



NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2021

Firstly, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and trust that you have all had a nice break over the festive period; it may now feel like a long time since the Christmas holiday as we enter another period of lockdown. I am sure that like me, no one was expecting to be starting the new term with us requiring to once again be engaging in online learning with our pupils and families. Nonetheless, by working together and supporting each other we will get through this

Extra Pupil Holiday

As advised by the Scottish Government, the school term now officially begins for all pupils on Monday 11 January 2021 with Wednesday 6, Thursday 7 and Friday 8 January this week being given as an extra holiday. School has been open this week to provide childcare for Keyworkers children and vulnerable pupils; this will be the case next week also.

Details of how to register for childcare as from Monday 18 January will be issued early next week by the local authority. However, please note that this is only for the children of Keyworkers and vulnerable children. Education Services staff will be monitoring requests for childcare to ensure this is adhered to in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

Online Learning

This will begin on Monday 11 January for all pupils in S1-S6. Pupils in S1/2/3 will be allocated tasks and assignments using the Show my Homework platform; pupils in S4/5/6 will be allocated tasks and assignments in MS Teams. All pupils must check these means of communication on a daily basis. Information to support online learning has been emailed directly to all parents/carers and also pupils in all year groups earlier this week.

As from Monday 11 January, it is vital that pupils in all year groups are focused and engaged with their learning. It will be particularly difficult after an extended holiday, but pupils must get back into a structured pattern or routine to help them with their learning and allow further progress. Planning the completion of tasks and assignments set, managing their time, prioritising and noting any deadlines given is vital to ensure pupils do not become engulfed by online learning at home.

Pupils in the Senior Phase who undertake College Academy or Foundation Apprenticeship courses should note that online learning will also begin during week commencing Monday 11 January.

Staff across the school will continue to monitor pupil engagement throughout the duration of this period of online learning; parent/carer communications will take place accordingly to address any issues that may arise. As always, your support at this time is crucial and I would ask you to discuss your child's learning with them on an ongoing basis over the coming weeks.

Senior Prelims/Reporting

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher prelims for pupils in S4/5/6 have been postponed given the current circumstances. Once we have clarity about when we will return to school, we will be able to confirm further arrangements about assessment periods and prelim exams. Thereafter, we will also communicate information about senior reports being issued to parents/carers.

Although prelims are postponed, it is vital that all senior pupils continue with a structured programme of study and revision at home focusing on all course coverage to this point. The turnaround between going back to the school building and undertaking important assessments of such a significant nature may well be very short and pupils must ensure they are fully prepared for this.

S3 Reports

Following the completion of reports for pupils in third year, these have been emailed to parents/carers today. We are trialling emailing reports rather than sending hard copies; I would welcome your thoughts on this change.

Dumfries & Galloway College and Barony College Applications 2021

Pupils in S4/5/6 who are considering an application to either Dumfries & Galloway College or Barony College for courses starting in August/September 2021 should note that applications will open soon. We are awaiting final details, but it is likely that both establishments will commence accepting applications later this month.

House Heads will be available to support pupils in S4/5/6 wishing to complete applications.

Skills Development Scotland (SDS)

At this point of the term, many senior pupils will be considering their options for later in the year. Although Zoe Winpenny, our school Career Advisor cannot offer a face-to-face meeting to provide career information, advice and guidance, SDS staff are still there to help. Many of our senior pupils and parents/carers may require specialist help to finalise future career paths. Please use the following contact details and websites which I hope you find useful:

- Telephone: 01387 – 272500
- Email: zoe.winpenny@sds.co.uk
- myworldofwork.co.uk
- mykidscareer.com

Free School Meals

Providing free school meals and ensuring the welfare and support of our children and young people is a key priority for our council. Due to the ever-changing circumstances of COVID19, I am aware that for some families their financial circumstances may have recently changed. Therefore, I would like to highlight the updated information for Free School Meals available. This link will take you to the school council webpage and includes the links to the online forms and telephone number should you wish to make inquiries. <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals>

Safe Social Media

During a period of lockdown it can lead to a feeling of isolation. At such times, an increased use of social media can help us to feel connected with the outside world. This is especially true of many of our pupils who regularly go on-line to chat with friends. When in school, pupils are regularly reminded about the need to take care and be mindful whilst using social media; pupils must be appropriate at all times.

Could I please remind parents/carers to be vigilant and remind your child that should they receive any unkind or inappropriate communication they should tell you immediately and block the sender. If you are significantly concerned, please contact Police Scotland.

School Contacts

During this period of uncertainty, it is important more than ever that parents/carers and pupils are able to keep in contact with staff at Dumfries High School. Various contact details are listed below to support families during this time:

Head of House Buccleuch – Miss Holmes – gw11holmesdebbie@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Head of House Caerlaverlock – Miss Bryce – gw09brycefiona2@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Head of House Devorgilla – Ms Kilmurry – gw08kilmurryjan01@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Child Protection Coordinator – Mrs Hogg – gw11hoggdaniella@ea.dumgal.sch.uk

Additional contacts if required: Childline – 0800 1111 Social Work – 030 33 33 3000

Please get in touch with the school if you have any queries at all as we begin online learning on Monday. By working together we can continue to support our young people during this challenging time. On behalf of the staff at Dumfries High School, I would like once again to extend the very best of wishes to every pupil and parent/carer within our community.

Take care and stay safe

