mrs Davidson, PT Pupil Support and Attainment Team for Dunnottar, co-ordinates the programme in school and is currently developing the suite of qualifications that pupils can gain in support of their wider achievement through SQA. For further details please see her.

**“The further you get away from yourself, the more challenging it is. Not to be in your comfort zone is great fun.”**

Benedict Cumberbatch