

Castle Douglas High School



Marginal Gains for Attainment

Small improvements. Repeated consistently. Powerful collective impact.

Inspired by the marginal-gains approach associated with British Cycling: rather than searching for one dramatic intervention, we improve the small behaviours that influence learning every day. Individually they may seem minor. Together they can change outcomes.

Parents and carers - create the conditions in which learning can flourish

Marginal gain - What it looks like.

Prioritise attendance. Avoid unnecessary absence and reinforce that being in school matters.

Prioritise punctuality. Support routines that help young people arrive ready to learn.

Ask what was learned. Move beyond 'How was school?' and encourage conversation about learning.

Ask for an explanation. Having a young person teach you something helps strengthen their understanding.

Create a study space. Provide a reasonably quiet, consistent place for independent learning.

Protect short study periods. Help create 20-30 minutes without phones, gaming or interruptions.

Encourage reading. Normalise books, articles, audiobooks and discussion at home.

Know important dates. Keep assessments, coursework, prelims and exams visible.

Check rather than police. Take an interest in homework without turning it into a daily battle.

Praise effort and improvement. Recognise the behaviours that create progress as well as final grades.

Talk positively about education. Communicate that learning, effort and qualifications matter.

Contact school early. Small concerns are generally easier to resolve than established problems.

Encourage support. Back school recommendations for revision, supported study or intervention.

Protect sleep routines. Help young people arrive rested, particularly during assessment periods.

Discuss future goals. Connect today's learning with future courses, careers and ambitions.

Celebrate progress. Recognise improvement, even when the final target has not yet been reached.