**English Course Outline - Higher**

**Criteria and Expectations**

Pupils who have achieved an A – C grade at N5 are given the opportunity to attempt work of a Higher level, but this is carefully monitored throughout the year and pupils may be recommended to attempt the course over two years.

Although the course structure is similar to that of N5, pupils must be prepared for a noticeable increase to both workload and the quality expected at this level. A greater degree of sophistication of language skills both in terms of identification and application is required. Lessons are more intense and there is a noticeable increase in the approach to the course in terms of the independence and skills levels required.

Our presentation policy for Higher is made on an individual pupil basis and decisions concerning final levels at made at various points in the year depending on specific circumstances.

Although many pupils require Higher English to support their applications for Further Education, they should be clear that studying at this level makes it a specialist subject and that an appreciation and understanding of literature and its relevant techniques is required. Personal reading of both fiction and non-fiction is highly recommended to aid study.

We take into account: work ethic, homework submission, ability to meet deadlines, quality of work produced, attendance and evidence of independent study and revision. These elements are used along with assessment results to determine suitability for progression to the Advanced Higher course in S6.

**Assessments**

**Internal:** Reading, writing, talking and listening skills are assessed in a variety of contexts. These are used to determine suitability for the Higher course as well as identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The RUAE paper (1 hour) tests understanding and analysis skills and is closely linked in format to the paper in the final exam. Writing is usually assessed through Folio drafts – pupils MUST submit examples of work which pass Higher level before the SQA deadline date.

**External:**

Paper 1: RUAE (Reading paper) – Two unseen non-fiction passages and a selection of questions testing understanding, analysis and evaluation skills – 1 hour 30 minutes (30 marks)

Paper 2: i) Textual Analysis – Scottish Texts which will have been studied in class. Series of questions which test language skills and understanding of the text. (20 marks)

ii) Critical Reading – To write one critical essay based on literature studied over the year. This tests not just their ability to remember their text in depth but their writing style and ability. (20 marks – 1hour 30 minutes for both sections)

Portfolio: Two writing pieces are sent to the SQA to be externally assessed. This tests the ability to plan, develop and edit work as well as being able to meet set deadlines. (up to 1300 words each - 30 marks in total)

1. Creative/reflective
2. Persuasive/discursive

Pupils can work on these independently throughout the year but evidence must retained to determine authenticity. Teachers are limited in the amount of support they are allowed to offer due to strict SQA guidelines. Pupils are not allowed to work on these pieces with Tutors or be given extensive parental support.

Assessment and submission dates for the Portfolio will be shared with pupils and parents via Show My Homework, the English Faculty website and the school assessment calendar.

**English Faculty Results and Ethos:**

The English Faculty at Mackie Academy prides itself not only in it highly successful results but also in its approach to attainment. We are aspirational in our desire that all pupils should be given the opportunity to attain their potential and we spend a lot of time personalising the learning paths of pupils to best meet their needs. As such for the last two years we have had a 91% pass rate at Higher with over 68% of the students gaining an A or B grade. This has been possible through the knowledge and experience of staff but also due to pupils following our advice and recommendations as to which particular level they should be presented for.