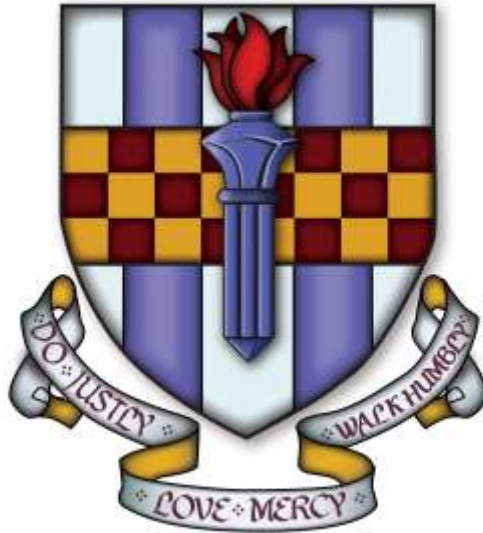


# Kilmarnock Academy



**Session 2015 – 2016**

## **Information for Parents**

## **Contacting staff**

If you wish to discuss an issue with a member of staff please phone to arrange an appointment, or leave a message for a return call. All staff teach classes and are not necessarily freely available to take a call or see someone. If you come to school without an appointment it is unlikely that the appropriate person will be available to talk with you. Please telephone first and make your first point of contact your son or daughter's guidance teacher. This will save time and inconvenience. Telephone number 01563 525509.

## **School attendance**

One of the most significant indicators of success in school is a high attendance rate. For most pupils, attendance at school should be at or near 100%.

Where possible all medical or dental appointments should be made outwith school hours.

In particular, holidays taken during term time are recorded as **Unauthorised Absence** on pupil records. Reasons such as cost, parental holiday dates, weather conditions or availability of accommodation or travel arrangements, are **not** considered valid reasons for holidays in term time. The Head Teacher cannot give permission for holidays taken during term time.

## **Absence from school**

Schools are becoming increasingly vigilant about informing parents of absence from school. We now operate an automated system which routinely contacts all parents of pupils for whom there is an unexplained absence. It is therefore very important that

- we have an up to date contact number for all pupils
- parents inform us as soon as possible if a pupil is absent
- parents contact us to explain about an absence if they receive a call from the school

Please note that if your son or daughter fails to register with his/her teacher, or does not sign in at Reception, you will receive a text from the school. **You may reply to this text with reason for absence.** Please emphasise to your son/daughter that he/she must follow all school rules and procedures.

It is also important to note we require a written letter of explanation following a return to school from absence. This is a legal requirement even if you have phoned to inform the school. If this is not received on return to school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## **Mobile phone number**

As indicated above, Kilmarnock Academy uses an automated telephone system to contact parents if there is an unexplained absence from school. This system is much more effective, and much cheaper, if a text message is sent to a mobile phone number rather than a recorded message sent to a landline. Also, with mobile numbers, it is possible to send text messages regarding other school issues such as emergency closures or changes to timetabled events.

**We therefore require a mobile number for every pupil so that we can communicate with parents as effectively as possible.**

We will complete the annual data check exercise at the start of term in August. If you have not included a mobile phone number in the past, please do so at that stage. Thank you for your help with this.

## **Latecoming**

Pupils who are late for school may not be allowed to join classes until the change of period. The disruption to lessons caused by latecomers is not acceptable and is unfair on the other members of the class. We welcome your support in ensuring that pupils arrive on time for school. Please note, however, that persistent latecoming can ultimately result in referral to the Children's Panel.

## **Photographs**

We use pupil photographs on the school website, for the local newspapers and in other publicity materials. If you have any objections to this, and do not want your son or daughter to be photographed, please let the Head Teacher know. Thank you.

## **Uniform**

There are a number of reasons why it is important for pupils to wear school uniform.

- Security – intruders are easily identified.
- Safety – tracksuit materials are flammable and trainers do not protect feet in practical classes.
- Appearance – uniform presents a smart image for pupils and the school as a whole.
- Cost – this is the cheapest way to outfit a pupil for school.
- Confidence – pupils need not worry that they have the most fashionable clothing, or a large number of clothes.
- Bullying – pupils will not be picked on or abused because of their clothing. For this reason football tops or factional items (currently goth or mosher) are banned.

For the reasons listed above we place great emphasis on the wearing of uniform and we welcome your support. Uniform items are

- Shirt and tie
- School jumper
- Grey or black trousers or skirt
- School shoes

T/shirts for PE may be purchased from the school.

Order forms are available from the school office.

To encourage pupils to wear uniform we operate the ACE award scheme. Pupils not in uniform will lose credits and may not be eligible for school discos or extra-curricular activities.

Please note that pupils wearing trousers or jackets made from tracksuit type materials, or wearing trainers, may not be allowed to participate in certain practical activities in classrooms, for health and safety reasons.

We will contact you if your son/daughter is not in uniform or has been prevented from a classroom activity because of inappropriate clothing.

## **Piercings**

Facial piercings are discouraged in school for health and safety reasons. All piercings must be removed for PE classes. Staff will not check for body piercings, for obvious reasons, but pupils should not attend school with these. Pupils may be obliged to remove visible facial piercings when in school.

## **Pupil property**

The school cannot be responsible for the personal property of pupils. Pupils should not bring valuable items to school, or wear expensive items of clothing. In particular, mobile phones are confiscated in school if seen or heard by a teacher. This will be returned at the end of the school day unless this is a persistent problem in which case a responsible adult will be requested to collect it. We do not have insurance cover for pupil property. If items are lost, damaged or stolen it is highly unlikely that any compensation will be paid unless the authority has been negligent in some way. Therefore, pupils should leave valuable items at home. We provide lockers for rent at £5.00 for the full year, which may be used by pupils. The rental charge includes the use of a combination padlock. Pupils interested in renting a locker should contact the Classroom Assistants.

## **Homework**

It is very important that pupils develop the habit of completing homework assignments. It has been proved time and again that regular homework:

- improves pupil results at all levels from S1 to S6
- trains pupils in useful study habits
- promotes a more positive attitude to school
- encourages pupils to feel successful in school and take an interest in improving.

For all these reasons your son or daughter will be expected to undertake regular homework in Kilmarnock Academy.

Normally you should expect:

S1/S2 pupils up to 1 hour each night

S3/4 pupils up to 1½ hours each night.

For pupils in S5/6 the amount of homework will depend on the number and level of National qualifications being studied. Homework will include assigned tasks plus time spent on study and revision.

## **What we will do**

Each pupil will be given a homework diary (S1-S3) at the start of session. Teachers will require pupils to note down homework tasks in the diary. Every department will provide a programme of homework designed to maximise your son or daughter's achievement in school. Homework will be checked regularly.

## **What you can do**

Check your son or daughter's homework diary and sign it each week. Take an interest in homework and review homework tasks with your son or daughter. Provide a quiet place for homework to be completed. Encourage your son or daughter to complete homework tasks. Respond to information from school that homework has not been completed.

If you have any queries or concerns about your son or daughter's homework, or progress in general, please contact the guidance teacher in the first instance.

## **Guidance**

### **The aims of the guidance system**

- To give each pupil a member of staff to whom he/she can turn for advice on a wide range of matters.
- To operate a link between the school and parents to ensure that parents are kept fully informed on all matters concerning their children.
- To try to ensure that each pupil is following the course best suited to his/her abilities and ambitions, and to monitor the pupil's progress through the entire course.
- To prepare each pupil for adult life through a Personal and Social Education programme with topics which are not normally covered in school subjects, for example Careers, Health, Lifeskills, Study Skills, Leisure.
- To give to the entire staff a point of reference for each pupil. The Guidance teacher is the member of staff with the widest knowledge of each pupil, covering such matters as attendance, behaviour, progress, exam results and ambitions.
- To give a known point of contact for each pupil in the school to parents and outside agencies such as the Children's Reporter, the Police and employers.

## **What your guidance teacher does for you!**

- Helps with the changes from Primary to Secondary.
- Advises with subject choices and gives career advice.
- Encourages regular attendance and time-keeping.
- Encourages good behaviour and manners including attending to all bullying problems.
- Provides information for outside agencies when needed - the Careers Service, the Social Work Department.
- Organises and encourages extra-curricular activities
- Helps to write and teach the PSE programme of work.
- Advises about your personal learning plan and Progress File.
- Writes references for UCAS, colleges or employers.
- Helps to make the school a friendly and supportive place.
- Gives advice and support in any matter whether it is school-related or personal.

## **Book return**

Senior pupils must return textbooks and revision notes to school. We are experiencing great difficulty with the non-return of school materials. Pupils who fail to return books at the start of session will be sent home to collect them.

## **School meals service**

The school dining hall, Metro, services healthy food options at the morning break and lunchtime. A standard two course meal will cost £1.80 and this is also the value of a daily free meal.

## **Student finance**

Pupils considering future applications to higher education can find information regarding finance issues at

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/Learn/erfunding/highereducation](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/UniversitiesColleges/16640/Learn/erfunding/highereducation)

## **Educational Maintenance Allowance**

For senior pupils in receipt of an EMA (formerly know as a bursary) please note the following.

- You receive the EMA only for the weeks in which you have 100% attendance.
- If you have more than one late in a week you are not entitled to EMA.

- Pupils are allowed one self certified absence in each session if they have more than one absence they have to produce medical evidence to say they were unfit to attend school.
- The system is sometimes slow to stop payments. Do not assume that your absence has been ignored if you continue to receive payments – you will be obliged to pay the money back once the system catches up. This is public money; you will not be allowed to keep it if you are not entitled to it.
- The payments will stop on the date of your last exam in June, if you are leaving school. You must return to school until the end of term for the payments to continue.
- This is a national system. If you have concerns about the EMA please contact the education authority at Civic Centre South, John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock.

## **Religious Observance**

All pupils attend a regular assembly at which a chaplain will officiate. The theme of an assembly will be morally uplifting in nature and may include both prayer and Biblical references. In addition, there are formal religious assemblies at Christmas and Easter, which include specifically Christian references and bible readings. The Gideon Society will address S1 pupils and distribute free bibles. If you do not want your child to participate in any aspect of the Religious Observance programme please contact Mr Rose, Head Teacher, who will make alternative arrangements for him/her at assembly times.

## **Applications to medical school**

Senior pupils intending to apply to study medicine must sit a clinical aptitude test. Guidance staff can provide further information if necessary.

## **Parent Council**

All parents are automatically members of the Kilmarnock Academy Parent Forum and may volunteer to join the Parent Council. The AGM of the council will be held on Tuesday 1st September in Kilmarnock Academy conference room at 7.30pm, to which all parents are invited. If you wish to join the council please contact Mr Rose on 01563 525509.