



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2018

With the new academic year well underway, I would like to say a big welcome back to everyone and extend a particularly warm welcome to all of the pupils and parents/carers of our new S1 cohort. After a long summer break, it is vital that we all get back into the routine and structure of school life as quickly as possible. This will allow our pupils to ensure they are making progress this year. As always, it is important that we work together to support and challenge our learners as they work towards their individual targets this year.

SQA Exam Results 2018

Senior pupils received their SQA exam results on Tuesday 7 August. Once again Dumfries High School pupils have produced very good results in fourth, fifth and sixth year. I would like to congratulate pupils on their achievements. I would also like to express my thanks to Dumfries High School staff for the commitment and support provided throughout the year to all pupils and also to the parents and carers whose support plays a pivotal role in ensuring students are fully prepared. It is important that our new S4/5/6 year groups focus on the year ahead allowing further exam success.

School Uniform

It is fantastic to see the overwhelming majority of our pupils returning to school with uniform in line with the standards and expectations set out at the end of term before the summer break. Our pupils look incredibly smart and there have been numerous comments in the community about how good they look. I would like to thank all of the parents/carers who continue to support us with this. Working together in this manner can help us all to raise standards in the Dumfries High School community.

Staff Update

A number of new staff join Dumfries High School this year and I would like to extend a warm welcome to them all as they join our team.

Callum Hyslop (PE) and Susan Farquhar (Home Economics) join us as permanent members of staff. David Kerr (Modern Languages) and Robbie Gordon (Physics) join us on a temporary basis.

Jessie Burgess, Lee Van Waklen and Maureen Kelly come to Dumfries High School as Classroom Assistants and become part of the Removing Barriers to Learning team.

Callum Waugh (PE), Lizzie Smithard (History), Natalie McColl (Business Studies) and Hayley Johnstone (Biology) are Probationer teachers with us this year.

Holly Flint (English) returns to Dumfries High School after her recent maternity leave.

DHS 'House' Contacts

All pupils at Dumfries High School belong to a 'House' - Buccleuch, Caerlaverock or Devorgilla. If you have any concerns or queries the following people are the relevant contacts:

	Buccleuch	Caerlaverock	Devorgilla
Pupil Support	Debbie Holmes	Debbie Downie	Jan Kilmurry
Depute Headteacher	Billy Davidson	Daniella Hogg	Kenny Pullen

School Improvement Plan Priorities

Each year every school has to create an improvement plan which identifies areas that the school will focus on for the year ahead. The priorities for Dumfries High School this year are as follows: (i) learning and teaching (ii) behaviour management (iii) self-evaluation.

Although these are fairly wide-reaching aspects of improvement, they will be broken down into many different areas that will remain a focus throughout the year.

How to Pass Evening (S4/5/6)

Our *'How to Pass Evening'* this year takes place on Monday 1 October. This event is specifically designed to give information to parents/carers of all pupils in fourth, fifth and sixth year about the courses that they are studying this year and importantly, how you can support your child with their learning at home.

This is an extremely important evening in the school calendar and goes a long way to ensuring each and every pupil in the senior school can achieve success in the final exams next May. All parents/carers and pupils in S4/5/6 should attend this event. Further information will be issued in due course, but please make a note of the date to ensure you can attend.

Prelim exams for all pupils in S4/5/6 take place between Monday 14 January 2019 and Friday 25 January 2019.

S1/2/3 Information Evenings

Information evenings have been planned for the parents/carers of pupils in first, second and third year. These evenings are an opportunity to pass on information about the year ahead, the requirements of pupils in each year group and also look at ways in which parents/carers can support pupils at home with their learning. Each evening will begin at 6.30pm and the dates are as follows:

- S1 Information Evening – Tuesday 28 August
- S2 Information Evening – Thursday 30 August
- S3 Information Evening – Tuesday 11 September

Your attendance at the evenings would be greatly appreciated.

Behaviour/Standards

The standards and expectations that we have of our pupils have been addressed recently during House assemblies. School should be a place of fun and enjoyment; it is also a place of learning. Punctuality, uniform, behaviour at all times, in and around the school, litter, homework and being prepared for classes are among some of the areas addressed with pupils ensuring they are clear about the expectations we have of them.

High standards in these areas will allow all pupils to engage and focus fully on learning activities without disruption. Pupils who make choices not to work towards meeting such standards will be dealt with appropriately and parents/carers contacted as required.

Latecoming

Our school day begins at 8.50am and pupils should ensure they are in registration by this time. Morning registration finishes at 9am each day, during this important information and announcements will be shared with pupils. This is also a time for pupils to focus and prepare themselves for the lessons they are about to attend. Please ensure your child is in school no later than 8.50am to attend morning registration.

Data Capture Forms

It is important that all information we hold in school relating to each individual pupil is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Data Capture Forms and various consent forms were sent home recently. Any outstanding forms should be returned to the school office as soon as possible.

Mobile Phones/Headphones

Mobile phones and/or Headphones should be not visible or used by pupils in classrooms or corridors when at school. When pupils are using mobile phones they are not engaged in learning and this can cause distractions, disruption and sometimes danger for themselves and others. All pupils have been reminded of this. Pupils may be asked to hand their mobile phone to a member of staff if they fail to follow this clear instruction.

Website

Our new school website has been under construction over recent months and I am delighted to say that it has now been completed. Hopefully, this will give you lots of information about Dumfries High School. The website will be updated regularly and will be used as a way of communicating with parents/carers and the wider community. Your suggestions as to how further improvements could be made to the website would be most welcome; please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Free School Meals/Clothing Grants/EMA

Forms for parents/carers wishing to apply for free school meals and/or a clothing grant can be collected from the main school office. An electronic version is also available on our website or at the following address: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15246/School-clothing-grants>.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) forms and guidance notes are also available at the main office. In relation to EMA, a fresh application must be made each academic year and submitted with all documentation needed to complete the assessment.

Wider Achievement

As a school, we are very keen to be kept informed of pupil successes both in and out of school in order that we can share and celebrate this with staff, other pupils and the wider Dumfries High School community. If your son/daughter has undertaken a particular challenge, completed something amazing or had success in an activity outwith school, please get in touch and let us know.

Use of Social Media

Staff at Dumfries High School regularly go above-and-beyond to provide opportunities and experiences for pupils to ensure that their time at school is both enjoyable and successful. Outwith the normal school day, staff provide an array of study support sessions, run various clubs and other extra-curricular experiences including numerous sporting opportunities. Trips after school, during weekends and even during holiday periods are offered to all pupils. All of these are offered by staff within their own time; they are under no contractual obligation to do so.

It is therefore disappointing when unhelpful comments which are often factually incorrect are made on social media. Posting comments of this nature in a public forum may prompt staff to remove their gesture of goodwill and decide not to undertake unpaid overtime for after school events.

Therefore, in the best interest of our learners, I urge all parents/carers and their families to consider the impact of putting negative and sometimes hurtful statements on social media. As always, any parent/carer who has a genuine concern or suggestion for improvement, please contact the school directly so that your views can be heard and addressed in an appropriate forum.

Parent Council Meeting

The first Parent Council meeting of the new school year will take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 12 September. We will meet in the school library. A strong representation from the parents/carers of our pupils can help to ensure we work together to enhance learning opportunities for all of our pupils within Dumfries High School. Meetings usually last no longer than an hour and a half; it would be fantastic to have more parents/carers being part of this group.

Dates for the Diary

Tuesday 28 August	S1 Parents' Information Evening – 6.30pm in Main Hall
Thursday 30 August	S2 Parents' Information Evening – 6.30pm in Main Hall
Monday 3 September – Thursday 6 September	Paris Trip (Art/Drama)
Monday 3 September – Friday 7 September	Battlefields Trip (History)
Tuesday 11 September	S3 Parents' Information Evening – 6.30pm in Main Hall
Wednesday 12 September	Parent Council Meeting – 6.30pm
Thursday 13 September	S4/5/6 'Planning for your Future' Event – 6.30pm in the Main Hall
Thursday 20 September	S1 Caerlaverock Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Thursday 27 September	S1 Devorgilla Trip – Galloway Activity Trip
Monday 1 October	S4/5/6 'How to Pass Evening' – 6.30pm in the Main Hall
Wednesday 3 October – Saturday 6 October	London Trip (Music)
Thursday 4 October	S1 Buccleuch Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Friday 12 October	S1/2/3 Tracking Reports issued
Friday 12 October	End of Term
Monday 29 October	New Term begins
Friday 16 November	S4/5/6 Interim Reports issued
Friday 7 December	S2 Full Reports issued
Friday 21 December	End of Term
Monday 7 January 2019	New Term begins

It has been a very positive start to the new academic year. With your help and support, we can continue to work together to ensure our learners have a successful and enjoyable year.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at school if you have a concern, you would like to share something or simply pass on some information.

On behalf of all staff at Dumfries High School, I would like to thank you for your continued support.

