NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2026

As we return following the recent October break, I would like to welcome everyone back to the new term. As always, this time will be a very busy period for pupils, staff and parents/carers alike. Please take a few minutes to read through this newsletter, noting important information relevant to your child/children.

Staffing
Liz McGuinness (English) will now be known as Liz Mackay.

Alex Gilbert (Pupil Support Assistant) will fulfil the role of Pupil Equity Worker for the remainder of this school year.

Angela Booth-Wallace has joined the Pupil Support Assistant team to provide cover across the school.

Punctuality
Our school day begins at 8.50am and pupils should ensure they are in their period one class by this time; any pupil late to school is missing important learning. Please ensure your child is in school no later than 8.50am to attend morning registration.

Uniform
With the onset of more inclement weather following the October break, I would like to clarify the situation in relation to school uniform, specifically the wearing of blazers, during winter months. This is a query that has been raised a few times by parents/carers in recent times.

With your support, our pupils have looked amazing during the first term of the new school year. With every pupil now wearing a green school blazer, we are keen to maintain the high standards that we have set for all young people within the school.

The expectation for pupils to continue to wear their blazer at all times when in the school building remains during periods of cold and/or wet weather. If they choose to do so, pupils can absolutely wear a coat or jacket over their blazer to remain warm en-route to and from school. However, when in the school building, blazers must continue to be worn.

S4/5/6 Reports
Senior interim reports will be issued to all parents/carers no later than Friday 13 November and in advance of the subsequent parents' evening. Please take some time to discuss the reports with your child as this will be based on progress to date and reflect performance in the recent October Assessment week. Importantly, reports will also give advice and guidance about how pupils can make further improvements in advance of the January 2027 prelims.

S4/5/6 Parents' Evening
Please note the dates and times of our senior parents' evenings this term. Discussions following the October Assessment week will play a vital role in advance of the January prelims and your attendance at parents' evening is crucial to help us work together to support pupils during this examination year. Please note the following dates:

*S4 Parents' Evening: Tuesday 17 November (4pm – 6pm)

*S5/6 Parents' Evening: Wednesday 25 November (4pm – 6pm)

S1/2/3 Tracking Reports
Tracking reports for all pupils in S1/2/3 were issued prior to the October break. Please take some time to review this with your child. If you would like to discuss any aspect of subject progress, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Study Support
Study support sessions for subjects/levels are available for pupils in all year groups to attend during lunch and after school each week day. Such sessions will be of particular benefit to senior pupils who are working towards National Qualifications this year. Please encourage your child to attend where possible and build this into part of a weekly study programme. Details of study support sessions available are attached with this newsletter.

S4/5/6 Prelim Exams - January 2027
Prelim examinations for pupils in S4/5/6 will begin on Thursday 7 January 2027 and finish on Wednesday 20 January 2027. 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.

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.

The area in and around Marchmount Avenue leading from Moffat Road can often become very congested in both directions. If you are a driver in this area at these times, I would ask you to be mindful of the fact that many pupils are also crossing roads to arrive at or depart from school. Local residents are also undertaking activities in their community.

Please demonstrate patience, caution and consideration when driving in and around the school at all times, but especially at the beginning and end of the school day.

Christmas Fayre 2026 – Thursday 12 November
I am delighted to be in a position once again to open our doors for our annual Christmas Fayre. This takes place on Thursday 12 November between 6pm – 8pm in the main school hall. We have over 60 arts and crafts stalls available to help purchase some early Christmas presents. Hot and cold food will also be available in addition to festive entertainment.

As a school, we are always very grateful for the support that we receive throughout the year. To help ensure our annual Christmas Fayre is a success once again and help to raise much-needed funds for our school, we would welcome your support. We are aware that many of our parents/carers have businesses or may work for businesses who may be willing to donate. If you think that you would be able to support this event by donating a prize for our raffle, please get in touch. Donations can be dropped off at the school office or, if easier, arrangements can be made for collection.

Charities Committee
Our S6 Charities Committee recently organised various events including a non-uniform day and a cake sale to raise funds for their chosen international charity for last term. As part of their work, the Charities Committee delivered assemblies to pupils across the school to raise the profile of the chosen charity, The Red Cross. A big thank to everyone involved as we managed to raise £1069.71 for The Red Cross.

Christmas Ceilidhs 2026
Our junior ceilidh and senior ceilidh will both take place on Tuesday 15 December. The Nicky McMichan Ceilidh Band will be providing entertainment at both events. Tickets will be on sale soon.

In a change to previous years, the junior ceilidh will take place during periods 6/7 on Tuesday 15 December. The senior ceilidh will take place between 7pm and 10pm on the same day.

S1 Parents' Evening – Thursday 10 December
Please note that the timing of the S1 parents' evening will take place between 4pm and 6pm on Thursday 10 December.

Health and Wellbeing Padlet – School Website
Our school website now contains a HWB Padlet which will be updated each term. This will allow you to keep up-to-date with all aspects of health and wellbeing at Dumfries High School. In the 'padlet' you will find;

- Information on the HWB (PSE) Programme
- Signposting to contacts for support in Dumfries High School
- Signposting to sources of support for self help
- Details of the Dumfries High School Mental Health First Aid provision
- Photographs and details of pupil participation and achievement in Health and Wellbeing lessons and activities.
- Details of our external partners in curriculum delivery

Please take some time to look through this valuable resource.

'Take What You Need Boxes'
As a school, we very much recognise the difficulties that families may be experiencing as a result of financial hardship. To assist, 'take what you need boxes' are available for pupils to access as required; these are situated outside the senior management offices in the main reception area of the school.

Boxes contain the following items which pupils can take as they need: toothpaste, shower gel, shampoo, deodorant, sanitary products, toilet rolls, tights, cereal bars, hair bands and stationary items.

School Photographs
Orders for school photographs should be returned no later than Monday 9 November.

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.

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 are also attached along with this newsletter. An electronic version is also available on our website or at the following address: https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/schools/school-meals/free-school-meals

Please use the following email address if you have any queries in relation to free school meals and/or clothing grant payments: *educationbenefits@dumgal.gov.uk*

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

Please use the following email address if you have any queries in relation to EMA payments: *ema@dumgal.gov.uk*

Breakfast Club
As previously communicated, Dumfries High School will be running a breakfast club each morning between 8am and 8.45am. The breakfast club will take place within the kitchen area of our Additional Support for Learning (ASL) department.

To help support those families most in need, the breakfast club will be available to access by the young people who may not be able to secure a healthy breakfast before they leave home each morning. Cereals, toast, hot and cold drinks will be available at no cost to any pupil who attends.

Email Communication
Almost all communications from Dumfries High School will be sent via email directly to the email address detailed on the recent data capture forms. Please check your emails on a daily basis to ensure you are receiving communications in a timely manner.

Could I ask parents/carers to ensure that your email contact details are as up-to-date as possible by sending an email message with the name of your child/children and registration class to the following address: gw08officedumfries@ea.dumgal.sch.uk Please only do this if your email address has changed since the Data Capture forms were completed in August.

School Show June 2027 – *'High School Musical'*
Following the success of *'Oliver'* in June 2025, I am delighted to announce that Dumfries High School will once again be producing another whole school show later this year. Castings are now underway for what will be another great stage production.

Performances will take place on Tuesday 15, Wednesday 16 and Thursday 17 June 2027; please keep one of these dates free to come along and support our school show. Further information about

tickets will come out in due course.

UNICEF Rights Respecting School (Silver Award)
Earlier this year, Dumfries High School was successful in being recognised as a Rights Respecting School by participating in the Rights Respecting School Award when we were awarded the Silver Award. This award recognises the hard work of staff and pupils alike and importantly, also recognises the values and culture embedded within our school.

Defibrillator
The defibrillator that was kindly donated to Dumfries High School by the Summerpark Residents Association a few years ago has now been re-installed in our new building; it is placed on the wall outside of the main reception, and as such, accessible by the local community if required.

We are greatly appreciative of the donation and maintenance of this defibrillator by members of the Summerpark Residents Association.

Demolition of 'Old' School
This is now well under way, with the David Keswick Centre currently being taken down. Once this is complete, the main part of the 'old' building will also start to disappear over time. It is expected that works will take a further 9-12 months from this point. Thereafter, ground will be landscaped and a boundary fence installed.

Dates for the Diary

Monday 9 November	Deadline for the return of School Photograph orders
Thursday 12 November	DHS Christmas Fayre (6pm – 8pm)
Friday 13 November	S4/5/6 Interim Reports Issued
Tuesday 17 November	S4 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Wednesday 25 November	S5/6 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Wednesday 25 November	Flu Immunisations
Wednesday 2 December	Parent Council Meeting – 6pm
Thursday 10 December	S1 Parent's Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Tuesday 15 December	Junior (S1/2/3) Christmas Ceilidh (Periods 6/7) Senior (S4/5/6) Christmas Ceilidh (7pm – 10pm)
Friday 18 December	End of Term
Wednesday 6 January 2027	New Term Begins (Pupil's return)
Thursday 7 January 2027 – Wednesday 20 January 2026	Senior (S4/5/6 Prelims)

Best wishes

