



**MEARNS CASTLE
HIGH SCHOOL**
SCHOOL HANDBOOK
2023/24

SCHOOL ADDRESS

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CONTENTS

<u>Welcome from the Head Teacher</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Senior Leadership Team</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Mission, Vision & Values</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Our Expectations</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Joining Mearns Castle</u>	<u>8-9</u>
<u>School Dress Code</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Child Protection</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Pupil Support</u>	<u>12-13</u>
<u>Curriculum Opportunities</u>	<u>14-15</u>
<u>Senior Phase</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Attainment Information</u>	<u>16-17</u>
<u>Celebrating Achievement</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Extra Curricular Activities</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Homework & Home Learning</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>School Improvement Plan</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>School Facilities</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>School Meals</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Equality and Diversity</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Pupil Impact</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Citizenship</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Developing Skills for Work</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Useful Links</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Policies and Procedures</u>	<u>26-27</u>
<u>Confidential Information</u>	<u>28-30</u>
<u>Community Access</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Parental Information</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Contact Us</u>	<u>32</u>

LETTER FROM THE HEAD TEACHER

Dear Parent/Carer

I am delighted to welcome you to Mearns Castle High School and to provide you with our school's handbook. In it you will find answers to a whole range of questions concerning the transfer of your child from primary to secondary school. The transition from primary to secondary school is an exciting time for both parents and children. It can also be daunting and so I hope this handbook will dispel any concerns and indeed add to the feeling of anticipation at moving to the high school.

You will see how much care and attention is taken in providing your child with an excellent education – an education which will equip them for the demands of modern life. We aim to foster their academic, physical and social development through a well-balanced curriculum designed to help them develop a wide range of skills. We wish them to develop a sense of responsibility and respect for others. Ultimately we will strive to prepare them to go on to make a positive and successful contribution to society.

We hope you find this handbook useful and I would encourage you to visit us when the opportunity presents itself and experience first-hand something of the life of the school. I look forward to working in partnership with you in the years ahead and trust that your child's time in Mearns Castle will be happy and successful.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

Mr. S. Clark

Head Teacher

@MearnsCastleHT



SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

There are seven Depute Head Teachers who, along with the Head Teacher, have responsibility for pupils in our Year Groups S1-S6.

- *Mr S. Hale – Depute Head Teacher (S6)*


 - *Mr B. Harrison – Depute Head Teacher (S5)*

 - *Mrs J. Mitchell – Depute Head Teacher (S4)*

 - *Mr M. McGarry – Depute Head Teacher (S3)*

 - *Mr P. Donnelly – Depute Head Teacher (S2)*

 - *Mrs N. Mortimer — Acting Depute Head Teacher (S1)*

 - *Mr S. Sorley – Depute Head Teacher (.4)*
- 

Mission, Vision & Values

OUR MISSION:



OUR VISION — BEING OUR BEST:

We will work together, supporting every member of the school community to be their best.

We will learn co-operatively with equal appreciation of excellent learning experiences with the strongest outcomes.

We will continue to evolve our curriculum to meet future challenges and develop our understanding and care for the world and each other.

We will support the development of our skills, resilience, knowledge and wellbeing to fully realise our potential as confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

We will identify our own personal goals and celebrate our achievements.

We will take pride in our school and community, encouraging everyone to reach the highest standards in all aspects of school life.

OUR VALUES:



MISSION, VISION & VALUES IN ACTION—OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

To realise our Mission, Vision & Values we have developed a Strategic Improvement Plan to guide our improvement activity over the next three years. This is available on our school website, alongside our annual School Improvement Plan and Standards & Quality Report.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

Mearns Castle High School is a caring and supportive school and the guidelines that we have are there so that pupils may live and work together safely and securely. Pupils are required to show respect to staff, visitors and other pupils. They are expected to care for themselves and others by attending, being punctual and behaving well. They should wear full school uniform and bring all the materials they need for their work each day, including the designated P.E. kit.

All property, whether it belongs to the pupils or the school, should be treated with care. Books, jotters and folders should be kept in good condition and carried in a schoolbag.

We challenge our students to do their best at all times.

We challenge them to attend every day and to always arrive on time.

We challenge them to do their very best in all of their studies.

We challenge them to be a good ambassador for their school by wearing school uniform at all times and by being on their best behaviour both in school and in the local community.

Mearns Castle High School is more than just a building with staff and students. It is a hard working school community. If pupils meet all the challenges above they will get the best possible education.



JOINING MEARNS CASTLE

STATUS OF SCHOOL

Mearns Castle is a non-denominational, co-educational school, and is organised as a six year all-through comprehensive.

Our current roll is 1487 (as of August 2023).

The partner nursery and primary schools in our Cluster are:

- Hazeldene Nursery
- Calderwood Lodge
- Eaglesham Primary
- Kirkhill Primary
- Maidenhill Primary
- Mearns Primary

PRIMARY/SECONDARY TRANSITION

We have close contact with our partner schools in the Mearns Castle Cluster. There are regular visits by a range of Mearns Castle staff co-ordinated by the Senior Leadership Team. Primary 7 pupils regularly see Mearns Castle staff as circumstances allow and the Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for transitions co-ordinates a programme including visits to Mearns Castle, to ensure that pupils feel comfortable to start S1 in August.

Any parent who wishes to make individual contact regarding arrangements for their child, should contact our school office who will refer you to the relevant staff member.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS

Pupils may join Mearns Castle High School at times other than the start of S1 and from schools other than our associated primaries. Before a child enrolls in Mearns Castle High School, the Education Department will seek documentary evidence to validate a child's entitlement to a catchment place at this school. If appropriate evidence is not submitted the Education Department will withdraw the offer of a place. Documentary evidence can be submitted to the Education Department via the school office; further detail on required documentary evidence is available in the Education Department's school admission policy which is accessible on the Council's website: <https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/1383/School-admissions>.

When a child who was enrolled in the school as a catchment pupil ceases to reside within the Mearns Castle High School delineated catchment area and their parents wish the child to continue to attend the school the parent must submit a placing request to remain. Where it is found that a child is no longer entitled to a catchment place in Mearns Castle High School since they no longer reside in a property in the delineated catchment area associated with the school and a placing request to remain has not been submitted and approved, the Council may seek to exclude that child from the school.

JOINING MEARNS CASTLE

A child's parent(s)/carer(s) is/are responsible for providing the Education Department with full and correct information about their child(ren) and any changes to that information which may affect their status as a catchment child. In the event that parent(s)/carer(s) fail to do this, the Education Department will view this as a refusal to comply with the rules and regulations of the school; this lack of cooperation will result in the Council seeking to exclude the child(ren) from Mearns Castle High School. If information that is submitted is found to be fraudulent the Council may pass the matter to the Procurator Fiscal's Office.

The Council will use all means available to it in order to investigate suspicions or allegations of fraud, including but not limited to, surveillance in cases where it is necessary and proportionate to do so. In all these cases, we would normally want to meet with the child and the parents to discuss the request and be sure that it is the best way forward for all concerned. We would normally also contact the previous school to obtain further information to help us ensure that needs will be met.

To make a placing request, or for further information, please contact:

East Renfrewshire Council Offices

Placing Request Education Department

211 Main St

Barrhead

G78 1SY

0141 577 3578

More information on P7 Inductions and Transitions can be found on the school website at:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/parents/p7-induction-meetings/>

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/p7-transitions-2020/>

SCHOOL DRESS CODE

Blazers

A black blazer with a Mearns Castle High School badge is compulsory for all pupils. Blazers should be worn to and from school. Blazers must also be worn in school at all times but can be removed during lessons.

During inclement weather, pupils can wear outdoor jackets over their blazer to travel to school. Outdoor jackets must then be removed in school and may be stored in lockers or kept in school bags. If appropriate, blazers should be correctly braided.

Information on braiding arrangements is available on our school's website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/parents/school-uniform/>

Skirts

Two styles of black skirt are school uniform: box pleat or straight. Dependent on a pupil's height, skirts should be between 18" – 22" in length. As a rule, skirts should be worn no higher than 2" above the knee.

Trousers

Formal, black school trousers (not jeans/denim or joggers). Trousers must be worn up to the waist. If a belt is worn it must be all black with a plain buckle.

Shirts / Jumpers

A formal white school shirt must be worn, tucked in. A plain black v-neck jumper or cardigan, where the tie is clearly visible, can be worn. Hoodies, crew necks and branded jumpers are not allowed.

Footwear

Formal all black school shoes/boots with a black sole and black laces, if appropriate, must be worn.

Ties

An appropriate school tie must be worn up to the neck and properly tied with the school badge clearly visible. The following school ties are available:

- S1/S2 - red tie
- S3/S4/S5 - blue tie
- S6 - black and red tie

Colours ties are available in all styles for pupils who have achieved School Colours.

Scarf

Two styles of school scarf are available

Physical Education Kit

Pupils in S1 to S6 must wear a red Polo shirt. A school hooded top is available to be worn during PE or when representing the school at sporting events but this is not an essential purchase and it will not be worn around the school. All pupils must also wear either black tracksuit trousers or black shorts.

All items of Mearns Castle High School uniform are available from:

Stevensons School Outfitters 192 Fenwick Road, Giffnock, Glasgow, G46 6UE. Tel: 0141 638 7689

Email: giffnockbranch@stevensons.co.uk

Blossoms Schoolwear, 130 Ayr Road, Newton Mearns, Tel: 0141 639 8616.

CHILD PROTECTION

At Mearns Castle High School We Work Hard to Keep Our Children Safe

At Mearns Castle High School we take the care, welfare and protection of our children very seriously. We believe all children have a right to feel safe within the school, home and community. Within our school we strive to provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for our pupils, which promotes inclusion and achievement. All staff in Education have a statutory and professional responsibility to take action if we have reason to believe a child is suffering, or is at risk of abuse.

Our child protection policy and procedure sets out what we will do if we have reason to believe a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse, either within the home or the community. These policies are designed to ensure that children get the help they need when they need it.

Every staff member undergoes a minimum of one child protection training activity every session. Many of our staff are more extensively trained in specific areas of child protection to support and identify potential child protection concerns.

All schools in East Renfrewshire have comprehensive Pupil Support systems in place and we work closely with our partners in Social Work, Health and the Police. The school operates a multi-agency Joint Support Team to ensure that the best possible supports are available to pupils when they need them. The Child Protection Co-ordinator for the school is Mrs Mitchell, one of our Depute Headteachers.

The Headteacher, Mr Clark, is the Child Protection Officer. If you wish any further information, please contact the school office. If you wish to discuss this important matter further, please make an appointment to see Mrs Mitchell or Mr Clark.

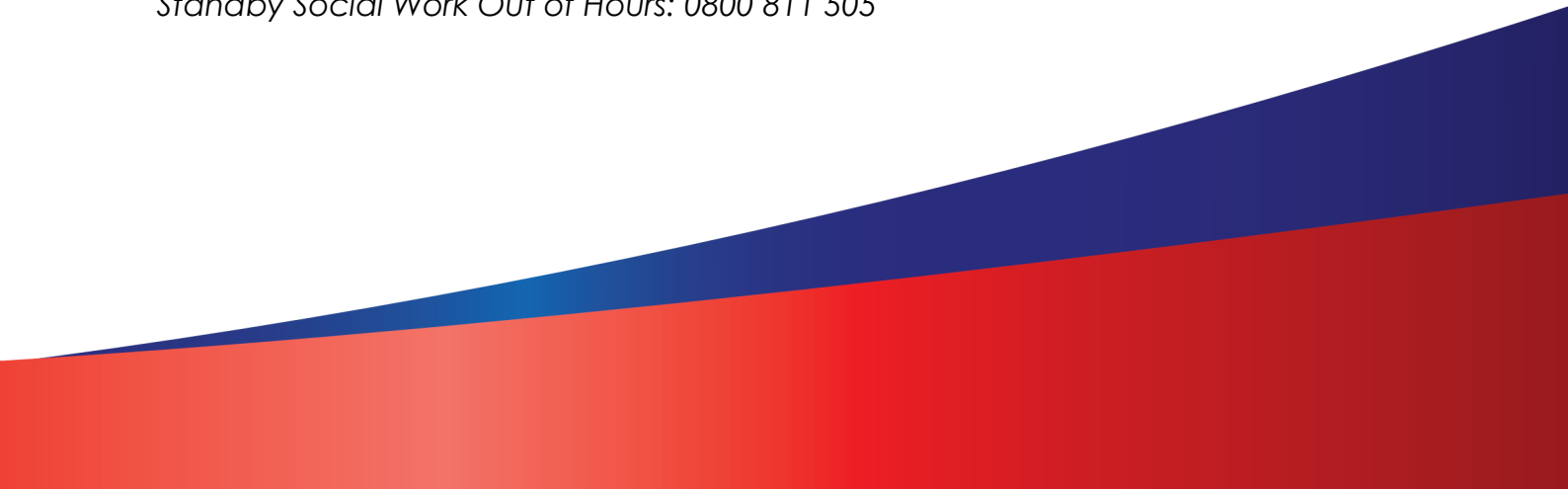
If you are worried or know of a child who could be at risk of abuse or neglect please speak to the Child protection Coordinator or to a member of staff at one of the following numbers:

Barrhead Social Work Office: 0141 577 8300

Clarkston Social Work Office: 0141 577 4000

Strathclyde Police Family Protection Unit: 0141 532 4900

Standby Social Work Out of Hours: 0800 811 505



SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

Our Pupil Support arrangements are based on a Year Team system with each Year Group being allocated its own Principal Teacher of Pupil Support (Pastoral).

The four principal components of our Support for Pupil Department are: Pastoral Support, Learning Support, Personal Development and Wellbeing (The Hub). The staff in these teams work very closely together to ensure that every pupil is appropriately supported in relation to their needs.

The basis for effective Pupil Support now and in the future is "To enable all young people to be happy, safe and achieve their potential and to ensure that they have the support they need to become effective learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society." (The National Review of Guidance)

The Pupil Support Teacher (PT Pastoral Support) is usually the principal contact between home and school and one of his/her more important functions is to offer support to the pupil and to the parent. Each pupil is allocated the same Pupil Support Teacher throughout their time in the school.

The Pupil Support Team aims to:

- provide each pupil with ongoing personal support throughout their school career
- ensure each pupil is given opportunity to fulfil their academic and social potential
- build close links between school and home

The Pupil Support Team provides:

Pastoral Support for all pupils

- They contact home when necessary
- They monitor attendance

Curricular Support for all pupils

- They monitor pupil progress and liaise with subject teachers
- They advise pupils on Subject Options

Vocational Support for all pupils

- They relay information from colleges and universities
- They organize Careers Education as part of the PSE Programme
- They work closely with Careers Scotland

PASTORAL SUPPORT

Each member of Pastoral Support team leads support for a Year Group and works with this group of pupils throughout their time in the school. Pastoral Support Principal Teachers follow a programme of individual pupil interviews to build up relationships with their caseload. Principal Teachers of Pastoral Support also co-ordinate the PSE programme which incorporates a wide range of areas relating to health and wellbeing, including SHARE (Sexual Health & Relationship Education). Further information regarding the PSE programme will be available on the school website.

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

LEARNING SUPPORT

The Support for Learning Department works closely with the wider Pupil Support Team to monitor the progress of pupils with Additional Support Needs and provide additional support as required. Every teacher in the department has a caseload of pupils in each year group and they are responsible for monitoring the progress of their caseload carefully, liaising with parents as required.

Consultation with parents is a priority and reviews and transition planning meetings are held with parents as appropriate. The SfL Department also work closely with a range of partner agencies, including Psychological Services, Outreach, Sensory Support teachers and specialist staff to ensure that the appropriate level of support is put in place.

The SfL Department works closely with class teachers, pupils and parents to ensure that any Alternative Assessment Arrangements are put in place as required, following SQA guidelines.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & RECOGNISING ACHIEVEMENT

The Personal Development Department is a school wide resource that complements learning and teaching by offering support to pupils to fully engage in the curriculum and identify skills, achievements and next steps. The team also support pupils with a range of social, emotional, behavioural or communication difficulties. Parents/Carers are valued as vital partners and the team also works collaboratively with a range of partner agencies to support pupils.

WELLBEING (THE HUB)

The Hub is a recent addition to the school and the team lead a range of activities to promote the wellbeing of all pupils and staff. The team operate on both a universal and targeted basis—delivering inputs to PSE, outreach activities to promote the support within the Hub and whole school events such as the Be Kind to Your Mind Week. The team deliver the CBT based programme—Living Life to the Full for all pupils and also as 1-1 and group sessions.

JOINT SUPPORT TEAM

The Joint Support Team is made up of representatives from the school Senior Leadership Team, Pupil Support staff, Teaching staff, Social Work Department, Psychological Services, Careers Service, and any other appropriate agency. It is co-ordinated by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The Principal function of the JST is to develop and implement strategies to help our young people.

CURRICULUM OPPORTUNITIES

We aim to develop and provide a curriculum appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of each of our pupils. It is important to note that at Mearns Castle High School, this is interpreted as taking into account not only the subject courses, but the whole experience of a pupil as they progress through the school.

The term "curriculum" is taken to apply not only to the formally planned programme of courses shown on a pupil's timetable, but also to include other school based activities, such as clubs, pupil/teacher relationships and all other ways in which the school affects the life of the pupil. The Curriculum incorporates a full range of learning experiences. It is of great importance that each pupil, after four, five or six years at Mearns Castle High School, achieves results in the national examinations which reflect his/her ability. We will strive to ensure that every pupil fulfils their potential.

We will offer a variety of different learning opportunities so that pupils may broaden their educational experience. These opportunities include an active commitment to Outdoor Education and a number of excursions and educational visits are organised by subject departments. We are committed to fostering a supportive atmosphere for active and purposeful study.

A CURRICULUM FOR EXCELLENCE

Our aspirations for all our young people are that they should be successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

■ Successful Learners

We aim to develop enthusiasm and motivation for learning in all our young people and in addition a determination to reach the highest standards of attainment and achievement.

■ Responsible Citizens

We aim to encourage respect for others in all our young people and nurture a commitment to participate responsibly in society.

■ Effective contributors

We aim to develop an enterprising attitude in all our young people and to foster the attributes of resilience and self-reliance.

■ Confident Individuals

We aim to develop self-respect and wellbeing in all our young people. We will support all our young people in the development of a secure set of values and beliefs. We will encourage our young people to be ambitious and strive for excellence in everything they do.

COURSES AND ASSESSMENT IN S1 AND S2

S1/S2 pupils follow a Broad General Education, viz. Art, English, French, Geography, History, Mathematics, Modern Studies, Music, Physical Education, Food & Health Technology, Home Economics RMPS, Science, Personal and Social Education, Technical Subjects, Information and Communications Technology. In addition to school assessment, all pupils in East Renfrewshire will sit standardised tests in Literacy and Numeracy during S2.

S3 OPTIONS PROGRAMME

This programme runs from January to March of S2. The programme will include an information evening for parents and individual interviews for students. A more detailed programme of information will be issued at the appropriate time.

COURSES AND ASSESSMENT IN S3 AND S4

In S3, the majority of pupils will be ready to transition to National Qualifications courses and in S4 pupils study nine National Qualification courses at National 3, National 4 or National 5 level as well as Personal and Social Education, RMPS and Physical Education.

The subjects studied in S3/4 provide a good basis for progression onto National Qualification courses in the upper school and beyond. The subjects offered and the option pattern fully reflect both national and local guidelines on curriculum structure. In addition every pupil will be offered the opportunity to take part in our work experience programme in S4.

In August 2017 the Scottish Government introduced the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) as part of the National Improvement Framework. The assessments have been designed to provide teachers with information about children's progress, as such, they should help inform professional judgements. The SNSA will be undertaken by all children in S3 and assess aspects of reading, writing and numeracy. As is currently the case with ERC standardised assessments, schools may share relevant SNSA data with parents. From S4 onwards, young people will also experience assessment practices which lead to qualifications. There will be a variety of internally and externally assessed items, including SQA exams.

CAREERS ADVICE

Our school Careers Adviser is available to help students during Options programmes and also on a regular basis throughout the school session.

SENIOR PHASE

S5/6 OPTIONS PROGRAMME

This programme runs from January – March of S4 and S5. The programme will include an information evening for parents and individual interviews for students. A more detailed programme of information will be issued at the appropriate time.

Results of external examinations are not published until early August. It is appropriate that changes can be made to S5 and S6 courses in the light of the results. Students have an opportunity to come into school before the beginning of the school term to finalise their courses.

More details on all aspects of the Secondary School curriculum are available on the following website: www.ea.e-renfrew.sch.uk/curriculumlinks

This website also provides a gateway to many other interesting and related websites.

COURSES IN S5 AND S6

In S5 pupils study five National Qualification courses at Level 3, Level 4/5 or Level 6/Higher depending on their prior levels of attainment. In addition they continue with their study of Personal and Social Education and Physical Education.

In S6 pupils undertake four options up to Advanced Higher level, again depending on their prior levels of attainment and their intended destination after school. Pupils in S6 also have a variety of opportunities to demonstrate leadership skills or be involved in wider achievement.

In S5 and S6 pupils also have the opportunity to study a range of Vocational courses offered by Further Education colleges in partnership with the Local Authority.

ATTAINMENT INFORMATION

% of S4 pupils attaining 5 Level 5 (equivalent of National 5, A-D) qualifications:

Year	MCHS %	National
2014-15	77%	N/A
2015-16	86%	N/A
2016-17	86%	N/A
2017-18	88%	48%
2018-19	84%	49%
2019-20	89%	55%
2020-21	85%	53%
2021-22	85%	55%

ATTAINMENT INFORMATION

% of school leavers leaving with the following number of SCQF Level 6 (equivalent of Higher Grade) qualifications:

Year	No. Qualifications	MCHS %	National %
2018	3	85%	50%
2018	5	75%	36%
2019	3	87%	51%
2019	5	75%	36%
2020	3	85%	54%
2020	5	77%	40%
2021	3	82%	56%
2021	5	70%	42%
2022	3	82%	53%
2022	5	73%	39%

% of school leavers in a positive destination

Year	MCHS %	National %
2017/18	97%	94%
2018/19	98%	95%
2019/20	96%	93%
2020/21	96%	95%
2021/22	99%	96%

Destinations 2020/21

Higher Education	79%
Further Education	8.5%
Employment	9.5%
Training	1%
Other	2%

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT

Pupils at Mearns Castle High School are involved in a wide variety of different activities both within and out with school.

Pupils can be recognised for their achievements through the school Colours System. Full details of our Colours System, including application forms and criteria, can be found on the [school website](#).

As a school, we celebrate achievement in a variety of different ways such as:

- Departmental achievement boards
- Classroom and corridor displays
- School website
- Twitter
- Teacher praise
- Reward stickers/stamps/certificates/letters
- Parents' evenings/reports/tracking
- Homework planners
- Plasma screens
- Pupil News & HT Assembly
- Awards ceremonies (junior and senior)
- Accredited awards (Saltire, Duke of Edinburgh, etc.)
- Year Group Assemblies

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in activities outwith the timetabled school day. These may occur at lunchtime, at the end of the school day, or they may involve day visits or residential visits either at home or abroad. We offer a wide range of activities from various sports to music and drama. We are very proud of the achievements of our pupils in a wide range of extra-curricular fields. Where pupils are involved in any out of school activities, a parental consent form has to be completed in advance.

HOME WORK & HOME LEARNING

HOMEWORK

Each year pupils are advised how to utilise school platforms to track their homework. Pupils are able to set up a digital calendar which will automatically record all set homework tasks. There are essentially two types of homework:

(i) Set Homework

The purpose of most homework issued by teachers will be to consolidate the work already covered in class. This is frequently achieved by tackling examples of problems already studied in class, or by trying new skills acquired in class.

If difficulties occur, a pupil should look over textbooks, notes, examples already covered and then have another attempt. Success at this stage usually means the piece of work is properly absorbed. If, after several attempts, a pupil is still uncertain, they should ask the teacher for further help.

(ii) Private Study

Private study should also be planned. A note should be made of what subjects are to be revised and when. Regular revision is important. The more frequently a point is revised, the more firmly it is grasped. There are many factors including the range of pupils' abilities and the nature of work being done in departments, which determines the amount of homework set and when it is set. This makes it difficult to make a definitive statement as to the amount of time pupils should spend on their homework.

OUT OF HOURS LEARNING

Each year the school undertakes to provide a programme of out of hours learning in a range of subjects. This provision is a valuable addition to learning and teaching within the school. The help of parents in encouraging their children to take advantage of this programme will be much appreciated.



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mearns Castle High School works in the context of the Local Improvement Plan of East Renfrewshire Council's Education Department and of the National Outcomes for Education.

East Renfrewshire is a progressive authority in which to work. It supports and challenges its schools to examine and improve their performance.

As a school, we are keen to ensure that we are offering the best possible learning experiences for our pupils. This requires us to examine our own practice as well as individual teachers and as a school. Each year we produce a School Improvement Plan which aims to steer our development.

A copy of this plan can be located on the school **website**:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/about-us/school-plans/>

SCHOOL FACILITIES

The school library is run by our chartered librarian. The library contains PCs for student use, fiction, non-fiction and reference books. As well as these resources, the Internet and on-line careers information can be accessed on computers in the library.

The Careers library is part of the school library and the librarian will help to provide information for students in conjunction with the Careers Adviser and Pupil Support Team.

The school has a modern extension providing a range of additional spaces. The grounds/entrances/exits are monitored by internal and external security cameras. All doors are automatically secured and we have a public announcement system for exceptional use. Further information on the use of school facilities is available on our website.

A HEALTH PROMOTING SCHOOL

Our school is a Health Promoting School which recognises the importance and value of well supported and healthy pupils and staff.

- We believe in Active Participation in school life for all
- We believe in a Curriculum which is centred on the learner
- We believe in creating an Environment which is safe, supportive, resourced and accessible to all
- We believe in creating an Ethos which is caring, responsible and celebrates success
- We believe in supporting Staff/Pupil Health and Wellbeing
- We believe in Leadership which is committed, enthusiastic and listening
- We believe in Partnership with key agencies which can help us

SCHOOL MEALS

Pupils in S3 and above are allowed to go out of school at lunchtime, however, we encourage parents and pupils to make full use of the on-site facilities. Our cafeteria is safe, supervised and offers a wide range of healthy eating options. S1 & S2 pupils are required to stay on school premises at lunchtimes, however S1 & 2 pupils are allowed access to the all-weather pitch during this time. If you would prefer that your child is not given access to the pitch, please phone us to let us know.

Mearns Castle High School operates a cashless cafeteria. Pupils and staff have an account which is accessed by entering their individual code number. Purchases are then debited from the account. Money can be credited to the account by inserting cash into the machines in both the Open Area and before the Dining Hall. However, we would encourage parents to make use of the online payment facility ParentPay to add money to the pupil's card (contact school office for information about ParentPay).



If pupils require special diets, their parents should obtain a diet sheet from their doctor or the hospital dietician and send it to the school meals supervisor. The supervisor will then contact the catering manager at the school and the matter will be dealt with discreetly.

Free School Meal Entitlement

Some pupils may be eligible for free school meals. This is a means-tested benefit dependent on parental income. Pupils are given a daily allowance which is automatically added to each pupil's account every day. If it is not used, it is then lost and cannot be cashed or built up.

Information and application forms for free school meals may be obtained from the school office or from Customer First staff at Council Offices, Barrhead (0141 577 3001).

Although application may be made at any time, it is helpful if forms are completed in April for applications which are to take effect from the beginning of the following session. Please note that a new application must be made each session. We would encourage parents, who are eligible, to apply for this.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Our school is committed to the educational and social values of sustainability, equality and justice. We seek to support our community through fair, transparent, inclusive and sustainable policies and practices in relation to age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, gender and gender identity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

We take a values based approach to our work with children, staff, parents and the wider community. We respect all learners' rights and our work is underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The school regularly gathers and reflects upon the views of children, families and community partners in order to continually improve our approaches to promoting equality and equity. We work to remove or minimise all forms of disadvantage suffered by our learners, including economic disadvantage.

We value the diversity of the Mearns Castle High School community and wish for all parents to be involved in the life and work of the school.

In accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 we seek to:

- *Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act*
- *Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.*

*Mearns Castle High School's Equalities Coordinator is Mr Steven Sorley
He can be contacted by telephoning or emailing the school.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND OBSERVANCE

The school meets for religious services which are conducted by our chaplain from Maxwell Mearns Parish Church alongside multi-faith assemblies delivered by our multi-faith partners. Families may request in writing that their child be permitted to be absent from school in order to celebrate recognised religious events. In these circumstances the pupil will be noted as an authorised absence in the school register.

There is a statutory provision for parents to withdraw children from participation in RMPS and/or religious observance. Should you wish further information regarding this, please contact the relevant Depute Headteacher.

PUPIL VOICE

Our main mechanism for consulting with pupils is the Pupil Parliament. The Pupil Parliament is made up of representatives from each year group. The Pupil Council aims to take forward the views of the pupils on such issues as uniform, extracurricular activities and systems for recognising achievements.

The Pupil Parliament aims to meet on a monthly basis.

Our House Captains, in consultation with the pupils in their House, make decisions on which charities the school supports each year. The Pupil Parliament makes a significant contribution to the life of our school.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The school has well-established links with the community through our Community Involvement Programme and Charities Week. As part of the programme our S6 pupils are involved in a range of placements in the local area. We also have very close links with the Prince and Princess of Wales Hospice in Glasgow

Our contact and links with commerce and industry are maintained through pupil placements with local firms as part of our work experience programme.

Each year every S4 pupil participates in Work Experience placement.



CITIZENSHIP

It is important that all our young people continue to develop as responsible citizens, as well as confident individuals, effective contributors and successful learners.

A programme of lessons during PSE and Citizenship time in S1 to S6 engage pupils through topics such as the school community, human rights, fair trade and global environment issues, as well as providing a forum for pupils to be consulted and involved in the life of the school.

Along with these lessons, students will have the opportunity to experience active citizenship at local, national and global levels through organised events and extracurricular activities. The school was recently awarded an Eco-Schools Green Flag and an International Schools Award.

DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR WORK

Mearns Castle High School is continuing to develop a programme of activities which encourage enterprise and innovation as well as prepare our young people for the world of work.

Many of these depend on good links with local businesses who supply valuable support in the form of mentors, advisors and work experience placements. Some of our pupils participate in the ERC Vocational Qualifications programme.

The school was recently awarded the Platinum Award for Enterprise and reached the finals of Most Enterprising Secondary School in the Scottish Education Awards.

USEFUL LINKS

School Website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/>

SQA Website

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/>

National 5 resources

[Bright Red Publishing](#)

Free School Transport

[Free School Transport Information and Application form](#)

Online Safety

[BBC](#)

[Who is hosting this?](#)

[NSPCC](#)

[Social Networks](#)

[Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

[NSPCC – The dangers and legalities surrounding sexting](#)

[Webwise](#)

Vocational

[Vocational Brochure](#)

Online Placing Requests

Additional Support Needs

<https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/children-with-asn>

<https://enquire.org.uk/>

School Year

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/er/MearnsCastle/about-us/school-year/>

Parent Portal

<https://www.parentportal.scot/home/>

Parent Pay

<https://www.parentpay.com/>

National Parent Forum of Scotland

<https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

Glow Login

<https://glow.rmunify.com/>

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Attainment at school is clearly linked to attendance. We would encourage all pupils to aim for full attendance wherever possible. There will, of course, be times when it is simply not possible for a pupil to attend school. If it is clear that a pupil is not going to be able to attend school, it is essential that a parent/carer let the school know by telephoning and giving the reason for the absence and its likely duration.

On returning to school a pupil must bring a note dated for the day of his or her return. An absence extending to three or more days without any word from a parent can be recorded as unauthorised and can be passed to the attendance officer.

Every effort should be made to avoid holidays during term time as this both disrupts the child's education and reduces learning time.

ILLNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

If a pupil becomes unwell at school, they will be referred to the school office. We do not have a school nurse but members of the office staff will give assistance and, if necessary, call one of our trained first aiders.

If a pupil seems likely to benefit from going home or should they require further medical attention, parents/carers will be contacted. If parents/carers cannot be contacted the named 'emergency contact' will be contacted. You will understand the importance of keeping us up-to-date with any changes in contact numbers which may occur after the start of the session.


HEALTH AND MEDICAL CARE

The school health service provides a programme of immunisation. Parents will be informed whenever the opportunity occurs to take advantage of this service. For private medical or dental appointments, pupils are asked to make their appointment outside school hours whenever possible. Where this is not possible the pupil should bring his or her appointment card or letter to the school office either on the day before the appointment or before 8:45 am when a permission slip will be issued to show to the class teacher. On return to school the pupil should again report to the school office before going to class.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE OF SCHOOL

From time to time circumstances arise which can lead to the emergency closure of schools. Examples of such circumstances include severely inclement weather, abnormal temperatures, burst pipes, disruption to fuel power or water supplies. The length of closure may vary from an early closure for a brief period with a return to normal on the following day to a closure for one or more full days.

In such a situation it may not be possible to inform parents in advance of the need for the emergency closure. Should such a circumstance arise regard for the health and welfare of pupils will be paramount and arrangements for the closure will adhere closely to the advice given in East Renfrewshire Council Education Department's Revised Standard Circular No 10a dealing with Emergency Closure of Schools and other Educational Establishments. It would be very helpful, however, if parents would discuss with their child the issue of emergency closure and provide them with advice on what action they should take under such circumstances



CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Who will process your information?

The personal information you give to us through any of our forms relating to Education and any other pupil administrative information we hold about you in this context will be processed by East Renfrewshire Council, Eastwood Park Giffnock, G46 6UG for the administration of Education and any additional support you or your child may require.

Why do we process your information?

Your information is processed to help us administer education provision and related functions within East

Renfrewshire. Your information may be shared with other departments within the council and other organisations for the same purposes and also to check the information we have is accurate; prevent and/or detect crime; and protect public funds. Other organisations may include bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, other councils, public sector agencies, government departments, exam bodies and other private companies or partners we use to process information and distribution services for the issue of correspondence.

What is the legal basis for us to process your information?

The council processes your information in order to perform a task carried out in the public interest and also to fulfil its legal obligations to ensure proper administration of the council's financial affairs in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The law gives certain types of information special significance because of its sensitivity e.g. health information. If we process this type of information about you in relation to Education we do so on the basis that it is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest.

Do you have to provide your information?

Education needs your information to allow us to carry out public tasks in the public interest that is set out in law such as teaching in primary and secondary schools. It allows us to organise and administer classes, lunches, exams etc.

How do we collect information about you?

Most of the information the council holds about you will come from you as an individual and it provided at your first encounter with education whether it is applying for a place in an early learning and childcare establishment, support in the early years or applying for a place in one of our schools.

Such information includes:-

- Child's Forename
- Child's Surname
- Child's gender
- School Stage
- Details of child's medical condition
- Any other name child is known by
- Child's date of birth
- Address including postcode
- Mother's/Carer's Name, telephone number, email address & postal address, including postcode
- Father's/Carer's Name, telephone number, email address & postal address, including postcode
- Single Parent/Carer family
- Name of Brother/Sister
- Date of Birth of Brother/Sister
- School stage of Brother/Sister
- Additional Information Support Application
- School applying for
- Preferred Alternative School
- Early Learning and Childcare place applied for
- Council Tax Evidence
- Mortgage Statement
- Rental Agreement
- Rental Agreement End Date
- Landlord Registration Number
- Birth Certificate
- Baptism Certificate
- Date of Baptism
- Name of Church venue
- Child Benefit Statement
- Utility Statements
- Other Catchment Evidence

How long will we keep your information?

The council will hold your information from when your child first has contact with one of our services through to five years beyond them leaving school.

Who is your information shared with?

Your information will be accessed by council staff who need to do so to administer education and the many services that run alongside it. If such administration is provided on the council's behalf by an external agency, that agency will also have access to your information. The information will be shared with SEEMiS, CRB, ParentPay, the Diocese of Paisley (in Roman Catholic schools), Scottish Government including their Analytical Services, Education Scotland, Glow (Scotland's national education network), SQA, 2Cqr, BAM FM (Carlisle Primary, Barrhead Mearns Castle, Williamwood, Woodfarm High Schools), Bellrock FM (Mearns Primary and St Ninian's High), Skills Development Scotland, Scholar (Heriot Watt University) and East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust.

The council also needs to ensure proper administration of its funds so details will be checked internally for fraud prevention and verification purposes. Information is also analysed internally in order to provide management information and inform future service delivery. Your information may also be shared with other departments within the Council. The council also generally complies with requests for specific information from other regulatory and law enforcement bodies where this is necessary and appropriate.

Do we transfer your information outside the UK?

In general we do not transfer personal information outside the UK but on the rare occasions we do we will inform you. We will only transfer information outside the UK when we are satisfied that the party that will handle the data and the country it is being processed in have adequate safeguards for personal privacy comparable to those which are in place in the UK.



Profiling & automated decision-making

The Education Department does not use profiling or automated decision-making for administration.

Your rights

You have the right to be informed of the council's use of your information. This notice is intended to give you relevant information to meet this right.

Access personal data held about you

You have the right to access personal information the council holds about you by making what is known as a subject access request. You can receive a copy of your personal data held by the council, details on why it is being held, who it has been or will be shared with, how long it will be held for, the source of the information and if the council uses computer systems to profile or take decisions about you.

1. Request rectification of your personal data. You have the right to request that the council corrects any personal data held about you that is inaccurate.
2. Request that the council restricts processing of your personal data. You have the right to request that the council restricts processing your personal data if you think the personal data is inaccurate, the processing is unlawful, the council no longer need the personal data but you may need it for a legal purpose or you object to the council processing for the performance of a public interest task.
3. To object to the processing of your data. You have the right to object to the council's use of your personal data. The council will have to demonstrate why it is appropriate to continue to use your data.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Complaints

If you have an issue with the way the council handles your information or wish to exercise any of the above rights in respect of your information you can contact the council's data protection officer by post at:

The Data Protection Officer
East Renfrewshire Council
Council headquarters
Eastwood Park
Giffnock
G46 6UG

or by email at:

DPO@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

You have the right to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's office (ICO).

The address of their head office is:

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5EF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Alternatively, you can report a concern via their website

at: www.ico.org.uk

The ICO also have a regional office at:

45 Melville Street,

Edinburgh EH3 7HL

Telephone: 0303 123 1115

e-mail: scotland@ico.org.uk

While you can go directly to the ICO, the council would welcome an opportunity to address any issues you have in the first instance.

If there is a change to any of the confidential information held in school records it is important that parents/carers notify the school in writing of any such change. In the event of an emergency we need to have accurate information and correct emergency contact names/ telephone numbers.

PARENTAL RIGHT OF ACCESS TO RECORDS

The Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003 give the independent right of parents to access their child's educational records. A request for access to educational records has to be put in writing and must describe what information is requested.

COMMUNITY ACCESS

Out with school hours the building is also used extensively by the local community. Applications for lets should be made to:

East Renfrewshire Council
Corporate and Community Services
Business Support Section
Council Headquarters,
Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road,
Giffnock, G46 6UG Tel: 0141 577 3900

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

We believe that regular, effective communication with parents is essential in order to promote our school community. At Mearns Castle we use the following means of communications:

- A regular Parent Update is issued to all parents and this provides information on what is happening in the school and any special events taking place.
- We update the school website on a regular basis and we also use Twitter.
- Parents' meetings are held regularly throughout the session. These take the form of information evenings or meetings where the pupil's performance and progress can be discussed between parent and teacher.
- Support Staff (Depute Heads and/or Pupil Support staff) may meet with parents to discuss specific issues at any time during the session.
- Full reports and Tracking Reports are issued detailing strengths, needs for improvement, attitude to work and attendance.
- Parents are contacted when concerns develop about a pupil's attendance.

Pupil reports are monitored by the Pupil Support staff and Depute Head Teachers and appropriate targets are agreed with pupils at personal interviews which are held regularly

PARENT COUNCIL

Based on the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 School Boards were replaced in August 2007 by a new system of Parent Councils. The Act makes provision for all parents to be members of the Parent Forum at a school, and to have their views represented to the school, education authority and others, through a representative Parent Council for the school.

The legislation supports parental involvement in a much wider sense than before. It aims to help **all** parents be:

- Involved with their child's education and learning
- Welcomed as active participants in the life of the school
- Encouraged to express their views on school education generally and work in partnership with the school

The Parent Council also has a role in the appointment of Head Teachers and Depute Head Teachers. The Parent Council for our school is known as: **Mearns Castle High School Parent Council**. The Chairperson of the Parent Council can be contacted at: **parentcouncil@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk**

The Head Teacher and local councillors may attend all meetings as advisors to the Parent Council and have the right to speak although, not being members of the Parent Council, no right to vote. Meetings take place approximately every 6 to 8 weeks during the period August to June. The Parent Teacher Association now exists as a subcommittee of the Parent Council

CONTACT US:



Telephone Number: 0141 577 2300



Email: schoolmail@mearnscastle.e-renfrew.sch.uk



Website: <http://www.ea.e-renfrew.sch.uk/mearnscastle>



Twitter: @MearnsCastleHS

