

There are a number of places that parents can find advice and information about the Broad General Education (BGE) and Senior Phase. **Parentzone Scotland** has information about BGE and the **Senior Phase**.

The National Parent Forum of Scotland has subject-by-subject guides; **Nationals in a Nutshell** and clear and concise guides for **Highers**; **Highers in a Nutshell**. The **Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)** has information for parents on national qualifications and Highers.

How will my son/daughter be supported in deciding his/her subjects and level of courses as he/she moves into senior phase? How will I be involved?

Decisions will be based on a number of factors. Of main importance will be the needs, interests, current performance and aspirations of the individual learner, which will inform any decisions that are made, including planning the number and level of subjects taken during the senior phase. Your son/daughter will be supported in such decisions in a number of ways. Information in profiles and reports, plus input from you as a parent, school staff and Skills Development Scotland will probably all be part of the decision making process. An important point to stress is the 3-18 nature of **Curriculum for Excellence** and, therefore, S4 onwards should be viewed as a continuation from the Broad General Education and not as discrete years.

My son/daughter keeps talking about progression routes. What does this mean?

To increase achievement and raise attainment for all, schools and their partners are developing the curriculum in ways that provide flexibility as learners progress from the Broad General Education and through the senior phase. Schools and their partners have recognised that this requires a flexible approach to progression in order to build on a learner's knowledge, understanding, attributes and capabilities. This might include a variety of learning and training both in school and involving different partners including Colleges, Skills Development Scotland, Community Learning and Development (CLD), Voluntary Sector, etc.

Why has my son/daughter been told to look at senior phase over three years and plan for this?

With the emphasis on progression in learning under Curriculum for Excellence, learners are developing a clearer understanding of their aspirations beyond school. With this in mind, they should look at senior phase as a progression from their work in the Broad General Education and a lead-in to their post school destination, whenever this might happen. Therefore, it is important to plan for a senior phase which will support this and give them the best possible chance of maximising their overall performance (academic qualifications and other achievements) in school and realise their post-school aspirations. Some learners will only plan for one year in school but, increasingly, learners will be planning for a senior phase of two or three years. Naturally, these plans should be seen only as a guide for the future. They may well change as your son/daughter progresses through the senior phase and he/she reflects on their performance and/or their plans for beyond school.

My son/daughter is working at fourth level in aspects of his/her work. What does this mean?

A key principle of curriculum design is to support progression from age 3-18, with Curriculum for Excellence levels viewed as a scale providing continuous learning experiences. Within S1 to S3 it is important to ensure that all children and young people receive their entitlement to experience well-paced progression in their learning across all curriculum areas, up to and including third level. Most learners will progress to fourth level in many aspects of their learning before the end of S3. The opportunity to challenge learners in open-ended ways means that there is no ceiling to achievement at fourth level.

Individuals will progress towards fourth level experiences and outcomes at different rates and, as a consequence, S1 to S3 curriculum frameworks should be designed to provide flexible progression routes to meet the needs of all young people. This will include, for example, meeting the needs of those wishing to specialise in subjects and learn at greater depth.

Fourth level should provide opportunities to develop greater independence and resilience in learners as well as occasions to practise a range of subject specific skills. Indeed, through the enhancement of knowledge, understanding and related skills, fourth level experiences and outcomes can be viewed as a bridge spanning the Broad General Education and senior phase.

My son/daughter is exceptionally talented in one subject. Should he/she sit National 5 in S3?

It is expected that learners will undertake examinations in the senior phase in S4-S6 rather than in S3. However, for very exceptional cases, and where it is clearly in the interests of the learner, it is possible to undertake examinations in S3. This should not be undertaken lightly and should be agreed through dialogue involving your son/daughter, yourself, the school and perhaps others such as Skills Development Scotland. It is vital that learner's needs, interests, abilities and aspirations inform fully any decisions that are made. This is to ensure that the decision genuinely supports progression in learning and that future progression routes are clear. In addition, it is important that any such decision does not get in the way of the learner's entitlement to a Broad General Education across the curriculum or their access to other activities which support their wider learning, development and enjoyment.

Will the work my son/daughter has done in the Broad General Education be of any use as he/she moves into senior phase?

Yes, it certainly will. In the progression from Broad General Education to senior phase it is important that learners build on their previous experiences. This is no different from the progression that has happened for a learner from age 3. Curriculum for Excellence needs to be seen as a 3-18 process and teachers should work to ensure progression in learning throughout this learning journey.

Should my son/daughter stop his/her activities out with school when he/she is in S4 to focus on his/her exams?

One of the key strengths of Curriculum for Excellence is that we are aiming to develop all our young people to be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Another dimension is that Learning should not just be seen as what happens in class or in an examination but also the learning that goes on across both in schools and in the learning that takes place out with school. These aspirations apply from 3-18. The examination subjects being studied in the senior phase will contribute to this and it is important that learners commit plenty of time to this work. However, they do also need to continue to develop other interests and skills and so there needs to be common sense and careful decisions made in the allocation of time. Moreover, this needs to be kept under review as, for example, at times of heavy workload in examination subjects it might be wise to give more time to them in the short term. Finally, it should be kept in mind that involvement in a wider set of activities could improve rather than reduce examination performance.

My son/daughter has to complete a profile at the end of S3. Why is this and will it continue in S4?

Profiling is an important process and the Profile itself is an important document. Learners produce a P7 profile and, through the profiling process, schools are continuing to build on this profile throughout the Broad General Education. The learner has ownership of the Profile and it contains the information that they choose to share with others.

The profiling process supports, and is supported by children understanding their learning. It involves learners in reflecting on their learning in all classes, having learner conversations with a key adult and the creation of the S3 profile, which captures evidence of learning. This process encourages the development of deeper reflection on learners' progress in order to help prepare them for the senior phase. Additionally, the development within learning at fourth level means that greater responsibility can be placed with learners themselves in terms of profiling. Increasingly, schools are extending profiling into the senior phase as the importance of learners being clear on their learning applies from 3-18. It is now appreciated that this is a process which benefits learners post school after leaving school, including when studying at university. Information about profiling can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](#).

My son/daughter seems to have responsibility for assessing some of his/her own work and that of his/her peers. Surely this is the teacher's job and I assume the teacher will assess more in the senior phase?

At times, teachers will certainly assess learners' work but in order to be able to assess your own work or that of a peer, you need to be able to understand the work and understand what represents acceptable quality of work. Self and peer assessment are important skills which can be developed, in very basic ways, from age 3 and further developed in secondary schools. This approach can actually improve learning and, for example, allows the learner to hear explanations from other learners or explain their own thinking/understanding to other learners. Teachers spend time with learners to build up their skills in self and peer assessment and checking their understanding so that they are then able to benefit fully from the process. More information can be found on [Parentzone Scotland](#).