NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2024

With the new academic year now 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. Pupils have settled back into school life very well and are enjoying their learning activities. The support and encouragement that pupils get from parents/carers in relation to their school experience cannot be underestimated and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for this. As always, it is important that we work together to support and challenge our learners as they work towards their individual targets this year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support in terms of our uniform guidelines. It has been quite amazing to see how well our pupils have been turned out at the start of the new term. Regardless of whichever year group your child is in, each and every pupil should remain focused, committed, work hard and be ambitious about their learning at all times; this will go a long way to helping them attain and achieve this year.

SQA Exam Results 2024

Senior pupils received their SQA exam results on Tuesday 6 August. Dumfries High School pupils have, this year once again produced exceptional results across fourth, fifth and sixth year; results in all measures continue to improve and we must now build upon this for the year ahead.

Fourth Year Exam Data - Percentage of Pupils (of S4 roll) Attaining 5, 6 or 7 National 5 Qualifications

Year	Dumfries High School	D&G Average
2024	**61%**	**37%**
2023	56%	40%
2022	58%	42%
2021	62%	44%
2020	46%	48%
2019	42%	39%
2018	36%	38%

- 74 S4 pupils (61% of year group) attained 5, 6 or 7 National 5 qualifications
- S4 attainment in 2024 is higher than the Dumfries and Galloway average by 24% points

Fifth Year Exam Data - Percentage of Pupils (of S4 roll) Attaining 5 Higher Qualifications

Year	Dumfries High School	D&G Average
2024	**22%**	**14%**
2023	19%	12%
2022	26%	13%
2021	20%	15%
2020	14%	16%
2019	13%	13%
2018	11%	16%

- 7 pupils achieved 5As in S5 in 2024; 34 pupils attained five Highers in S5 in 2024

- S5 attainment in 2024 is higher than the Dumfries and Galloway average by 8% points

As can be seen in the tables above, Dumfries High School pupils are performing extremely well and in all cases this year, are performing well above the Dumfries and Galloway average.

I would like to congratulate all of our senior pupils from last year for their fantastic achievements. I would also like to express my thanks to Dumfries High School staff once again for the commitment and support provided throughout the year to all pupils. It is now important that our new S4/5/6 year groups focus on the year ahead allowing further exam success.

Staff Update
Following interviews on the final day of term prior to the summer holiday, Stuart Douglas was appointed to the position of Principal Teacher Physical Education and Home Economics. Stuart is therefore now the main contact should you have any queries relating to those two subjects areas.

Sam Barrick (Home Economics) and Natalie Rosie (Removing Barriers to Learning) both join the Dumfries High School team as permanent members of staff.

After a successful probationary year with us last session, Declan McGarva (Music) now joins the Dumfries High School team as a permanent member of staff.

We also welcome Natalie Hamblin (Business Education) back to Dumfries High School from a period of maternity leave.

Tracy Boyd (Library Assistant) also joins our team to provide support to subject departments across the school.

Hayley Johnstone (Biology) will now be known as Hayley Crawford following her recent marriage. Lauren Moffat (Home Economics) also got married during the summer holiday and will be known as Lauren Thornburn. Congratulations to Hayley and Lauren and to Adam Park (Removing Barriers to Learning) who also got married during the summer holiday.

Punctuality
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 and during this time, 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.

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	Fiona Bryce	Jan Kilmurry
Depute Headteacher	Billy Davidson	Daniella Hogg	Claire Harrison

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) Broad General Education (BGE) learner experiences (iii) Inclusion, Equality and Wellbeing of all learners

Although these are fairly wide-ranging aspects of improvement, they will be broken down into many

different areas that will remain a focus throughout the year. These targets are building upon findings from self-evaluation tasks carried out throughout the last school year including the surveys that parents/carers, pupils and staff were asked to complete.

'How to Pass' Evening – Fourth Year
Our *'How to Pass'* evening this year takes place at 6pm on **Tuesday 17 September**. This event is specifically designed to give information to parents/carers of all fourth year pupils about the courses that they are studying this year and importantly, how you can support your child with their learning at home.

This event is specifically for the parents/carers of S4 pupils undertaking National 4 and National 5 study.

This is an extremely important evening in the school calendar and goes a long way to ensuring each and every pupil in S4 can achieve success in the final exams next May. All parents/carers and pupils in S4 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.

Stepping up to Higher Evening – Fifth Year
To support our fifth year learners undertaking five Highers, this year we have once again arranged for all pupils to work with an organisation called 'Tree of Knowledge' during an interactive session on **Wednesday 6 November.** Workshops that pupils attend during the school day will help to combat the stresses that study in S5 can bring. Managing workload, prioritisation, target setting, focus and motivation will all be addressed to help pupils cope with the demands that the year ahead can bring.

In addition to this, a parent/carer information session has also been arranged for the same evening on Wednesday 6 November (6.30pm). This is for the S5 parents/carers of pupils undertaking five Highers this year and your attendance at this event will go a long way to helping us work together to support our fifth year learners. Further information will follow.

S4/5/6 October Assessment Week (Monday 7 October – Friday 11 October 2024)
As with recent years, all fourth, fifth and sixth year pupils studying National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will undertake a series of subject assessments during week commencing Monday 7 October. A detailed programme of study leading up to this assessment period is crucial to ensure that pupils perform as best they can.

This is an important week of assessments which will help to determine pupil progress at that point. Importantly, it can also help to identify areas of improvement that pupils can address before the prelim exams in January 2025. Please discuss thorough preparation for the October assessment week with your son/daughter and ensure a structured revision schedule is in place.

S4/5/6 Prelim Exams (January 2025)
Prelim examinations for pupils in S4/5/6 will begin on Wednesday 8 January 2025 and finish on Tuesday 21 January 2025. Prelim performance is an absolutely vital element to help ensure that all senior phase pupils achieve the best possible outcomes in every course this year. Parents/carers have a crucial role to play within this and once again I would ask for your help to ensure that your child has a programme of study in place at home for the term between October and Christmas.

Behaviour/Standards
The standards and expectations that we have of our pupils will continue to be addressed during House assemblies throughout the school year. School should be a place of fun and enjoyment as well as a place of learning. Punctuality, uniform, exemplary 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.

School Car Park – Drop Off and Collections
At the beginning and end of each school day, the front of the main building is an incredibly busy area with hundreds of pupils walking around and numerous vehicles travelling in a variety of directions. As such, parent/carer vehicles are not allowed into the school grounds before or after school at these busy times. This is to help maintain pupil safety.

When dropping pupils off at the front of the school prior to the start of the school day, please do so by stopping in Bane Loaning to allow pupils to get out of the vehicle; do not bring your vehicle into the school grounds at the front of the school. At the end of the school day, the main gates at the front of the school building will be closed and manned by the janitor as from 3pm to prevent vehicles entering the car park. Please also be vigilant in Bane Loaning at these busy times. Thanks for your support and understanding with this matter.

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 at the start of term. Please ensure completed forms are returned to registration tutors no later than **Friday 30 August.**

Free School Meals/Clothing Grants
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 copy and instructions is also attached along with this newsletter. An electronic version is also available on our website or at the following address: https://dumgal.gov.uk/article/15246/School-Clothing-Grants

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) forms and guidance notes, which are applicable to pupils in S4/5/6, are attached to the email along with this newsletter; paper copies 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. https://dumgal.gov.uk/EMA

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. Please follow the experiences and successes of our pupils on our school Facebook page.

Parent Council Meeting
The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place in the main school library on **Wednesday 11 September** at 6pm. If you would like to take part in this meeting, please contact the Parent Council Chair Jackie Byrne: jackiembyrne@gmail.com or 07816061976. A strong Parent Council can have a huge impact upon a school community and we are keen that as many new members join and support the work of the group. Meetings usually last no longer than an hour and it would be fantastic to have more parents/carers as part of the group. I would particularly appeal to new S1 parents/carers to consider joining the DHS Parent Council.

Mobile Phones/Headphones
Mobile phones and/or Headphones should not be visible or used by pupils in corridors when at school. They should also not be used by pupils in a classroom setting unless instructed to do so by a staff member; on occasion, they may be used to aid learning and teaching. When pupils are using mobile phones for personal use 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.

School Photographs
Martin McNae will be in Dumfries High School on Monday 23 September and Tuesday 24 September to take school photographs for pupils in all year groups. Family photographs will also be taken for those that indicate a request for this; an email link will be sent in advance to determine this. Martin will also be in school on Wednesday 8 October to catch up with any pupil who is absent when pictures are taken on the two original dates.

Child Protection Concerns
I would like to take the opportunity once again to ensure that our community is aware of the fact that Daniella Hogg (Depute) is the main point of contact within Dumfries High School should a child protection concern ever exist.

Holidays During Term-Time
In recent times there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils taking time out of school during term to attend family holidays; in some cases this can often be a week or longer. Whilst I recognise that in some situations this is unavoidable due to parent/carer work commitments, it is against council policy to authorise this and has an obvious negative impact upon pupil learning.

As always, I would ask for your consideration when booking holidays to minimise the time out of school so that we can work together to support all of our learners as best we can.

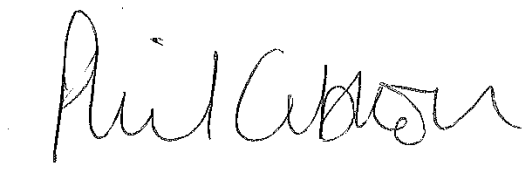
Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
The MHFA is Dumfries High School's Mental Health First Aid service, aimed at promoting positive mental health in the school community. Please be aware of the support that is available to pupils in relation to any mental health issues, including stress, feelings of uncertainty, anxiousness or low mood. Pupils can contact our fully-trained team using the 'get help' button on the home-page of the school website.

Extra-Curricular Sports Clubs
Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to sign up for a range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Activities take place between 3.15pm – 4.30pm, Monday to Thursday. Please encourage your child to take up the fantastic opportunity. Details are as follows

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Football (Mr Monteith, Mr Douglas, Mr Allison)	**Badminton** (Mr Smith)	**Netball** (Ms Glen, Ms Henry, Mrs Crawford)	**Basketball** (Mr Hyslop)
		Rugby (Dumfries Saints)	

Dates for the Diary

Wednesday 28 August	S1 Parents' Information Evening – 6.30pm in Main Hall
Tuesday 3 September	S1 Caerlaverock Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Wednesday 4 September	S1 Devorgilla Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Thursday 5 September	S1 Buccleuch Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Monday 9 September – Friday 13 September	History Battlefields Trip
Monday 9 September – Thursday 12 September	Music/Drama/Art London Trip
Tuesday 17 September	S4 'How to Pass' Evening – 6pm
Thursday 19 September	Senior Prizegiving – 7pm
Monday 23 & Tuesday 24 September	School Photographs
Friday 27 September	Physics Trip – Alton Towers
Friday 4 October	S1/2/3 Tracking Reports Issued
Monday 7 October – Friday 11 October	S4/5/6 October Assessment Week
Friday 11 October	End of Term
Monday 28 October	New Term Begins
Wednesday 6 November	S5 Stepping up to Higher Evening – 6.30pm in Main Hall
Thursday 14 November	DHS Christmas Fayre (6pm – 8pm)
Friday 15 November	S4/5/6 Interim Reports issued
Tuesday 19 November	S4 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Wednesday 27 November	S5/6 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Thursday 28 November	Flu Vaccines – Pupils
Monday 2 December – Friday 6 December	S3 Berlin Trip
Wednesday 4 December	S1/2/3 Tracking Reports Issued
Tuesday 10 December	Junior Christmas Ceilidh (S1/2/3)
Thursday 12 December	S1 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Tuesday 17 December	Senior Christmas Ceilidh (S4/5/6)
Friday 20 December	End of Term

As a staff, we look forward to the year ahead. With your help and support we will continue to work towards ensuring that each and every Dumfries High School pupil strives to reach their own individual targets during the school session.

Best wishes