



NEWSLETTER JUNE 2020

Return to School in August

As you will be aware from the recent letter from the Director of Education, it is expected that social distancing will have to continue over the next few months meaning that some changes will need to be made to how learning is provided in school on our return in August. In common with other secondary schools in the authority we have been asked to plan for pupils being in two groups, with each group in school for face to face lessons for 50% of the time and engaged in home learning the remaining time when not in school.

Our plans are as follows:

- Pupils in S1-S6* will be divided in to two groups according to surname allowing siblings to be accommodated within the same group: **Group A** – surnames A-J / **Group B** – surnames K-Z
- Pupils attend lessons in school for a 'Long Week' (Mon-Wed) one week followed by a 'Short Week' (Thu-Fri) the next
- Across a fortnight, pupils in each year group will access the full curriculum by following their existing Monday – Friday timetable. Individual pupil timetables will be emailed to pupils and their carers later in the week.

Please see below our schedule for the first term until the October holidays. *Please note this arrangement may change should Scottish Government guidance on social distancing requirements be updated.* You can keep up to date on Dumfries and Galloway Council's plans for the re-opening of schools (including transport and childcare) at <https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/article/21014/Re-opening-of-schools>

	'Long Week'			'Short Week'	
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
w/b 10/08/20	STAFF INSET		Group A	Group B	
w/b 17/08/20	Group A			Group B	
w/b 24/08/20	Group B			Group A	
w/b 31/08/20	Group A			Group B	
w/b 07/09/20	Group B			Group A	
w/b 14/09/20	Group A			Group B	
w/b 21/09/20	Group B			Group A	
w/b 28/09/20	Group A			Group B	
w/b 05/10/20	Group B			Group A	

(*to ensure continuity of classes for pupils, a few pupils in S1 and S2 have been allocated to a group which is not aligned with their surname. Should you have a child in S1 or S2 who falls in to this category we will already have contacted you to confirm which group they have been allocated to)

Staffing Update

Mrs Shona Cowie (Music) who has been a long-standing member of staff at DHS has been successful in securing a permanent position with D&G Council as part of the Education Support team. Mrs Cowie has been undertaking this role on a temporary basis throughout the year; congratulations to Mrs Cowie on her appointment.

Callum Waugh (PE) has secured another teaching position in Holland and will be leaving us at the end of term. We wish Callum well as he departs for pastures new.

Gillian Hunter (Modern Languages) who has been with us on a temporary basis this year will be moving to Edinburgh for the start of next term. Miss Hunter leaves with our best wishes.

Bebhionn Paterson (Music) and Robert Stewart (Physics) have been probationer teachers at DHS this year and both will be moving to new schools to continue their career. I would like to thank them both for their contributions to our school this year.

Jenny Lyon (History) will begin her maternity leave following the summer break and will return later in the academic year. We look forward to hearing of the safe arrival from Ms Lyon in due course.

On behalf of our school community, I would like to thank all of the staff who are leaving DHS at the end of term for the contributions they have made to our school during the time they have been with us. I'm sure we all wish them well as they begin the next chapter in their career. When we return in August, I will update everyone in relation to the new staff members joining the DHS team.

Pupil Timetables

Individual pupil timetables for your child will be emailed in the course of this week. This is the timetable that your child will follow when term begins in August. Please refer to the details on the first page of this newsletter to ensure you are clear about which days your child should attend school in the first instance.

Uniform

Details of the uniform requirement for the start of next session has been emailed to all parents/carers. Given the amount of time pupils have been away from school, it is important that we can work together to once again establish the high standards and expectations that we all have of our pupils. As always, your support in ensuring that every pupil comes to school with the correct and appropriate uniform is very much appreciated. Please check the specific details of the uniform guidelines (also found on the school website) to ensure that every pupil is wearing the correct uniform.

Blazers

As was the case this year, blazers are a compulsory part of school uniform for all pupils in S5 and S6 next session. Details of how to size and order blazers has already been emailed to all parents/carers. Please ensure you order a blazer for your son/daughter if they are returning to school following the summer break.

Academy Uniforms, who provide us with the blazers, have made it clear that they are happy to exchange any blazer that you order if the sizing is perhaps not appropriate when it arrives. In addition, if any parent/carer has a financial difficulty in relation to the purchasing of a school blazer, please contact us to allow us to support you with this.

SQA Exams 2020

During the past few weeks, staff at Dumfries High School have been incredibly busy collating information to send to SQA for pupils in the senior phase who would, under normal circumstances, have undertaken National Qualifications this year. Results for pupils will be issued on Tuesday 4 August. Pupils who wish to receive their results via text or email, must register at www.mysqa.info no later than Tuesday 14 July.

School Materials – Be Ready for the New Term

Can I please ask and encourage all parents/carers to ensure that when the new term begins in August, pupils come to school ready to learn; this includes having all of the necessary equipment to support their progress in lessons. Each pupil should come to school with a well-stocked pencil case with all of the usual materials – pens, pencils, ruler, rubber etc,

Leavers Forms

Ms Kilmurry has communicated with all senior phase pupils who have indicated their intention to leave school and requested that completed leaver forms are returned to her as a matter of urgency; these should be emailed to the following address: gw08kilmurryjan01@ea.dumgal.sch.uk. Completed forms help to indicate the destination of all pupils to ensure everyone is moving towards a positive destination whether that be University, College, employment or training.

Any pupil who is unsure about their next step after school should get in touch to allow us to discuss options with them. Alternatively, pupils and parents/carers can contact our Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Career Coach Zoe Winpenny to discuss options: zoe.winpenny@sds.co.uk

It is important that any senior phase pupil who is leaving school and therefore not returning following the summer break, hands back any textbooks, materials and other resources that they may have used during the course of this year. At a time of dwindling school budgets, it is becoming more difficult to afford to replace books and materials that have not been returned by pupils who leave school. If your child is in this position, please encourage them to return materials to the box at the front of the school at the main reception specifically for this purpose.

Return of School Laptops

During the Covid-19 pandemic, a number of school laptop devices were issued to families to support learning at home. To prepare the laptops ready to be used again following the summer break, I would ask that these laptops are returned to school as of Tuesday 30 June and certainly no later than Thursday 2 July. This is to allow our ICT staff to check the laptops and prepare them ready to be used in lessons in school as of August.

Primary 7 Transition Visits

During the last few weeks, a number of transition activities have been taking place with our new S1 cohort who are joining us after the summer break. 'Teams' meetings, a transition video, an online quiz and a transition booklet are some of the things that have helped to welcome our newest pupils to Dumfries High School.

During Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 June, transition visits to DHS will take place. Small groups of pupils have been invited to school to allow them a short tour of the building. This is very different to the planned transition days, but we felt it important that our new S1 group had the opportunity to step foot into the building before the summer holiday to help address any worries or concerns that they may have.

Trip Refunds

Refunds for most trips that should have taken place during this term have now been refunded to parents/carers based on the bank account details we received. Payments for Alton Towers (Physics), Lady in Black (English), Edinburgh Zoo (Biology) and the S1 Paris trip have been refunded. This was then confirmed with a groupcall text message. If there are any issues with these repayments, please get in touch before the end of term.

Unfortunately, given the continued circumstances in relation to Covid-19, we have also had to take the decision to cancel this September's visit to the battlefields of WW1. The school will be in touch soon to arrange for a full refund of any payments made to date. We hope to be able to reschedule the visit for a date in 2021 and all those who intended to go on this year's visit will be given the opportunity to participate.

Library Books

A number of pupils have outstanding library books from before the beginning of lockdown. Groupcall text messages have been sent to the parents/carers where appropriate. The return of these books is important to allow them to be checked and indexed once again ready for distribution to pupils and enhance learning when the new term begins.

Please ensure all outstanding books are returned as a matter of urgency. These can be handed in at the main reception at the front of the school.

Mental Health Support

To help support young people during these difficult times, we have been sending out regular Mental Health newsletters. These have included useful help, advice and guidance about how best to try and deal with the issues that may have arisen as a result of the prolonged period away from school and the potential isolation caused by not seeing friends for so long.

The newsletters can be accessed on our school website. Please take a few minutes to look through these to help support your child during this time. The most recent edition of our Mental Health newsletter will be published before the end of term and will address many of the issues raised by pupils who recently completed a Health and Wellbeing online survey that we issued a few weeks ago.

Parent Council

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place on Thursday 25 June at 6pm. This will be an online 'Zoom' meeting. If you would like to take part in this meeting, please contact the Parent Council Chair Lorrie Kyle: lorriekyle@btinternet.com or 07859939895.

Key Dates

Date	Event
Thursday 2 July	End of Term
Tuesday 4 August	SQA Results issued to pupils
Monday 10 August	Inset Day 1
Tuesday 11 August	Inset Day 2
Wednesday 12 August	New Term Begins* (Please note details on page 1 in terms of which pupils should attend on specific days)

The last few months will perhaps be some of the most difficult that we will ever have to deal with within our lifetime. I would however, like to say a huge thanks to all staff within Dumfries High School for the way in which we have supported our young people in the most difficult of circumstances.

In addition and on behalf of all of the staff at Dumfries High School, I would to extend a huge thanks to all parents/carers for your continued support during these testing times. Without your support, our job is so much more difficult.

Finally, I would like to say thanks and well done to all of our pupils for the way in which you have conducted yourselves during lockdown. I think we are all aware of how difficult it has been to undertake learning at home for such a long period, but I would like to congratulate you all on your efforts.

We look forward to Wednesday 12 August when term begins again and we can see everyone back in school at some point during that week.

Take care and stay safe.

