



The Senior Phase

Making choices in S4 for S5

6 January 2026

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Depute Head Teacher



Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

The progression pathways within the Senior Phase are outlined below:

National Qualifications

National 3 » National 4 » National 5

National 5 » Higher

Higher » Advanced Higher

Non-NQ Courses

Level 4 » Level 5

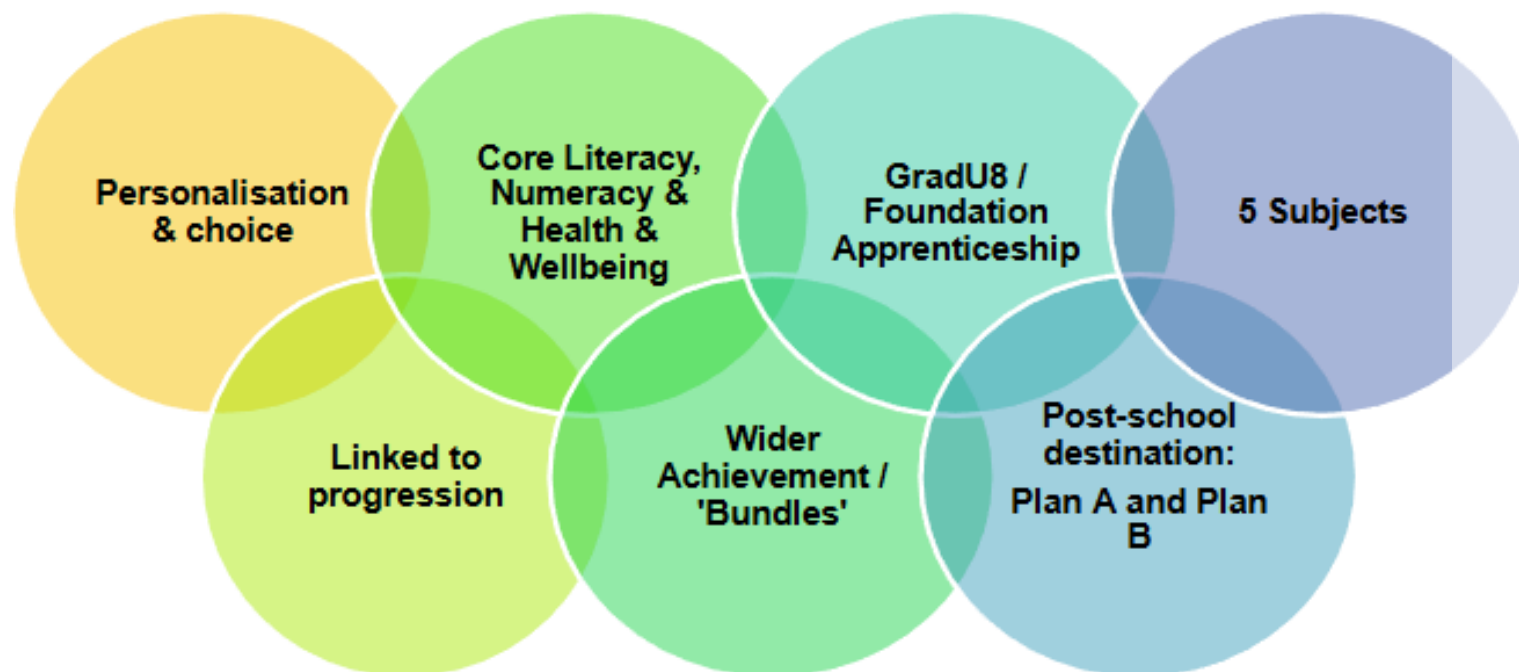
Level 5 » Level 6

Level 6 » college/apprenticeships/training

Pupils can select all subjects from either pathway or a mix of subjects across pathways.



S5 Curriculum





S5 Curriculum Structure

Curriculum Structure

- Five chosen NQ subjects of six periods
- Two periods of Physical Education (core)
- One period of PSHE (core)
- Registration

Levels available

- National 5 (not as many subjects offered at N5 as in S4)
- Higher
- SCQF Level 5 / 6 courses



Choosing subjects

- Know your current progress / expected attainment
- Fully explore the range of pathways and courses available
- Be aspirational and do not set false limits on your potential
- Play to your strengths and interests
- Be open minded to alternative modes of learning and routes
- Know more about the labour market trends and job roles
- What will you need in your portfolio of qualifications on leaving school?



Choosing Subjects

Recommended progression into Higher subjects:

- 5 Highers - almost all National 5 at A/B grades
- 3+ Highers - almost all National 5 passes, some at A/B
- 1+ Highers - 1 or more National 5 pass



Mathematics pathway

In S5, mathematics has two pathways:

- **Mathematics** (National 5, Higher)
- **Applications of Mathematics** (National 5, *Higher)

* Higher Applications is more computer/spreadsheet based and focuses on statistical data. Pupils complete a project as part of the qualification.



Higher Biology

There are two different Higher Biology options:

- **Biology**
- **Human Biology**

Higher Biology is a progression from National 5 and links to Advanced Higher.

Human Biology is a new course that expands on 1 unit of National 5 and does not align with Advanced Higher.

It is **not true** that a pupil thinking of studying medicine must study Human Biology, but Advanced Higher Biology is often a conditional entry requirement.



Additional Courses S5

Personal Finance + Barista (Level 5)

Cyber Security (Level 5/6)

Environmental Science (Higher)

RMPS (Higher)

Scottish Studies (Level 5/6)

Sports Development (Level 6)

Laboratory Skills (National 5) + Scientific Technology (Level 6)

Mental Health and Wellbeing (Level 6)

Exercise and Fitness (Level 6)

Accounts (Higher)

Human Biology (Higher)

Games Development (Level 6)

Practical Metalwork (National 5)

Please note, the above courses will only run if there is sufficient uptake

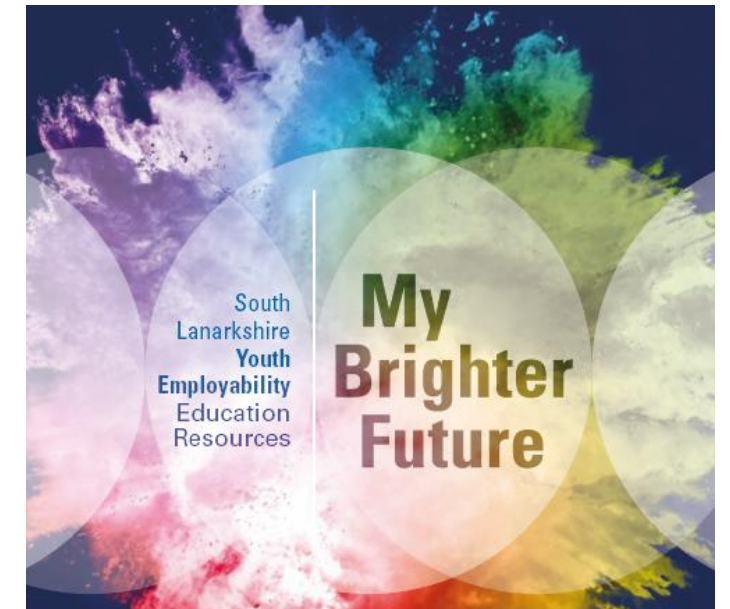


Vocational courses

GRADU8 college programme – Friday out of school per week studying for a SCQF Level 5 qualification in:

Beauty Skills, Construction, Early Education & Childcare, Engineering Skills, Hair & Barbering, Health & Social Care, Hospitality, Make-up Artistry, Uniformed & Emergency Services, Sport & Recreation and Winter leavers.

GradU8 Works programme – pupils will access a local work experience placement from September to Easter in an employment sector that is of interest. All placements will be risk assessed and have an allocated supervisor.





Vocational courses cont...

Foundation Apprenticeship - attendance is usually 2 afternoons over S5/S6 or 2 days in S6 at South Lanarkshire or Glasgow based colleges:

Accountancy, Business Skills, Children and Young People, Engineering (Civil and Mechanical), Engineering Systems, Creative Digital Media, Financial Services, Health and Food Science, ICT Hardware, ICT Software, Scientific Technologies, Social Services and Health Care.

Pupils can get more information on these courses by speaking to their Pupil Support (guidance) teacher who has a detailed brochure on all programmes listed above.



Key dates

Curricular & Careers Evening – Tuesday 6 January 2026
(parents & carers)

Subject Information Session – w/c 26 January 2026
(pupils only)

Full Report Issued – Tuesday 27 January 2026

Options Interviews – w/c 2 February 2026
(pupils only)

Option Form Deadline – Friday 20 February 2026



Options form

- Pupils will be given an options form when they meet with their Pupil Support teacher
- Pupils take the form home to discuss with their parents.
- Parents should sign the form and note any changes.
- Pupils return their form to their Pupil Support teacher.
- Year Heads upload subject choices on system and timetable creation begins.
- Due to staffing and timetable constraints, it is not always possible to guarantee subject choices. Any issues/changes will be discussed with pupils and parents. If there is a solution, we will do our best to find it!!



Further information

Detailed course information on all subjects available in S4, including GRADU8, will be available on the school website before 14 January 2026. If you would prefer a printed copy, this is available at the school office.

The following websites should be familiar to pupils through PSHE and can help with the subject choices process:

Skills Development Scotland: <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/>

My World of Work website: <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/>

SQA – A to Z of National Qualification subjects: <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/45777.html>



Here to help

Pupil Support team:

Avondale	Mrs Smith
Dungavel	Mrs Neil / Mr McNulty
Kype	Ms Harvey
Lethame	Ms McGinlay
Loudoun	Mrs Breddy

Year Head:

Mrs Kane