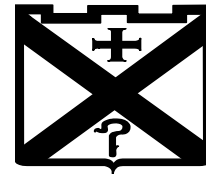


MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



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How to contact us



0141 577 2300
08:20am - 4:30pm
(3.15pm Fridays)



0141 577 2314

www.mearnscastle.co.uk



Dear Parents/Carers

I am delighted to contact you through our first Newsletter of the new session.

Following another set of impressive SQA results we are now settled into the rhythm of a new school session and as you will see from the Newsletter it is business as usual at Mearns Castle. The school as always is an exciting hive of activity both in and out of the classroom and there is never a dull moment for pupils and staff alike.

You will perhaps recollect that in the last Newsletter in June I expressed some concerns about the declining standard of school uniform at the time. I am delighted to say that standards have improved with the start of the new session and I would ask for your support in ensuring that these high standards are maintained for the rest of the session. As I have stated previously it is my ambition that our school is excellent in every dimension and I am sure you will agree that school uniform has a role to play in achieving this ambition.

You may be aware that the Scottish Government is currently involved in a consultation on the next generation of national qualifications in Scotland. The proposed timescale for the introduction of these qualifications is from 2012 / 2013 onwards. If this turns out to be the case the first group of young people to be presented for these qualifications are currently in P7 and will be coming to S1 in Mearns Castle in August 2009. I will be making a presentation on this consultation to our Parent Council on Wednesday 22nd October at 7.00pm in the School Conference Room. All parents as members of the Parent Forum are welcome to attend this presentation. I would ask however that if you intend to come along you contact the school office to let them know so that we can have an accurate idea of numbers attending. If you are unable to attend the presentation I would still urge you to participate in the consultation which is open until 31st October 2008 and can be accessed on line at www.scotland.gov.uk/consultations under 'current consultations'.

On the subject of websites can I draw your attention to our recently re-designed school website at www.mearnscastle.co.uk Mr Cairns our PT Computing and his team have put a lot of work into creating our new site and I am sure when you access it you will agree that he has made an excellent job of the new design.

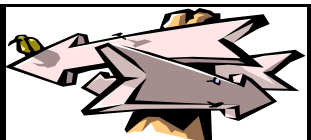
One issue that is again causing me concern is the congestion at the front of the building at the start and the end of the school day. I would appreciate it if for the safety of our young people you would help us to keep this to a minimum by ensuring that if you have to drop off your child by car you use the drop-off zones identified for that purpose. Thank you for your support in this matter.

I hope you find the Newsletter both interesting and enjoyable and if you wish any further information on any of the items covered or indeed want to raise any other issues please do not hesitate to contact us. Also please remember to complete the tear-off slip at the end of the Newsletter and add any comments you wish to make.

I hope you and your family enjoy the long weekend and the October holiday.

Dean Smith
Head Teacher

College/University Applications



By Mr H Cairney

Careers Fair

From mid September to the end of November senior pupils will be given a great deal of support to assist them with their College or University applications. This will be achieved during S6 PSE time which is on a Monday P3 and S5 applicants will be extracted from PE or PSE classes at this time.

All forms to be returned to advisors on or before these dates

Early applicants	Personal Statements Thursday 25 th September Forms completed and fees paid Monday 6 th October
Other applicants Including Route A Art & Design	Personal Statements Friday 24 th October Forms completed and fees paid Friday 14 th November
Route B Art & Design	See Mr Cairney
Fees	£15.00 for two or more choices £ 5.00 for one choice

There is no deadline for College applicants but this process should be completed as early as possible.

I would like to invite you and your child to attend our annual Careers Convention. This event will be held on Wednesday 1st October in the Open Area.

It promises to be an interesting and informative evening with representatives from Universities and Colleges and from many diverse careers such as the Armed Forces, Construction and Medicine. In order to cope with the large number we expect to attend, we would ask that pupils and parents from S2 and S3 attend from 6pm to 7pm and S4, 5 and 6 from 7pm to 8pm.

The event will comprise of stands for each represented organisation where pupils and parents will be able to collect information and ask questions of the representative. This is an invaluable opportunity to obtain information about course choices and career options.

The Law Society of Scotland Donald Dewar Memorial Debating Final 2008

By Mr J McGowne



Sally McKeeve, Alex Fergusson (MSP) & Paul Livingston

Back on 12th June Sally McKeeve and Paul Livingston (formerly of S6) took part in the Law Society debating final in the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. A group of around 50 supporters, including pupils, staff, family and friends also made the journey to encourage the team. Also competing in the final were Robert Gordon's College of Aberdeen, Douglas Academy and the High School of Dundee. The motion on the evening was *'This House believes that a multi-cultural society is a unified society'*. Sally and Paul debated to their usual very high standard on the night but narrowly missed out on the top prize. Great credit is also due to the many pupils from Mearns Castle who contributed to the floor debates.

Finally, a big thank-you not only to Sally and Paul for their contributions to debating for the last few years, but also to Greg Cunningham and Rhea Wolfson who competed in the same competition. All four were always on hand to offer encouragement and advice to the younger debaters in the school throughout their time at Mearns Castle.

We wish our Debators ever success in the coming year.

Performing Arts Information

By Miss A Borland

All lunchtime and after school music groups have now started rehearsing.

All lunchtime groups should bring a packed lunch with them which they can eat in the rehearsal room.

Any pupil who is interested in joining a group should speak to Miss Borland in the music department for more information.

Monday

Junior Vocal Group (S1-3) - C4 lunchtime

Woodwind Ensemble - C5 lunchtime

Percussion Ensemble - C3 lunchtime

Chamber Group - C3 - 3.35- 4.30pm*

*(new group this session - looking for all string, woodwind, brass and percussion players!)

Tuesday

Junior Jazz Band - C3 - 3.35-4.30pm

Thursday

String Ensemble - D1 - lunchtime

Senior Jazz Band - C3 - 3.35-4.30pm

Friday

Senior Vocal Group (S4-6) - C4 lunchtime

Junior Concert Band C3 - lunchtime

Senior Concert Band 2.45 - 4.30pm

The date for our Winter Concert has changed to **Wednesday 3rd December**.

All of the music groups will be performing at this concert plus solo and small group items and some drama performances.

We hope to see you there!

World Championship Success

By Mrs D Ferguson



Emily Morrison S4 has been dancing in top level Highland Dancing competitions recently. This summer she has danced in the Canadian Championships where she came home with 5 trophies and 22 medals. Another important event was the Commonwealth Championships on Sunday 24th August where she came 2nd.

The most important Highland Dancing event of the year was the World Highland Dancing Championships at Cowal, near Dunoon, on Saturday 30th August. Emily came 4th in the World. 1st was New Zealand, 2nd and 3rd were two Canadians and the first Scottish dancer was Emily. We're told the stadium was in an uproar - Scotland made the line up!

Many congratulations to Emily for all her success. We are all proud of you.

Sporting Achievement

By Mrs J Herald

Calum Firth, Calum McWilliam and Stuart Woodhouse, all S2, took part in the finals of the National Youth Athletic League in Manchester on 6th September.

Calum McWilliam won gold in the Shot Putt and all 3 boys won a silver in the 4x100 meter relay.

Congratulations to all three!



Callum McWilliam S2 (centre)

Left to right Callum McWilliam, Callum Firth & Stuart Woodhouse S2



London English Trip 08

By Alexander Dougans – Haining (S5)
& Lesley McBride (S5)



The train journey was about five hours long and was very entertaining even though there was not much to do; we still managed to amuse ourselves! We stayed at the Royal National Hotel which was a very lovely hotel to stay in. The food and bedrooms of the hotel were of very high quality. On the first night, we all went to see a production of The Lion King which was enjoyable and very visual with all the different animals. The day after we went on a tour of Shakespeare's Globe this was interesting as we saw the stage up close and the different areas of where the spectators would stand or sit depending on their social status. After the Globe was the River Boat experience which took everyone up the River Thames and back down while talking about the many different bridges, the Houses of Parliament, the Ministry of Defence and much more. That same night was the night of Billy Elliot and we were all very ecstatic about seeing the musical and when it ended, everyone seemed to love it and said it was amazing. Some people thought it was so amazing that they even bought the Soundtrack. Sadly, the last day arrived so it was time to return home but before we started the journey back, we took a trip down Oxford Street and got to experience many of the shops there and go on a shopping spree. Unfortunately it was time to head to Kings Cross Station and get the train home, so there we were, another 5 hours until we reached Glasgow Central. Overall, the London trip was excellent and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it.

Duke of Edinburgh

By Mrs J Herald

Our involvement in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme is thriving. Last session 80 pupils achieved the Silver Award and this session we have 40 pupils working towards silver and 80 going for bronze. This is really an impressive number.

Good luck to everyone and many thanks to Mrs Ward, Mr Hutchison, and Mrs McFetridge for their enthusiasm and commitment.

Young Enterprise 08/09

By Imaan Gangi S6 (Company Secretary)

This year the S6 Young Enterprise team hopes to continue the successful streak that Mearns Castle High School has had in previous years. The enthusiasm we will show towards this entrepreneurial experience is clearly evident through the number of Enterprisers we have this year. Each person is from 6th year and together we hope to build on our business acumen and create an innovative and sellable product.

Members include:

Graham Adams, Jonathan Agnew, Nayab Ahmed, Julia Caplan, Ben Carroll, Sub Mei Chan, Lauren Daly, Kerry Fergus, Richard Freed, Imaan Gangi, Alister Gibson, Sam Green, Adam Hunt, Kelsey Hunter, Stuart McIntosh, Kirsteen McPake and Rachel Moore.

We are on the verge of deciding our product or service and have yet to finalise a Company name. However we would appreciate the support of all students and parents towards our Company in the not so distant future.

Geography Alps Trip 2008

By Alasdair McGuire & Josh Burnett (formerly S3)

On the 6th June 2008, 11 people from S3 went with the Geography department to France to stay in the Alps along with pupils from St Ninians and Woodfarm High Schools.

We drove down to Dover and then got a ferry to France. We visited glaciers and towns. Our favourite part was supermaning down to the lake each evening for an ice cold swim.

Josh and I were pirates for the whole trip and we both talked like pirates too. I unfortunately fell down a mountain into nettles but was rescued by 'Cap'n Josh'. We were made to do some work and were out with our clipboards all day. Food was good, Kevin ate ours and everyone else's. David got himself a girl.

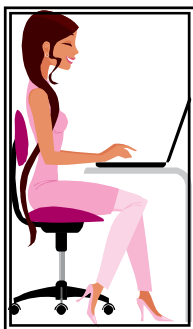
Some pupils got up at 8.00am for a jog. We saw global warming in action as a large piece of ice rumbled down a U-shaped valley.

Industrial Awareness Day

By Ms S Oram

I am looking for adults to help out at this event on Thursday 21st May 2009. It will involve guiding a group of approximately 10, S3 pupils through an Enterprise experience which will include a product production line.

If you would like to participate in this day long event, please could you contact Mrs Muir in the school office who will be delighted to take your details and give further information on what is involved.



School Correspondence

Could all correspondence from Parents/Carers to the School please be marked clearly with your son/daughter's name and year group on the envelope or letter.

Thank you

School Medical Room Procedure



The procedure for all pupils, regardless of what year group, if feeling unwell is:

- ◆ The Pupil lets the class teacher know they are feeling unwell. If necessary the pupil will be allowed to go to the Medical Room.
- ◆ The pupil will be assessed in the Medical Room and if necessary a member of the **Office Staff** will then call a Parent/Carer to collect the pupil.
- ◆ If a pupil is feeling unwell outwith class time they should report to the School Office where they will be attended to.

Remember for up-to-date school information, dates, events & news visit our website

www.mearnscastle.com

Tutor Group Lessons

By Mrs J Herald

Pupils from S1 – S4 have been discussing the following issues: uniform, the effects of late coming and respecting others. Pupils were enthusiastic in their discussions and have made comments and given suggestions as to how we can reward pupils for being responsible pupils in Mearns Castle. This initiative is part of our discussions on Values and Vision and will continue over the next few months.

Late Coming

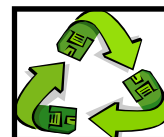
By Mrs J Herald

In May of last session we piloted a scheme to deter late coming in the school, which is very disruptive to all pupils in classes. Pupils will now be given detention on a Friday at lunch-time if they are late 3 times or more.

Already a number of pupils have attended detention. We ask for your support in ensuring that your son or daughter arrives on time for morning and afternoon classes.

Eco Schools

By Mrs J Herald



This session we are again working towards gaining Green Flag status. There are many recycling and energy saving initiatives going on in the school at the moment. We hope that we can encourage all pupils and adults to avoid litter in our grounds. Everyone should be mindful of our environment and we will be successful in our aim to be the first secondary school in East Renfrewshire to gain the Green Flag. We were awarded silver two years ago.

This year we would like to improve our environment. To achieve this we are looking for bulbs to plant for spring flowering and we would be delighted to accept donations from parents who are willing to support this adventure.

Many thanks to Miss F McCormick for coordinating Eco Schools this year

Modern Languages News

By Mrs L Stewart

Paris Trip 2008

Once again the Modern Languages Department took a (large!) group of pupils to Paris in the last week of the summer term. As always the overnight coach journey was tiring but only, it would seem, for the staff as our pupils always seemed to be full of energy.

We visited as many famous monuments and buildings as we could fit in – the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs -Elysées, the Palace of Versailles, the Sacré-Cœur, the Tour Montparnasse, the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay. We were also able to fit in a river boat trip, a day at the Astérix Theme Park, a guided tour of the Stade de France and, of course, a visit to the shops!

We were fortunate to have the services of two very experienced bus drivers who knew their way around the city of Paris, which saved the staff from having to navigate round the complicated one-way system of the city. The Parisians didn't know exactly what had hit them as a group of 90 pupils and teachers were to be seen in various parts of the city wearing their bright blue baseball caps. We were certainly easy to spot!

Our pupils were excellent time-keepers and their good behaviour was commented on by members of the public. We hope that all the pupils enjoyed themselves and might think of returning to Paris sometime in the future.

European Day

The Modern Languages Department will be celebrating the annual European Day of Languages at the end of September. There will be lots of games and quizzes and a chance to learn more about different European countries and the languages spoken in them. S2 Classes will be enjoying a French breakfast.

To find out more please visit www.ecml.at/edl



Visit to Germany 2008

For the first time in many years the Modern Languages Department organised a trip to Germany in combination with the History Department. The group of almost 40 people flew to Munich where they enjoyed a week of glorious weather.

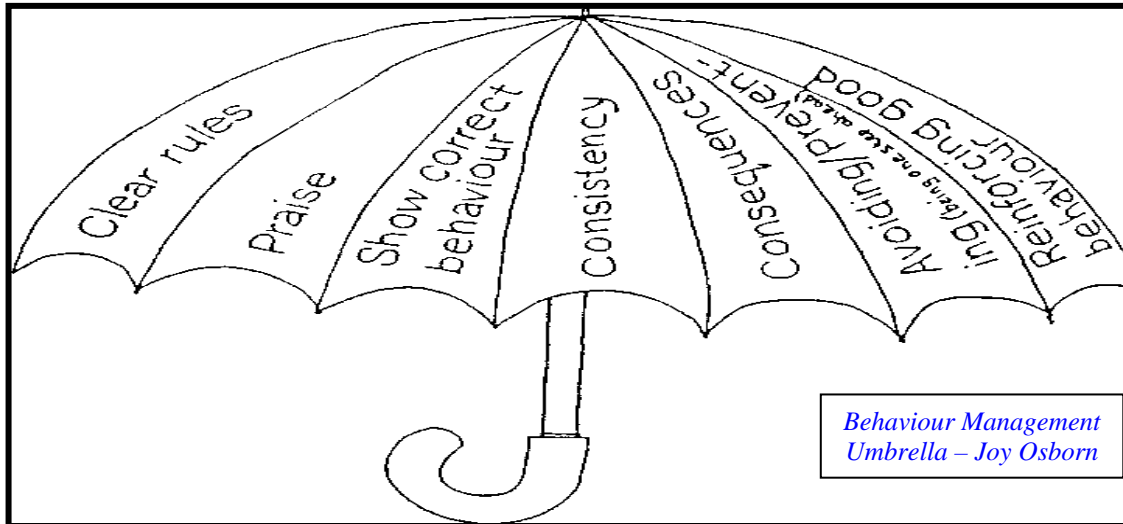
The pupils had a full itinerary with visits to the Salt Mines in Berchtesgaden, the Bavarian Film Studios and Dachau Concentration Camp. They were also able to spend a day in the city of Nuremberg, take a historical walking tour of Munich, go bowling and visit the Olympic Stadium and Tower. A visit to Hitler's Eagle's Nest House was intended but owing to problems outwith the group's control it was impossible to access. However, the highlight of the trip would seem to have been the "Oompah" night at the Hofbräuhaus in Munich where everyone was able to participate in traditional German dances and rousing songs.

Library Visit



The Advanced Higher French class is looking forward to a trip to the Alliance Française library on the 25th of September with Madame Naddell. After this they will relax in a French speaking cafe in the West End.

Handling Teenage Behaviour



Parenting is a very important but stressful job; especially around times of puberty, adolescence and change (moving to High School for example), however we all have skills, which we use to help us care for our children & young people.

To assist parents with this task a "Handling Teenage Behaviour" group will be offered at Woodfarm High School, Community Wing; Thursday 23rd October – Thursday 27th November 2008 from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. This will be an informal and enjoyable group, which will look at parenting skills, boundaries, rules, discipline, rewards and self-esteem etc.

**For further information or to book a place, either complete the tear off slip below and return to your child's school or contact:
 Tracy Dillon: 07974 178 798 / 577 2226
 Vivienne Middleton: 577 3535**

✂ _____

I am interested in attending the Handling Teenage Behaviour Course at Woodfarm High School, Conference room.

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... Contact Telephone Number:.....

Will you require childcare whilst you attend the Course: YES / NO

If YES, Name of child:..... Age of child:.....

Name of child:..... Age of child:.....

Name of child:..... Age of child:.....

**S1 Fun Run:
Thursday 25th September**



Each year our S1 pupils are joined by S6 pupils to participate in a sponsored run to raise money for our school funds.

This year the run will take place during Periods 6 and 7 on Thursday 25th September.

The route is stewarded by police, staff and S6 pupils. A large number of S6 pupils and staff also run with the pupils. The emphasis is on fun and we encourage pupils to wear fancy dress.

Prizes are awarded for the best costumes and also to the class which raises the most sponsorship. Pupils should collect money from their sponsors after the race and return their sponsor cards and money on Thursday 25th September.

PUPIL COUNCIL
By Mrs J Herald

Pupils have been electing Form Captains as representatives for their year groups. Pupil Council members will be elected from the Form Captains – 2 boys and 2 girls for each year. Pupil Council meetings are held once a fortnight and lively discussions take place on a variety of issues which affect all pupils in school. Our first meeting this session was on Monday 22nd September when we discussed our Values and Vision for Mearns Castle.

Mr Wilson, Director of Education, has hosted a meeting of secondary pupils at his ERC Pupil Council on Wednesday 17th September. These meetings are held twice a year and each school sends a pupil from S1, S3 and S6.

This year we are being represented by Natalie George S6, Andrew Paterson S3 and Bosire Oroko S1.

S1 Information

By Ms A Lewis

Welcome to all our S1 pupils and their parents! Over 200 pupils have joined us this session. During the first week, our **Academic Family**, comprising of pupils from S6, guided the new S1 to and from classes. Their support and assistance was of great benefit to the S1 pupils and helped settle them into Mearns Castle.

S1 pupils would like to extend a huge thank you to all the S6 pupils who were members of the Academic Family.

S1 Open Evening : Tuesday 23rd September

Each session we open our doors to parents of S1 pupils to allow them to see how the school functions. This year the evening was on Tuesday 23rd September. Subject departments provided live activities and displays of work from 6.30 - 8.30pm and refreshments were provided by parents of our Parent Council assisted by S6 pupils.

We hope if you attended, that you were impressed by the variety of activities you experienced during the evening.

A warm welcome was extended to everyone.

Peer Mentors (Buddies)

This session 126, S1 pupils have a Peer Mentor. Pupils meet with their Mentor or Buddy at least once a week at lunchtime.

If your son or daughter would still like to have a " Buddy" please contact Ms Lewis or Mrs Crilley on 0141 577 2300.

.....
Please return the tear-off slip to the blue boxes at the Main Office
I have received a copy of the Newsletter
Pupil's Name:.....Class:.....
Parent's/Carer Signature:
Comments:
.....