



Mearns Castle High School

School Information for Parents/Carers

General

Parents Portal

You will already have received information on how to register with Parents Portal. If you have not already done so, it is essential that you register as soon as possible. By doing so you will be able to access the following information:

Annual Data Check

To ensure an effective home/school partnership it is essential that we have full and accurate details about your child. To this end please view the Annual Data Check information via the Parents Portal and update if necessary. This can be updated at any point if your details change but must be checked and marked complete on an annual basis. It would be very helpful if your emergency contact could be someone who lives and/or works near the school.

I would also ask you to check any medical information noted on the Annual Data Check form and update this as required. Medical information will be shared with staff, if this causes you any concern please contact the school office.

Consent for Photography and Digital Imaging

As a mechanism for recording and celebrating achievement pupils are regularly photographed or filmed in the school. These images are used in a variety of forms thereafter. In order to continue using your child's image in these ways we now require consent from both you and your child. To give us this consent please complete the Photography and Digital Imaging form via the Parents Portal.

Responsible User Agreement

As you are aware the use of digital technology is an increasingly important aspect of the learning process. To allow your child to use computer equipment in school and access the Education Network and Internet we require both you and your child to read carefully, complete and sign the Responsible User Agreement form via the Parents Portal.

PE Consent Form

During the school session pupils can be involved in a variety of PE sporting events. It would be very helpful, in anticipation of your child being involved in any of these events, if you could complete the PE consent form via Parents Portal.

Please ensure that you complete the above documentation on the Parents Portal by Friday 28 August 2020, at the latest.

Pupil Timetables

Pupil timetables are currently available and will be updated as appropriate and available to view throughout the school session.

Pupil Reports

All pupil reports will, henceforth, be issued via the Parents Portal based on the timings in the Parents' Calendar.

Direct Access to

From Parents Portal you will be able to access the School Website, Twitter, Email and Calendar and the ERC website.

If you require any assistance in accessing or using the Parents Portal please contact the school office.

Communication with Parents

We continue to review our strategies for communicating with you to ensure that they are as effective as possible. You will be aware that our main form of communication is email and text. Following positive feedback from parents it is our intention to continue to use these electronic media for most of our communication.

It would be very helpful if on the annual data check form you could supply us with a current mobile phone number on which you could receive texts and a current email address.

We are also making increasing use of our school website and Twitter account as means of communication. Regular use of the website and Twitter account would be another way of accessing up-to-date information about the school. The website address is www.ea.e-renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle and our Twitter account is @mearnshigh.

School Calendar

We published a Parents' Calendar for session 2020-2021 with the communication you were sent in June 2020. This calendar is also available on the school's website.

Timekeeping

Lessons begin at 8.45 am each morning. Please make every effort to ensure that your child arrives at school on time as latecoming is disruptive to the learning and teaching process.

Pupil Absence

If your child is absent from school please call 0141 577 2300 or email schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk at the start of each day of the absence so that the correct absence code can be assigned. We regularly use texts and letters to keep you informed of any unexplained absence from school. Your phone calls or emails to explain absence allow us to ensure records are accurate and also prevent further unnecessary communication. Your cooperation in keeping us informed of absence is very much appreciated.

Permission to be Absent

Pupils are entitled to permission to be absent from school if they are attending a doctor, dentist or hospital appointment. If possible, please schedule such appointments outwith the school day. Please inform the school, in advance of these appointments, and your child will be recorded with *Permission* rather than *Absent*.

If you are unable to inform the school in advance, please inform the school office immediately. Your child's attendance record will then be amended to *Permission*.

Religious Observance

Your child will be given authorised permission to be absent on days recognised to be for Religious Observance only if you advise the school office of your intention on these days. You may wish to list in one letter/email all days during the school year that your child will be absent for this reason. If you have more than one child at this school then one letter/email will suffice for all. Without notification your child will be marked as "unauthorised absence"

Picking up and Dropping off pupils by car

For Health & Safety reasons please use the areas identified for these purposes. It is not appropriate for parents to use the car parks as a pick up or drop off point. The car parks are for staff and visitors only.

Medication

The office staff will distribute any medication which is required to be taken during the school day. In order for this to be administered, a parental consent form, which is available from the school office, must be completed stating the dose and the times that the medication is taken. Please label all medication with the pupil's name and date of birth and ensure that it is within the expiry date and replaced as necessary. Please also note that if you are picking your child from the medical room you must come to the window of the school office. We will not allow a child who is unwell to leave school unaccompanied.

Electronic Communication Devices - Mobile Phones etc

As you are aware the school now has full Wifi capability. On occasion, therefore, pupils will be encouraged to use their electronic communication devices in classes as part of the learning and teaching process. Use of electronic devices is only with the class teacher's permission.

If, at any time however, pupils use their device inappropriately the device will be confiscated by staff and secured in the School Office. The device will not then be returned to the pupil. It will only be returned when a parent collects it in person from the School Office.

We are satisfied that these arrangements keep the disruption to the work of the school by the inappropriate use of such devices to an absolute minimum. I would welcome your support in ensuring that, for everyone's benefit, your child adheres to the guidelines described above.

Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) works in partnership with schools to deliver Careers Information, Advice and Guidance. Your child may participate in group engagements and/or one-to-one sessions with a Careers Adviser in order to develop their Career Management Skills. As SDS strives to continuously improve their services, your child may be asked to provide feedback on the services they have received. Any feedback collected will be done so anonymously and no personal details will be recorded.

Online Payments

East Renfrewshire Council provides an online payment facility to make it easier for parents to pay for school meals, school trips etc. The 'ParentPay' service is part of the council's wider public service excellence programme aimed at offering an increasing range of services online. With the 'ParentPay' service, you will be able to pay online at ParentPay.com or via the school or Council website instead of sending your child to school with cash. Your child will already have received an activation letter detailing a username and password. If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Lunch

Please note the 'ParentPay' system allows you to check your child's school meals balance. This facility enables you to ensure your child's account has sufficient funds to purchase lunch. If your child has no money for lunch they can go to the school office for assistance.

Senior Awards Ceremony

This is an important highlight in the life of the school and we are currently investigating the best approach to hold this in the current circumstances.

Your assistance in the above matters is greatly appreciated and contributes to an effective and safe administrative system within Mearns Castle.

As I stated earlier, a full Parents' Newsletter will be published in September. In the meantime I hope you find this information helpful. If you wish to discuss any matter further please contact us.