



School Update 24th January 2022

Head Teacher Introduction



Dear Parent,

I hope that you and your family are well and that you find the information included in this update useful and interesting. There is a focus on Senior Phase assessment and support given the crucial importance of our senior pupils working hard towards success in their SQA courses at this time.

Best wishes,

Mr. S. Clark

Head Teacher

Covid-19 Update

In line with society generally, we continue to see positive case results affecting members of the school community. There remains no evidence of transmission to low risk contacts such as pupils who have shared the same class. However, we will continue to issue the 'warn and inform' letters to parents when a Year Group has had at least one positive case in a one week period. Please continue to be vigilant to potential Covid-19 symptoms and to encourage your child to undertake regular LFD testing.

Given restrictions across society are being reduced we will continue to monitor any changes to the guidance affecting schools and will update you on any relevant amendments.

SQA Update

The SQA have recently produced a message for parents and carers (link below) to provide a reminder of their approach to certification this session. They are clear that it remains the intention for exams to proceed in April-June this year and that it is expected that the Scottish Government will only cancel exams if public health advice in the Spring prevents gatherings from taking place. It is therefore crucial that your child continues to fully prepare for an exam diet as part of the awarding of grades this year.

In addition, it is also important to remember the guidance issued in November last year as part of the school's contingency planning. It is our intention that should exams be cancelled, we would gather both Prelim evidence and class assessments in forming teacher judgements, in line with SQA guidance. It is therefore crucial that your child continues to perform to the best of their ability in on-going class assessments and that they access the wide range of support available, including Assisted Study opportunities and online materials.

Further information from the SQA can be accessed here:

[SQA Message to Parents/Carers](#)

The Hub Team

Supporting Prelim Wellbeing



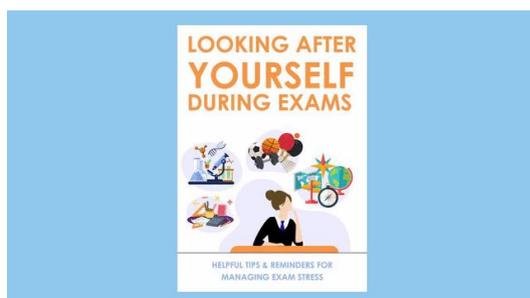
I am very grateful to our team in The Hub who are working hard to support all pupils at Mearns Castle to look after their wellbeing. They felt there was no better time to do this than during the prelim exams. They have been on hand to support and encourage pupils in a number of different ways including the activities below:

Producing a booklet called 'Looking After Yourself During Exams' - you can find it on the website, or on their Twitter @MCHSTheHub.

They have been on hand outside the exam halls with some free water, snacks, fruit, positive affirmation cards, or just to have a chat with pupils after their exam.

Pupils have also been welcome to drop in to The Hub at break or lunch time and have been invited to drop in to the Ace Base for a 10 minute morning meditation at 8:30 am every day to help with relaxation.

I am sure that our S4 pupils will have appreciated these additional supports during their assessments over the last fortnight and I am sure our S5/6 pupils will likewise appreciate this in the fortnight ahead.



S5 – Live'n'Learn Mindset for Exams

Following on from our very successful sessions with S4, we were delighted to welcome presenters from Live'n'Learn to lead our S5 pupils in workshops relating to developing positive mindsets for exams and to share hints and tips on increasing productivity and avoiding procrastination – reminders I am sure we could all benefit from every so often!

The feedback from pupils was very positive and I hope it helped pupils as they geared up for the Prelim diet which commences for S5/6 this week.



Excellent Assisted Study Uptake!

It has been so encouraging to see the number of pupils taking up the offer of additional support from teachers as they prepare both for Prelims and also for the final exams. Lunchtime, after school and Saturday morning support have been offered in many subjects and the uptake has been excellent. I am very grateful to teachers for all of this extra help. Below are some photos of recent after school Assisted Study sessions in Physics, our Saturday morning sessions covering a range of subjects and a few of our pupils enjoying a break during the Saturday Café.



This week's After School Assisted Study...

Week Beginning	Monday 3.35- 4.35pm	Tuesday 3.35- 4.35pm	Wednesday 2.45- 3.45pm	Wednesday 5.00- 6.00pm	Thursday 3.35- 4.35pm
24/01/22	Higher Drama N5 English Higher French N5 Music N5 & Higher Spanish	N5 & Higher Graphic Communication Higher History N5 Maths Higher Modern Studies	Higher Admin Higher Art & Design Higher Design and Manufacture Higher Geography	Higher RMPS	N5 Art & Design Higher & AH Chemistry Higher Food Technology Higher Maths N5 PE Higher Physics

Mearns Medic Society Speaker

It has been great to see the development of our new Mearns Medic Society, open to pupils interested in careers in medicine and healthcare. We have a great many pupils who successfully pursue study in this field and our some of our pupils have led the development of this new group in the school, with the support of Miss Crawford in our Biology Department.

The Medic Society recently enjoyed the input of a guest speaker, Dr Janet Iqbal, and the society's communications lead Maryam kindly wrote up the summary below:

"We were fortunate enough to have Doctor Janet Iqbal come into school and talk to the S4s and S5s involved in the Medic Society. She talked about the process of getting into medicine and gave great examples from her own experiences. Dr Iqbal gave a brief introduction of herself, what she has gone onto achieve and the opportunities she has had working abroad as well as working as a GP in rural areas.

We were able to ask questions about the process, exams and the difficulties and she answered them giving a useful insight into the reality of being a doctor and the hardships along with the benefits. She highlighted the importance of work-life balance and gave helpful tips about how to get through the selection process as well as what to expect when sitting university exams. We really appreciate that Dr Iqbal took the time out to meet with us and we extend our thanks to her."



Pupil Success in Maidenhill Competition

Recently, our Personal Development pupils were asked to design a sign or sculpture that would welcome people at the entrance of the new Maidenhill housing development.

Maidenhill Primary is an associated feeder school of Mearns Castle so we were delighted to accept this opportunity. The pupils had to create a poster of their idea and then sell this in a 'Dragons Den' style video which would be judged by a panel of experts. Congratulations to our very own Martin Li in S4 who came second and received a prize for himself and also £250 for the school. Martin is pictured at Maidenhill with his cheque. Well done Martin!



Uniform Reminder – Jumpers/Trainers

Whilst our standard of uniform remains very impressive I have noticed a slight increase in pupils wearing black trainers or wearing jumpers/hoodies that are not plain black. I would appreciate your support in ensuring that formal school shoes are worn and that any jumper/hoodie worn under your child's blazer is plain black with no logos/designs (except the school badge which is optional).

Upcoming Diary Dates

As I have indicated previously, we continue to keep the School Calendar under review due to the various impacts of Covid 19. I will continue to update you on forthcoming calendar dates which relate to the whole school calendar:

Monday 24th January – S5/6 Prelims Commence

Wednesday 26th January – S2 Reports Issued

Thursday 27th January – S2 Options – Parent Information Evening (virtual – information emailed)

Friday 4th February – Inservice Day

Monday 7th & Tuesday 8th February - Holiday

Thursday 17th February – S4/5 Options - Parent Information Evening

Tuesday 1st March – S3 Parents' Evening

Thursday 4th March – S5/6 Reports Issued