

**St. Joseph's Academy - School Handbook**

**Session 2023/24**



## Welcome

Welcome to the handbook of St. Joseph's Academy. Our school motto, 'Fidelis, Justus, Prudens' captures the essence of what we stand for as a community. We are faithful to the teachings and wisdom of Christ and witness to a strong sense of social justice. It is our desire that all parents/carers, pupils, staff, and partners will also take great pride in being members of our school community. All secondary school age pupils across East Ayrshire have the right to attend our school.

East Ayrshire Council's website contains a section on school handbooks with links to various legislative guidance relevant to all schools. For matters pertaining to this legislation, please visit [East Ayrshire Council Handbooks](#). This file provides a school-level overview of our provision within St. Joseph's Academy.

## Senior Leadership Team

Our Senior Leadership Team is comprised of Mr Kane (Head Teacher), Mrs Shearer (Depute Head Teacher), Mr Boyle (Depute Head Teacher) and Miss Quigley (Depute Head Teacher). Mr Kane was appointed as Head Teacher in February 2018.



Mr Kane (HT)



Mrs Shearer (DHT)



Mr Boyle (DHT)



Miss Quigley (DHT)

At the time of writing, responsibility for year groups is as follows:

- S3 and S6 – Mrs Shearer
- S1 and S4 – Mr Boyle
- S2 and S5 – Miss Quigley

## **Contact Details**

St. Joseph's Academy

Grassyards Road

Kilmarnock

KA3 7SL

01563 526144

School email address: [eastjosephs.ac@eastayrshire.org.uk](mailto:eastjosephs.ac@eastayrshire.org.uk)

Website: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/stjosephsacademy/>

School App: Download 'School App for Parents' from the App store and search for St. Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StJoAcad/>

Twitter: [@stjoacad](https://twitter.com/stjoacad)

Contact us: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/stjosephsacademy/contact-us/>

Please note, Facebook and Twitter are used for outward communication only. Our email address or the 'Contact Us' page on our website should be used to make contact with school staff.

## **General Information**

Head Teacher: Mr Joseph Kane

Status: Denominational, Roman Catholic

Catchment: Entirety of East Ayrshire Council

Roll: 642

Capacity: Around 910

FTE: 46.7

Gaelic Medium: No

## Parent Council and Parental Involvement

Welcome to the Saint Joseph's Academy handbook!

My name is Gavin Duffy, and I am the current Chairperson of the school's Parent Council.

Starting at a new school is an exciting chapter in the lives of our young people. As parents and carers, we all want it to be the best possible experience for them and it is important that we, as parents, are represented.

Your Parent Council is involved in shaping the immediate and longer-term priorities of Saint Joseph's Academy and participate in the recruitment of senior staff and pupil leaders.

On an annual basis, our Head Teacher hosts an engagement event for the wider Parent Forum where our current improvement plan priorities are discussed in detail. Our annual Parent Council AGM usually takes place in the October of each year.

The AGM is a time also when new parents and carers are formally invited to join the Parent Council. However, I want to let you know that all carers and parents are welcome to attend any meeting should you wish to. We all have one common goal; to support the whole school community to be a success. The success of our Head Teacher and all staff is the success of our children. We are here to help.

You can view the minutes of all of your Parent Council meetings here: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/stjosephsacademy/parents/> . Although the Head Teacher is not a member of the Parent Council, he has the right to attend and participate in all Parent Council meetings.

If you have an interest in attending a meeting or joining the Parent Council, you are welcome! If you simply want to have a chat about school with another carer/parent, you are also welcome to drop me a message. I can be contacted via [stjosephsacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:stjosephsacademyparentcouncil@gmail.com).



**Gavin Duffy**

Gavin Duffy

Parent Council Chairperson

## **Catholic Ethos**

The ethos of our school is rooted in Gospel values. In terms of the wider work we do, this passage from the Gospel of Matthew captures what we try to witness to daily.

‘For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, a stranger, you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me’.

While some of the forms of service cited are more relevant to the life of our school than others, the essence of what this passage is encouraging us toward is clearly visible in our interactions with one another. We see every young person, teacher, staff member, parent/carer and partner as a unique and important person made in the image of God.

We celebrate our shared identity as members of the community of St. Joseph’s Academy with no further distinction according to background, circumstance, or belief. It is in the quality of personal relationships that we can witness to what Jesus is asking of us in the care that we demonstrate to one another.

That is not to say that school life, regardless of the school in question, is perfect or without challenges. Rather, it is to be clear that we value each member of our community and recognise our vocation to make this evident to you. As would be the case in all environments where people gather, managing difference and difficulty is part of the fabric of life. We do so in the certainty that we are constantly striving to create a community of care, compassion, and trust.

## **Vision, Values and Aims**

Work undertaken during session 2020/21 and 2021/22 has allowed pupils to consider our Vision, Values and Aims and how they impact upon the life of our school. Our young people have identified the following six values as those they wish to promote and witness to within our community.

**Respect**

**Equality**

**Ambition**

**Courage**

**Truth**

**Service**





## Pastoral Care

Our Pastoral Care staff are your first point of contact and have a specific remit for working with young people and families. All parental requests and queries should be directed to Pastoral Care staff in the first instance.

Miss Cathie (Francis), Mrs Duthie (Carlo) and Mrs Marshall (Teresa) are our Principal Teachers of Pastoral Care.



Miss Cathie  
Principal Teacher of  
Pastoral Care  
Francis House



Mrs Duthie  
Principal Teacher of  
Pastoral Care  
Carlo House



Mrs Marshall  
Principal Teacher of  
Pastoral Care  
Teresa House

The role of Pastoral Care staff is sometimes referred to as Pupil Support or Guidance. The remit of Pastoral Care staff is extensive. Each Pastoral Care teacher has a caseload of over two-hundred young people. The role of Pastoral Care staff is summarised below.

- Provide pastoral, curricular, social and vocational guidance for all young people in their charge
- Manage attendance, timekeeping, general progress and the welfare of their caseload in line with the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).
- Maintain pastoral notes, pupil records and agency referrals/reports as required in line with GIRFEC principles.
- Liaise with parents / carers, teachers and relevant partners to create support packages for young people as required.
- Complete references and reports, including UCAS and College references for current and former pupils.
- Carry out a planned programme of pupil wellbeing interviews throughout the academic year.
- Carry out a range of wellbeing assessments with/for individual young people as appropriate.

- Prepare for, contribute to, and lead internal Staged Intervention Meetings, Team Around the Child Meetings (TACs) and parental meetings.
- Attend external and multi-agency meetings such as Children's Panel hearings, Social Work Meetings and Child Protection meetings as required.
- Liaise with external partners such as Social Work, Psychological Services, Skills Development Scotland, CAMHS, School Nurse, Campus Police Officer, Vibrant Communities, and School Counselling services as appropriate.
- Create and systematically review Child Plans for all young people for whom this is relevant across their caseload.
- Liaise with our Principal Teacher of Support for Learning to develop, implement and review Child Plans for young people with additional support needs.
- National and local project/initiative implementation, such as: Mentors in Violence Prevention, Magic Breakfast, No Knives Better Lives, Safespot, I am Me, Nurture, Equally Safe in School, Respect Me, and LearnWell.
- Attend P7 Transition meetings and decide upon pupil placement in S1 classes.
- Co-ordination of Developing the Young Workforce events.
- Plan, develop, deliver, and review our Personal and Social Education (PSE) curriculum for all year groups.

### **Personal and Social Education (PSE)**

All pupils have one period of PSE per week, and this is usually taught by their Pastoral Care teacher. PSE addresses and/or consolidates a large proportion of the Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes.

The Health and Wellbeing curriculum is organised into six key areas.

- Mental, Emotional, Social and Physical Wellbeing
- Planning for Choices and Changes
- Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport
- Food and Health
- Substance Misuse
- Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood

Pastoral Care staff recently updated our PSE curriculum for S1 – S6. Our PSE curriculum incorporates the necessary benchmarks, experiences and outcomes, SHANARRI health and wellbeing indicators and SCES (Scottish Catholic Education Service) equalities material. Our revised offering aligns with the sixteen recommendations of the recent government review into PSE provision.

The PSE curriculum at St Joseph's Academy is accredited through the Princes' Trust Award in S1-3, and both the Dynamic Youth and Saltire Awards in S4-6.

## Chaplaincy

We are very grateful for the support we receive from Fr. Martin, Fr. Kevin, Fr. Stephen, Fr. Gabriel and Fr. Philip and Mass is celebrated during lunchtime on a weekly basis. In addition, our Rosary group meet once per week to pray for the needs of our school community. Fr. Martin and Fr. Kevin regularly visit our school and our chaplains enjoy strong links with our school community. We encourage staff and pupils to take the opportunity to attend Mass and our Rosary group. We also gather as a community to participate in Masses on Holy Days of Obligation and Patronal Feast Days. Our school day begins with a prayer, and we hold various prayer services during Lent, Advent and throughout the academic year.

Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary joined our community in early 2021 and we regularly welcome the NET ministry team to facilitate retreats on an annual basis.



**Srs. Mabel, Rose Confidence and Juliet**



**Fr. Martin Chambers**

Our S6 pupils can work towards the Caritas award, and regularly give of their time to work with local parish and wider communities throughout the year.

Several of our current pupils worked with Mr Tomb to create crucifixes which are at the heart of each classroom within our school. We take guidance from the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) and the Diocese of Galloway as to our ethos and provision in Religious Education.



## **Wider Pastoral Team**

PC Dempster is our Campus Officer and Miss Baxter is our PEF funded attendance officer.



**PC Dempster**



**Miss Baxter**

### **Campus Officer**

PC Dempster works with young people across our campus and provides advice and guidance to pupils, staff and parents/carers. PC Dempster's role includes, but is not limited to:

- improving relationships between young people and the Police
- engaging with young people and developing their role within the community
- problem solving in the school and the community
- delivering and developing specific projects such as internet safety, young crime prevention and personal safety
- providing a visible presence in and around the school community
- supporting and developing activities to address challenging behaviour
- liaising with departments and organisations already involved in delivering programmes for young people (mentoring, street working, youth groups etc)
- promoting a restorative justice approach to encourage young people to take responsibility for their decisions within school and in the community

### **PEF Funded Attendance Officer**

Miss Baxter has responsibility for analysing attendance patterns and trends at pupil and cohort level. This analysis has a particular focus on providing Pastoral Care staff with up-to-date information as to the attendance patterns of those young people finding it most difficult to attend school.

Miss Baxter also works with teaching staff on a period-by-period basis to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded. Our average attendance figures have increased steadily since the inception of this post.

## **School Counselling**



**Helen Cosgrove**  
**School Counsellor**  
**The Exchange**



**Ruth Love**  
**Upstream Youth Therapeutic**  
**Worker and Counsellor**  
**Bethany Christian Trust**

Pupils can access one of two counselling services within our school. Upstream counselling (provided by the Bethany Trust) has worked with us since 2018. The Exchange are our local authority counselling service and started working with us in 2021.

Pastoral Care staff refer pupils to Ruth and Helen. Pupils can also self-refer by speaking with their Pastoral Care teacher. More information is available from Pastoral Care staff and is shared with pupils via our PSE curriculum.

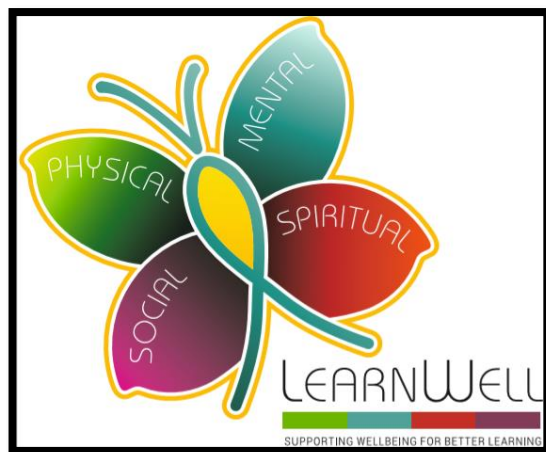
## **Educational Psychologist**

Mark Brotherton is our allocated Educational Psychologist. Mark works closely with our staff and families to ensure that we are trained and supported to help young people manage a range of behaviours and emotions that they may exhibit when in school or at home. Mark provides regular training for our staff, with this session's focus as detailed below.

- Trauma Informed Practice
- ASD in Girls
- Nurture

## LearnWell

In the late part of session 2021/22, we formally launched 'LearnWell'. LearnWell aims to support the wellbeing of young people in order that they meet their potential. This initiative focuses on four main areas: Physical Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing, Social Wellbeing and Spiritual Wellbeing. Each year, there will be a calendar of events and initiatives with a specific focus on each area. LearnWell will look to build on already existent practice to further enhance support across the school. Naturally, our Catholic Ethos is central to the successful implementation of this initiative.



## Support for Learning

Mrs Hoy is our Principal Teacher of Support for Learning. Should you have a concern that is related to additional support needs, please contact Mrs Hoy.



**Mrs Hoy**

We have an established Additional Support Needs overview for each year group. Pupil profiles (based on information from primary school, parents, pupils, and other agencies) give all staff information on individual pupil needs. Furthermore, support strategy reference materials are also shared with staff. These give teachers a comprehensive overview of various additional support strategies that can be used when working with specific pupils.

The Support for Learning Department is responsible for:

- supporting young people with literacy difficulties including dyslexic difficulties and other additional support needs.
- empowerment of teachers to meet the needs of their pupils.
- dyslexia friendly learning environments (designed to help all learners).
- early identification of young people at risk of developing literacy difficulties
- ensuring consistency in using the Staged Intervention Model embedded within East Ayrshire's Dyslexia and Literacy Difficulties Assessment Guidelines.
- effective monitoring and tracking systems to record pupil's literacy development.
- organisation of CLPL opportunities for staff.

- development of young people's empathy towards and awareness of additional support needs.
- work in partnership with EAST to assess pupils for visual stress, Dyslexia and Dyscalculia. Assessments are carried out in line with the East Ayrshire Assessment Policy.

For more detail, please refer to the school's [Inclusive Practice Policy](#).

Mrs Hoy is supported by our team of Classroom Assistants.



**Miss Bekker**



**Mrs Smith**



**Mrs Gardiner**



**Mrs Miller**



**Mrs McCrone**



**Mrs Murray**

**Not Pictured**

**Mrs Hughes**

**Miss Stephenson**

**Mrs Demir**

**Mr Hamilton-Bulger**

**Ms Nica**

**Mr Hastings**



## **PEF Funded Alternative Provision (AP) Base**

Our AP Base is an educational support resource for our young learners who, for a variety of reasons, may be disengaging from everyday schooling. It is a base that provides a supportive, and nurturing learning space where young people can engage with the curriculum.

We provide two different curriculum programmes of support. A Flexible Curriculum where the young person attends most of their classes but has scheduled coordinated support time in the AP. In addition, we provide an Alternative Curriculum, where pupils are supported fully in the AP for a short time with the intention of returning to classes with support.

The introduction of our AP base has allowed us to successfully maintain in-school provision for a number of young people.

AP staff work closely with our Pastoral Care teachers and our Educational Psychologist to ensure that support plans are pupil centred, clear and reviewed at regular intervals.

Our AP base is PEF funded and is staffed by Miss Millar and Mrs Walker.



**Miss Millar**



**Ms Walker**

## **IT Technician**

Mr Elliott is our IT Technician. Mr Elliott is available to staff and pupils to ensure that they can access and use the various IT equipment and systems needed to complete and set schoolwork. Mr Elliott's office is located on the first floor between Art and English.

## **Transitions**

### **Primary to Secondary Transition**

Our Pastoral Care staff work with colleagues in our associated primary schools during our formal transition programme.

- St. Sophia's Primary, Galston
- St. Patrick's Primary, Auchinleck
- St. Xavier's Primary, Patna
- St. Andrew's Primary, Kilmarnock
- Mount Carmel Primary, Kilmarnock

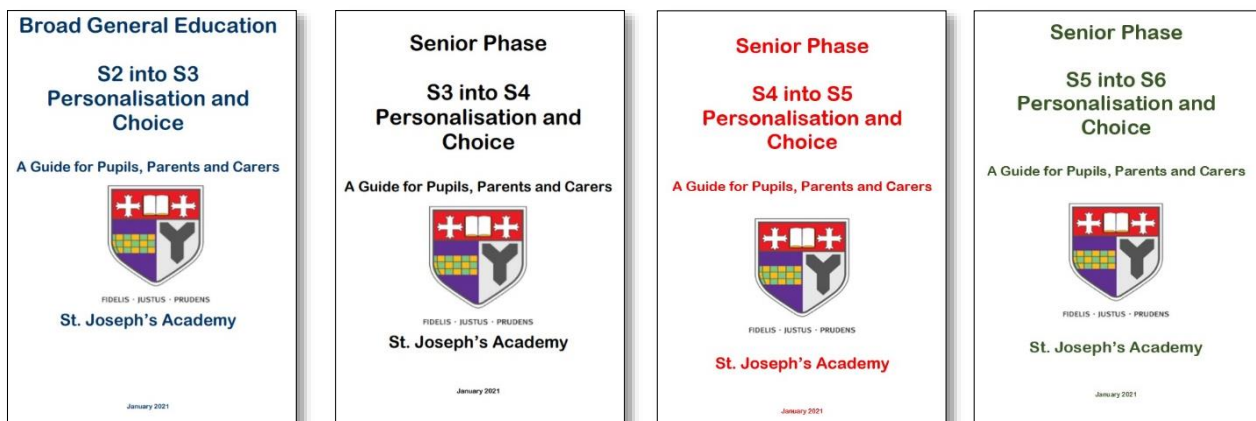
All Primary 7 pupils from each of the above schools are invited to participate in a range of annual transition events. In addition, a subgroup of identified pupils will participate in our enhanced transition programme. Transition events are ongoing throughout late Primary 6 and across Primary 7.

We receive information detailing the academic attainment and achievement of all incoming S1 prior to them starting with us. In addition, there are meetings between Primary staff and St. Joseph's Pastoral/Support for Learning staff to allow for the transfer of information for those young people with additional support needs.

In early February of each session, we share transition information online and via our associated primary schools. In May and June of each year, we hold transition events within school to complement activities that take place prior to that time.

## Transitions at key stages (S2 into S3, S3 into S4, S4/5 into S5/6)

We work in partnership with SDS and Ayrshire College to deliver input at the point where our young people make subject and course choices. Our published advice is updated annually, with the most recent version found by clicking on the thumbnails shown below. These links will take parents/carers and pupils to support booklets and videos which detail the annual process and provide information on pathways and further support.



## Transition to Employment, College, Training or University

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is the national skills body, and we deliver Scotland's careers service. Our Careers Advisers deliver career information, advice, and guidance in our school to pupils from S1-S6. SDS colleagues are there to help you understand the world of work and develop the Career Management Skills you need as you progress through school and beyond.

Your Careers Adviser can speak to you about:

- Finding out about yourself, your strengths and skills
- Making subject choices
- Different types of careers
- Developing the types of skills that are useful in a job
- Routes into careers including apprenticeships, college and university
- Building and developing your networks
- Creating CVs
- Making job applications and applying for courses

Our School Careers Adviser is **Kate Faulds** and you can get in touch with Kate through Tel/Text: 01563 601225 / 07500 097 503 email: [kate.faulds@sds.co.uk](mailto:kate.faulds@sds.co.uk) and on her school Twitter account: [@StJoAcadCareers](https://twitter.com/StJoAcadCareers)


You can also use our online service [www.myworldofwork.co.uk](http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk) .



## Communication

Our School App and School Website page are regularly updated with key information for Parents/Carers. For general information about school life or upcoming school events, Parents/Carers are encouraged to use at least one of the above as their first source of information.


Our school app can be downloaded for free from your app store, under the title 'Safer Schools Scotland'. We will send a joining code to you when your child enrolls.





### Paperless Communication

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/stjosephsacademy/>

You can use the 'Contact Us' page to get in touch via our website. The inbox is checked daily.

 [@stjoacad](https://twitter.com/stjoacad)


 [Search for @stjoacad](#)

 **Email and Letters by post**


Given the cost of paper, postage and the fact that those issued in school are often lost or not passed on we rarely issue paper letters.

We will email letters out as well as uploading online. Please complete all annual data checks to ensure that the email address we hold is accurate. For many families we hold no email address.


Should you require post only, please notify us by calling the school.



Download satchel:one from the app store relevant to your mobile device in order to access Show My Homework. Please contact the school via our website if you need login details emailed to you.



Please download the school app, which automatically pulls website and facebook posts. You can download from the app store. You then select our school from the menu.

 **We send brief SMS messages to direct you to online communication**

You can call the school on **01563 526 144** – Pastoral Care staff are your first point of contact

## Communication Turnaround Times

If you either call the school directly or use the '[Contact Us](#)' page on our website, we aim to acknowledge contact as soon as received. Staff then work to a turnaround time of three working days. This is because staff have teaching commitments and cannot account for contact from parents/carers in advance. Pastoral Care staff are your first point of contact.

Please note that staff will always endeavour to make contact as soon as possible, and that most contact will be on the same day. Please also note that immediate return contact would be made in the case of an emergency or a Child Protection concern.

In the rare event that after three working days you are yet to receive a call or email, please notify us of this via the school email address shown below.

[eastjosephs.ac@eastayrshire.org.uk](mailto:eastjosephs.ac@eastayrshire.org.uk)

This email inbox is monitored by Senior Managers who may not be aware of any delay in responding to you unless directly involved in previous correspondence.

If your enquiry necessitates the gathering of input from several different staff, it is likely that it will take a few additional working days to collate all responses. Pastoral Care staff are experienced in managing this and, following an initial discussion, will make contact again as soon as they have all requested information from staff.



## **Contact Details – Parental Responsibility**

All parents/carers will be asked to complete an annual data check. This allows us to double check contact and emergency contact details for all pupils. At all other points in the school year, we ask that you contact us if any of the following change.

- Home Address
- Telephone Number(s)
- Email address
- Name and details of emergency contacts

If we are unaware of changes to any of the above, we may not be able to pass on important information or make contact in the case of emergency. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that we hold accurate contact details.

## **School Day**

We share our Campus with St. Andrew's Primary School and Early Childhood Centre. The various opening hours of all three establishments contribute to the need for our school to run an asymmetric week, with four longer days than most schools and one shorter day on Fridays.

Mondays	8.50am until 3.40pm
Tuesdays	8.50am until 3.40pm
Wednesdays	8.50am until 3.40pm
Thursdays	8.50am until 3.40pm
Fridays	8.50am until 2.00pm

## **Break and Lunch**

Break time is from 10.30am until 10.45am. Lunch Time is split depending upon stage S1 to S3 or S4 to S6

S1-S3 Lunch Time 12.25pm – 1.10pm

S4-S6 Lunch Time 1.15pm – 2.00pm

The above is correct other than on a Friday, when the lunch break for all pupils is from 1.15pm until 2.00pm.

## School Holidays and Inservice Days

East Ayrshire Council has published school holiday and Inservice information here:

<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schoolholidays.aspx>

## Attendance and Timekeeping

Absences should be reported by calling the school on 01563 526 144. We monitor attendance closely, with three group calls per day to pick up on anomalies and ensure that we are aware of any transient absence. Where a young person is not marked as present and we are unaware of any valid reason for their absence, parents/carers will generally receive text message notification of absence.

## Dress Code

We work hard to foster a sense of community and identity. Promotion of school uniform helps us to create unity and togetherness. Given that we welcome pupils from a vast geographical area, we feel that this is an important feature of our school and ensures that our pupils can be recognised across East Ayrshire. Please be assured of the fact that we will always assist families for whom uniform costs are a barrier to following our dress code. Our uniform is as follows.

- School blazer
- White shirt
- School tie
- Plain black jumper or plain black cardigan
- Black school trousers or black skirt
- Black footwear (without colourful logos)

While we appreciate that jackets and alternative footwear may be necessary during inclement weather, we encourage pupils to make use of locker facilities to store outdoor clothing when on site. Young people know that they will be asked to remove non-uniform items when inside the school building and this is a well-established feature of our desire to maintain a sense of equity and pride.



## Security and Visitors

Please note that due to ongoing COVID restrictions, no visitors are allowed without a prior appointment. Please call or email the school to arrange an appointment. All visitors must always wear face coverings and maintain 2m social distancing.

All visitors should report to the school office and sign in. Office staff should issue a visitor lanyard and provide a brief overview of our Child Protection procedures.

## Homework and Supported Study

Most homework activity is posted to the Satchel:One App (previously ShowMyHomework). Parents/Carers of S1 pupils are given login details in the September of their child's first year with us. If any parent/carer has misplaced their login details, they should contact the school to request that they be shared again. Pupils can access Satchel:One from within Glow.

## School Catering

Our catering staff provide break and lunchtime sustenance for pupils and staff across the Campus. Parents/Carers and pupils should pre-order food using the online portal. Please note, you must use Chrome, Firefox, Brave, Chromium, Opera, Safari or Microsoft Edge to access the pre-order portal. Microsoft Internet Explorer is not compatible.

The links shown below provide more information in respect of catering.

[Cashless Payment using ParentPay](#)

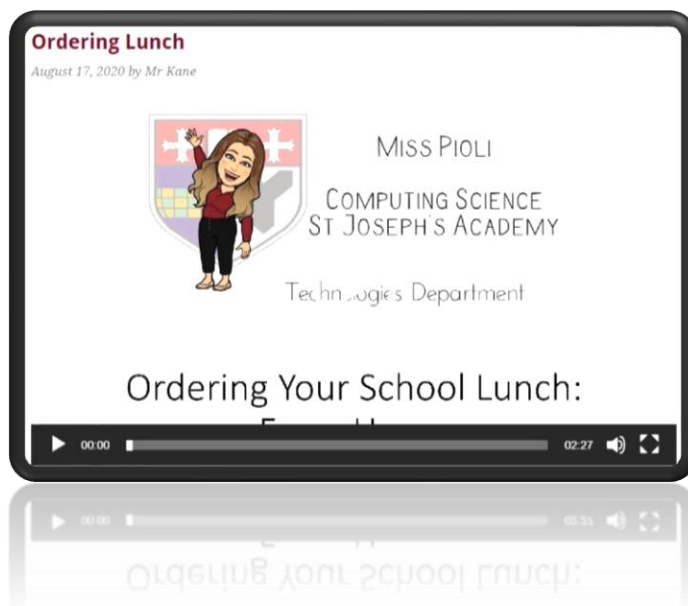
[Current Menu](#)

[Allergies and Specific Dietary Requirements](#)

[Pre-Order Portal – Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Pre-Order Portal](#)

For a video demonstration of how to order lunch using the portal, please click the image shown below.



## **Free School Meals and Clothing Grants**

We strongly encourage parents/carers entitled to apply for Free School Meal (FSM) or Clothing Grants to do so. In recent years, we have noticed an emerging trend whereby some parents/carers who do qualify are not applying. Naturally, this prevents pupils from accessing provision that they are entitled to. Our priority in this respect is to make sure that no young person is prevented from accessing support that is in their best interests, and school staff are always available to help with the application process.

In addition, it is important to note that an accurate overview of Free School Meal status at school level impacts on PEF funding and our Virtual Comparator. Our Virtual Comparator is used by Scottish Government to compare attainment in our school to that elsewhere. Where FSM and Clothing Grant uptake is not accurate, we may not receive additional PEF funding we would otherwise be entitled to.

[Find out if you qualify](#)

[Apply for Free School Meal or Clothing Grants](#)

## **School Transport**

Many of our pupils use School Transport to get to and from school. East Ayrshire Council's website provides parents/carers with the criteria for free school transport. If you do not meet this criteria, you can apply for subsidised access to school transport.

[East Ayrshire Council – School Transport](#)

In addition, all young people in Scotland can now use their National Entitlement Card to travel on bus services across Scotland for free. National Entitlement Card applications will be managed in school on an annual basis.

## **Building and Site Maintenance**

We work closely with Mitie to ensure that all matters pertaining to building maintenance and cleanliness are taken seriously and acted on. We have a very close working relationship with colleagues in Mitie. Should any member of our community have a concern in relation to building maintenance, please report it to the Head Teacher.



## **Complaints Handling**

It is natural that throughout the course of an academic year, Parents/Carers will have reason to contact the school to seek assurance on a wide range of matters. School staff understand this. Given that the nature of a complaint is indeterminable before it comes to our attention, we cannot know in advance who would be best placed to manage the complaint or query in hand.

For this reason, we request that formal complaints be directed to Depute Head Teachers or the Head Teacher only. The Head Teacher will be notified of all complaints and has responsibility to delegate management of the complaint to the promoted member of staff best placed to deal with the issue. In some cases, this may mean that the Head Teacher deals with the totality of a complaint raised, but more commonly, complaints will be managed by Principal Teachers, Pastoral Care Staff or Depute Head Teachers.

The promoted member of staff dealing with the matter will outline potential turnaround times and will communicate next steps as soon as possible. If you do not believe that the matter has been addressed, you should notify Mr Kane. Mr Kane would then follow up with you and take the matter on internally.

On rare occasions, you may feel it necessary to escalate a complaint to local authority level. In almost all cases, complaints that reach the local authority will be referred to Mr Kane for an overview of the issue from the school's perspective. Any actions or next steps would be communicated to you and taken from there.

An overview of East Ayrshire Council's complaints handling procedures can be found [here](#).

## **Positive Relationships/Anti-bullying**

Incidents of bullying are rare within our school. Staff have a legal responsibility to record every instance of perceived bullying and investigate the matter thoroughly. Pleasingly, very few issues have been raised in recent years. However, we are not naïve to the fact that not all perceived or actual bullying is reported to school staff or family members. For this reason, it is essential that you do not hesitate to bring concerns to our attention.

Our curriculum and general staff vigilance allow us to promote appropriate conduct with young people regularly. Pupils can report any perceived bullying via this [online form](#) and know that all staff within the school are available to discuss concerns at any time.

All schools in East Ayrshire follow the guidance outlined within the council's [Anti-Bullying – Respect for All Policy](#).

## **Managing Pupil Conflict**

It is not uncommon across a young person's teenage years to encounter situations whereby conflict or difference of opinion exist between two or more pupils, very often pupils who are part of the same broader friendship group.

In our extensive experience of dealing with issues that are open to interpretation/perception, we encourage parents/carers to consider that school staff simultaneously fulfil the roles of investigator, jury and counsellor. It is completely natural for parents/carers to emotionally invest in any such circumstance and school staff understand this. Unfortunately, and given that school staff are often the first person these issues are discussed with, there are occasions where the emotional strain associated with these situations is misdirected at staff before staff have had an opportunity to investigate an issue.

There can often be difficulty in unpicking the intricacies of inter-personal relationships amongst a group of peers, particularly at a time when young people are still developing the social skills necessary to manage conflict and change. School staff will take decisions based upon the evidence available to them and will do so in good faith. It is always necessary to consider the views of all pupils and families involved, and very often school staff hear an almost identical view from both parties in respect of what one pupil may have said or did to another.

Please know that when managing situations of this nature, staff will offer support to all pupils involved and will update parents/carers as to actions taken.

Please also note that school staff are not at liberty to discuss any actions or interventions put in place for pupils other than those for whom you are the parent/carer.

## **Emergency Procedures / Medical matters**

Given the time at which this handbook has been published, it is necessary to subdivide medical matters into four areas.

### **General First Aid and Illness**

In situations where a young person feels unwell but does not have symptoms of COVID, they will be supported in the first aid area beside the school office. Staff trained in first aid will speak with the young person and make a judgement as to the best course of action. On occasion, this will mean calling home to request that a young person is collected from school.

### **Administration of Medication**

For some pupils, it will be necessary to facilitate the administration of medication on a regular basis. Parents/Carers of those pupils will be aware of an individual plan that has been discussed with school staff. Trained staff will offer support in line with the terms of the plan agreed with parents/carers.

### **Emergency Situations**

In the case of an individual emergency, school staff will contact parents/carers or emergency contacts immediately. In the case of an emergency that impacts the campus, East Ayrshire Council follow protocols which can be accessed [here](#).

## **Mobile Phones in School**

We recognise the value in having access to mobile phones during lessons. While there is no expectation that pupils bring mobile phones to school, staff will often allow pupils to use phones during lessons for research purposes or to participate in virtual tasks that can be facilitated via a mobile phone.

We also understand that at break and lunch time, young people may elect to use their mobile phones. Provided that phones are not being used to facilitate inappropriate behaviour or to seek out inappropriate content, staff recognise that in the digital age, access to phones at break and lunch is inevitable.

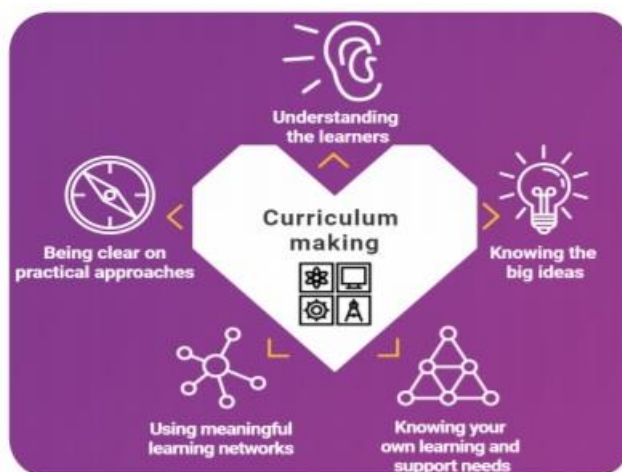
However, where pupils take mobile phones out without permission during class time, school staff will correctly ask that the phone is put away. Young people will always be given an opportunity to put their phone away. If a young person refuses to do so, phones will be held in the school office for collection by the pupil at the end of the school day.

Where there is a habitual pattern of young people using their phones during class time without the permission of staff, we will ask that families keep the device at home for a time limited period. On some occasions, families request that young people hand their phone in to the office in the morning and collect it at close of day. We would only facilitate this request if there is a pattern of phone use outwith break and lunch.

We are grateful to parents/carers for recognising that the above approach is both correct and proportionate. There is ample opportunity at break, lunch and when at home to use mobile devices for social purposes. Any pupil doing so habitually during class time has no reason to do so and we have a duty of care to ensure that they neither fall behind in their learning nor develop a dependence on their phone that is potentially unhealthy in the long term.

## The Curriculum

Extensive information in respect of the Curriculum offered within St. Joseph's Academy can be found by clicking on the image shown below. The link will take you to our school's Curriculum Rationale, which was updated against the latest government guidance last session.



## Course Provision

The tables shown below provide an overview of the qualifications on offer at the time of writing. We operate a free choice model, which means that the courses on offer are not static and change from year to year.

SCQF Level 5					
All qualifications below are also offered at SCQF Levels 4 and 3					
Faculty	Qualification	Course Title	Faculty	Qualification	Course Title
English	National 5	English	Social Subjects	National 5	Geography
	Level 5 Award	Mental Health and Wellbeing		National 5	History
Expressive Arts	National 5	Art & Design		National 5	Modern Studies
	National 5	Drama*		National 5	Skills for Work Travel & Tourism
	National 5	Music	Modern Languages	National 5	French
	National 5	Music Technology		National 5	German
	National 5	Skills for Work Creative Industries		National 5	Spanish
Mathematics	National 5	Applications of Maths	Physical Education	National 5	Physical Education
	National 5	Mathematics		National 5	Skills for Work Sports & Recreation
	Level 5 Award	Personal Finance		NPA	Team Sports & Fitness (Football)
Science	National 5	Biology	Technologies	National 5	Business Management
	National 5	Chemistry		National 5	Computing Science
	National 5	Physics		NPA	Computer Games Development
	National 5	Skills for Work Health Sector		NPA	Cyber Security
Religious Education	National 5	RMP5		National 5	Graphic Communication
Ayrshire College	SCQF Level 4 and 5	Various Courses		National 5	Practical Woodworking



SCQF Level 6		
Faculty	Qualification	Course Title
English	Higher	English
Expressive Arts	Higher	Art & Design
	Higher	Drama
Mathematics	Higher	Music
	Higher	Mathematics
Modern Languages	Higher	French
	Higher	German
	Higher	Spanish
Science	Higher	Biology
	Higher	Chemistry
	Higher	Physics
Social Subjects	Higher	Geography
	Higher	History
	Higher	Modern Studies
Physical Education	Higher	Politics
	Higher	Physical Education
Religious Education	SQA Leadership Award	Leadership
	Higher	RMPs
Technologies	Higher	Business Management
	Higher	Computing Science
	NPA	Cyber Security
	Higher	Graphic Communication
Ayrshire College	SCQF Level 6	Various courses

SCQF Level 7		
Faculty	Qualification	Course Title
English	Advanced Higher	English
Expressive Arts	Advanced Higher	Art & Design (Expressive)
Mathematics	Advanced Higher	Maths
Science	Advanced Higher	Biology
	Advanced Higher	Chemistry
	Advanced Higher	Physics
Social Subjects	Advanced Higher	History
Modern Languages	Advanced Higher	French
	Advanced Higher	Spanish
	Scottish Baccalaureate	Languages
E-Sgoil/ UHI (Distance learning)	Advanced Higher	Geography
Ayrshire College	Foundation Apprenticeship HNC	Various courses
Open University	SCQF Level 7 Modules	Various courses

## Religious Education and Religious Observance

As a Catholic school, all pupils will attend two periods of RE per week. As outlined earlier, we are also well supported by local parish priests, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and NET Ministries. The Scottish Government recognise that the Catholic Ethos of our school is something that parents/carers of young people attending St. Joseph's have opted into. More information on parental rights around religious observance can be found [here](#).

## PSE Curriculum – Sexual Health, Relationships, Parenthood and Drug Awareness

These aspects of the PSE curriculum are taught with the advice and guidance of SCES (Scottish Catholic Education Service) in mind and in line with our right to deliver these aspects of the curriculum while maintaining and promoting our Catholic ethos. Parents/Carers, through our Parent Council, will always be consulted on wider work around Sexual Health, Relationships, Parenthood and Drug Awareness e.g., National Surveys or external provision/input beyond that covered via SCES material.

## **School Improvement and Standards and Qualities**

On an annual basis, each school in Scotland publishes a School Calendar, School Improvement Plan (SIP) and a Standards and Qualities Report (SQR). The improvement plan is looking to the year ahead, and the Standards and Qualities Report summarises progress against local and national priorities in the year past. School Handbooks are published one session in advance of the year at hand. Rather than providing links to outdated documentation within this handbook, parents/carers can find our current Calendar, SIP and most recent SQR on the [homepage of our school website](#). All files can be found just underneath the search bar.

## **Attainment Trends**

The Scottish Government use a tool called INSIGHT to provide schools with an annual overview of attainment. The most recent data available shows the following trends.

- Performance in literacy and numeracy for those leaving St. Joseph's is above the Virtual Comparator used to measure our performance.
- Consistent pattern of year-on-year improvement culminating in the school's strongest exam results on record in session 21/22 (22/23 exams not occurred at time of writing).
- The number of pupils going on to a positive destination is above our virtual comparator, EAC and national figures.
- Across almost all deciles, performance of low attainers relative to high attainers is stronger here than against national figures.

There is no single factor which leads to strong attainment. However, the following measures in recent years have, we believe, contributed significantly to positive trends.

- Renewed focus on standards, expectations, and ethos across a number of areas of school life
- Revised targeted interventions for those at risk of not attaining (ARONA) via our Challenge 100 programme (see next page)
- PEF funded AP Base to support those struggling to engage
- PEF funded attendance officer to promote regular attendance
- Revised curriculum structure from S3-S6 which ensures that young people are accessing the courses best suited to their needs and intended destinations
- Increased breadth in the number of SCQF qualifications delivered in school
- Increase in the range of Advanced Highers on offer in school
- Stability in terms of staffing

## **Raising Attainment - Challenge 100 Programme**

The Scottish Government has been clear about its commitment to closing the poverty-related attainment gap between children and young people from the least and most disadvantaged communities. It is our aim that every young person at St Joseph's Academy is able to achieve their potential regardless of socio-economic factors.

As mentioned above, Insight is an online tool for benchmarking attainment in the Senior Phase and compares the number of tariff points achieved by our pupils with national and local data. While tariff points should not be viewed as the only way of measuring performance, analysing this data can help us evaluate how well young people from specific cohorts are performing at St Joseph's Academy. In 2018, S4 learners in the bottom 20% at St Joseph's Academy achieved fewer average tariff points than those from our virtual comparator. Performance also sat below the authority and national average.

An Alternative Provision (AP) base was established at St Joseph's Academy in January 2019 to engage young people At Risk of Not Achieving (ARONA). The Challenge 100 programme was introduced in 2020 to enhance our support of ARONA pupils, including those who are not accessing the AP base.

Our aim is to identify and support young people who are at risk of not achieving (ARONA) to achieve a minimum of 100 INSIGHT Tariff points by the end of S4, including qualifications in English and Maths.

The Challenge 100 Programme is an intervention which aims to.

- Identify young people who are ARONA
- Design individual learning pathways, where appropriate, to allow each young person ARONA to achieve 100+ Tariff points by the end of S4
- Provide greater support to young people ARONA to achieve qualifications through additional tracking and interventions and enhanced contact with parents/carers and partner agencies
- Process of continual review and alteration e.g., broaden range of SCQF qualifications in response to need across the cohort

INSIGHT data shows a trend of improvement in the attainment of young people from our most disadvantaged communities in recent years. The average tariff points achieved by young people in 2021 has more than doubled since 2018.

## **Learning and Teaching Policy**

While our Challenge 100 programme was developed to target a specific group of young people, it is in the quality of Learning and Teaching across the school that we find the best means by which we can raise attainment. Our current Learning and Teaching policy can be found by clicking [here](#).

## **Assessment and Reporting**

Young people will be assessed regularly through a mixture of formative and summative assessment. Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels still include work that is assessed by teachers and lecturers, but pupils will also have to pass a course assessment for these qualifications – usually an examination paper and/or coursework which will be marked by SQA.

The purpose of reporting is to support and improve learning. It should be an on-going process which provides clear information on a learner's strengths, areas for development and specifically what needs to be done to ensure continued progress. As much as possible, learners should be involved in the reporting process through on-going reflection and dialogue about their learning. It is also important that reporting fully involves and values the role of parents and carers. We know that parental engagement has a significant impact on learners' progress.

Parents will receive both tracking and full reports to ensure they are aware of their child's strengths and areas for development at key stages in the year.

Tracking reports will contain working grades as well as ratings for behaviour, effort, and homework. Full reports are more detailed and contain in-depth comment on a learner's progress and next steps in learning, along with strategies to support learning at home. Reports are often issued around the time of option choices for the next session to ensure young people can make informed choices about future pathways.

All reports will be issued by email. It is always our intention to ensure that reports are issued to all parents/carers who should receive reports. We understand that some family circumstances necessitate the issuing of report to more than one parent/carer separately. We make every effort to retain an accurate list of those pupils for whom we need to issue two reports separately. Where your family circumstances change and you require separate reports, please notify us as soon as possible.

Information to help clarify the meaning of the terminology used in reports is sent out at the time of reporting. Reporting dates for session 2022/23 will be released in August 2022. An up-to-date school calendar will always be available on our [school homepage](#).

## **Parents' Evenings**

In session 23/24, we will revert to face to face Parents' Evenings following several years of online meetings in light of COVID. All pupils receive one parents' evening per academic year.

Please note, in the event that Parents/Carers either reside apart or will not be in the same location during Parents' Evening, it is possible to share joining links with one another that will allow both/all parents/carers to attend meetings with staff.

## Student Leadership

In June of each year, we appoint our Junior Leadership Team (S3) and our Senior Leadership Team (S6). Pupils from both teams work in partnership with staff and our student improvement groups to take forward school priorities for the year ahead.

INSPIRE AND TRANSFORM

St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock

Pupil Leadership Team (PLT) (S6)	
Michael	Head Boy
Julia	Head Girl
Euan	Depute Head Boy
Cona	Depute Head Girl
Christopher	Head Boy of Junior School
Katie	Head Girl of Junior School
Ros	House Representative
Jane	House Representative
Dominika	House Representative
Euan	House Representative



take part



## Student Improvement Groups

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (respect for the views of the child) indicates “Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.”

Learner Participation in Educational Settings (3-18) (2018) states “there is now considerable evidence from research that supports the view that addressing learner participation makes for effective policy making, enhances school life, and improves a range of outcomes for learners.”

How Good Is OUR School? (2018) specifies “we know that children and young people can help to improve their schools when they have a say, and it is important that you are involved in this in your school.”

Considering these three policy drivers, the introduction of a Student Improvement Group (SIG) provides a meaningful way in which our pupils can voice their opinions and have their views considered in decisions which impact upon them. Our Student Improvement Group is important and is a useful way for us, as a school, to provide leadership and development opportunities for our pupils.



Our SIG is made up of three representatives from each year group and is directed by two members from both the Junior and Senior Pupil Leadership Teams, who form a cabinet and oversee the SIG. All pupils will learn about the Student Improvement Group and its role during their Personal Support classes. Expectations of members within the SIG will also be shared. Pupils interested in running for membership will advise their Pastoral Care teacher. Year Groups should then elect three members to represent them on the SIG. Elections for pupils in S2-S6 will take place in June with elections for S1 pupils taking place in early September. Members of the SIG will form four committees and will meet once per term during a Friday lunchtime.

Committees will lead on an arena from within the policy driver Learner Participation and will also consider themes from How Good Is OUR School? (pupil edition). Each committee will be made up of four or five SIG members and two members of the Pupil Cabinet. Pupil Cabinet members will take it in turn to chair the meetings with the other acting as minute taker. Committee members will gather views from Personal Support Classes prior to meetings. Pupil Cabinet members will create an agenda for the meeting and a member of staff will attend all meetings.

Committee      Decision Making Groups

Committee      Connection with Wider Community/Our school and community

Committee      Learning Teaching and Assessment/Our Learning and Teaching

Committee      Opportunities for Personal Achievement





## Achievement and Celebrating Success

We recognise and value wider achievement within St. Joseph's Academy. COVID mitigations have meant that in recent years we have had to curtail somewhat our extra-curricular activity and how we celebrate success as a community. Our merit system is used as means by which we can celebrate day-to-day success and we offer a number of opportunities for young people to achieve outwith a classroom setting.

A schedule of extra-curricular activity is released on an annual basis. Our current provision can be accessed via this [link](#). Please note that provision can and does change regularly.

Mr Hannah and Mr Yemm lead regular Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions during various weekends of the school session. Mr Hannah will always share information with pupils interested in participating at the start of the academic session.



PE staff run various school teams and offer the chance for pupils to play sport after school. Art, Drama and Music groups enhance the classroom offering in Expressive Arts and staff from across the school run various lunchtime and after school clubs and groups.



## Staff List – Correct as of 16/05/2023

<b>Senior Leadership Team</b>  Mr Kane (HT) Mrs Shearer (DHT) Mr Boyle (DHT) Miss Quigley (DHT)  <b>Religious Education</b>  Mr Mann (PT) Mrs Devine	<b>Pastoral Care</b>  Miss Cathie (PT Pastoral Care) Mrs Marshall (PT Pastoral Care) Mrs Duthie (Acting PT Pastoral Care)  <b>Support for Learning</b>  Mrs Hoy (PT Support for Learning) Mr Avery (Support for Learning)
<b>Maths</b>  Mr Johnston (PT) Miss Egan Mrs Curley Mrs Jamieson Mr Gibson <i>Mrs Shearer (DHT)</i>	<b>English</b>  Mrs Lloyd (PT) Mrs C Kelly Mrs Hill Mrs Howie Mr Brogan Mrs Kennedy <i>Mrs Duthie (Acting PTPC)</i>
<b>Social Subjects</b>  Mrs Cunningham (PT) (Geography) Miss Devaney (History and Modern Studies) Miss Gibson (History and Modern Studies) Mr Marr (History and Modern Studies) Miss Fiddes (History) <i>Miss Quigley (DHT) (History and Modern Studies)</i>	<b>Science</b>  Mrs McElhinney (PT) (Chemistry) Mrs Munn (Physics) Mrs Gilroy (Chemistry) Ms Horrey (Biology) Mrs McGeer (Biology) Mr Hannah (Chemistry and Biology) Mr Barbour (Physics) Mr Giroux (Biology)
<b>Physical Education and Home Economics</b>  Mr Howson (PT) (PE) Mrs McErlean (Home Economics) Mrs Shaw (PE) Mr Fulton (PE) Mrs Parker (PE) <i>Miss Cathie (PTPC) (PE)</i> <i>Mr Boyle (DHT) (PE)</i>	<b>Expressive Arts (Art, Drama and Music)</b>  Miss Woodward (PT) (Art) Mrs Pyott (Art) Mrs Ferguson (Drama) Miss Thomson (Music) Miss McLachlan (Music) <i>Mrs Marshall (PTPC) (Music)</i>
<b>Modern Languages</b>  Miss Blacklock (PT) Mrs A Kelly Mrs Donaghy	<b>Technical, Computing and Business</b>  Mr Tomb (PT) (Technical) Mrs Cassidy (Business) Mrs Flanagan (Computing) Mr Dunn (Computing) <i>Mr Kane (HT) (Computing)</i>

<b>Chaplaincy</b>  Fr. M. Chambers Fr. S. McGrattan Fr. K Rennie Fr. P. Kitchen Fr. G. Onoyima Sr. Mabel Sr. Rose Confidence Sr. Juliet NET Ministries  <b>HR Link</b>  C Pollock	<b>PEF Funded Support Staff</b>  Miss Baxter (Attendance Officer) Miss Walker (Alternative Provision Base) Miss Millar (Alternative Provision Base)  <b>Educational Psychologists</b>  Mr Brotherton Mr Beattie  <b>School Nurse</b>  V Paton
<b>Office Staff</b>  Mr Fitzsimmons (AFO) Mrs Harte (AFO) Mrs McMillan Mrs Green Mrs McPike Mrs Barbour	<b>Technicians</b>  Ms Ferguson (Senior Technician) Mr Dennis (Science) Mr Elliott (IT) Mr Starritt (Technical)
<b>Classroom Assistants</b>  Miss Walker (seconded to PEF Support post) Mrs Gardiner Mrs Miller Mrs Bekker Mrs Hughes Ms McCrone Mrs Murray Mrs Smith Mr Hamilton-Bulger Mrs Demir Miss Stephenson Mrs Nica Mr Hastings  <b>Facilities and Property Management (EAC) Link</b>  Mr Dickie	<b>Catering</b>  J Douglas R McMillan P Hunter R Tidy J Kelly K Stibbles (Catering and Mitie) L Sloan (Catering and Mitie) K Morton (Catering and Mitie) C McGuffie J Wilson L Baird J McGowan N Cree A Pattison G Wyper C Davidson
<b>Campus Officer</b>  PC Dempster  <b>Librarian</b>  Mrs Kirkwood  <b>SDS Careers Adviser</b>  Miss Faulds	<b>Mitie</b>  A Hawkes G Yemm J Robertson S ? A Calder A Currie J Cooper L Mair P Berrington M Fulton  K Mackin M Brown A Todd C Cunningham A Hyslop N Lamberton LA Campbell L Gardner K McCormack R Smith
In addition, we work closely with several visiting and partner staff from the Education department, Health and Social Care, Barnardo's, Vibrant Communities, Learning Outdoors Support Team (based on site), EAST, Princes Trust, YPI, SCQF, CentreStage, Upstream Counselling, Exchange Counselling, SCES, Galloway Diocese, partner East Ayrshire schools and a range of staff from across several departments within East Ayrshire Council.	

## **Further Information**

If you would like further information on any of the content covered within this handbook, please contact us using the [contact us form](#) on our website

You may also find the undernoted links useful.

[East Ayrshire Council](#)

[Education Scotland](#)

[SQA](#)

[SCES \(Scottish Catholic Education Service\)](#)

[Data Protection](#)