

MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

S4 Curriculum Evening
Tuesday 2nd September 2025
Welcome

Mutual Respect



Equality



Ambition



Resilience



Nurture



Sustainability



Welcome

Mr Paul Donnelly
Depute Head Teacher

S4 ELM Team

Mr Paul Donnelly
Depute Head Teacher

Mr Andrew Gilroy
PT Pastoral Support

Miss Rachel Harvey
Pastoral Project Lead

The Year Ahead

Key Dates

- Tracking Report – 9th October 2025
- Parents meeting – 28th October 2025
- S4 Prelim Exams: 1st December – 16th December 2025
- Full report – 22nd January 2026
- S5 Options Evening – 26th January 2026
- S5 Options – start of February 2026
- SQA Examinations – 22nd April 2026

So why is S3 and S4 so important...?

The table below illustrates the percentage chance of a student passing Higher depending on N5 grade award.

Subject	N5 "A" Pass	N5 "C" Pass
English	95%	60%
Maths	82%	28%
Biology	98%	35%
Chemistry	99%	33%
Art	97%	47%
Modern Studies	94%	58%

Types of Assessment in SQA Courses: Nat 4

- Assess the application of learning across the course
 - Pass or fail. NO FINAL EXAMINATION.
 - Ensure required skills, knowledge and understanding have been achieved
 - Unit Assessments are set by the SQA
 - Carried out and marked by class teacher and internally moderated by department/faculty.
 - All internal moderation could be subject to external verification by the SQA.

Types of Assessment in SQA Courses: Nat 5

- Most courses have a final examination which is marked by the SQA.
- Majority of courses will have practical assessments/coursework that is marked externally and contributes to the final grading.
- Graded A-C, D or fail.

Examples of Course Structure

Nat 5 English

- Assessment consists of a **final examination** and also **portfolio work**.
- A two paper final examination:
 - ❖ Paper 1 - Critical Reading
 - ❖ Paper 2 – Reading for Understanding
- All assessed externally.

Examples of Course Structure

Nat 5 Maths

- The Course Assessment consists of two Question Papers (**final exam in May of S4**)
- Both externally marked by the SQA

Examples of Course Structure

Nat 5 Biology

- The course assessment based on the **final exam and an assignment**
- The exam will feature a short multiple choice paper and extended questions. The assignment is completed during class time and is externally assessed.
- Final exam will be marked by the SQA
- This is also representative of the other Sciences.

Examples of Course Structure

Nat 5 Modern Languages

- The Course Assessment will be a **Final Exam** in listening, reading and writing and a **talking assessment**.
- The talking assessment is internally marked.
- The Course Assessment will be marked by the SQA.
- This is also representative of the other Modern Languages (Spanish, Mandarin).

Examples of Course Structure

Nat 5 Physical Education

- The Course Assessment consists of **Performance Assessment (50%)** and a **written Portfolio (50%)**:
- Each candidate will perform in two activities decided upon through discussion between the pupil & teacher. School staff will carry out the assessment but are subject to external moderation from SQA.
- The portfolio is worth 60 marks and is completed in school and marked externally by SQA.
- **No final exam**



Miss Rachel Harvey
Pastoral Project Lead

Additional Support for Learning

- Young people with additional support needs may be eligible for tailored assessment arrangements such as **extra time, use of a computer, digital question papers/tests/reader and scribe.**
- The Support for Learning department (Mrs Houston PT) will work with your child, yourselves and teachers to determine the correct level of support in time for S4 prelims.
- Each support may vary per subject.

Miss Louise Smith

PT Attainment



S4 STUDY SKILLS

Tips to best manage your revision

Getting Organised for Prelims

- Find a quiet, dedicated study space.
- Organise your study space.
- Take breaks.
- Devices only when necessary – no distractions.
- Homework.



S4 Study Skills Workshop

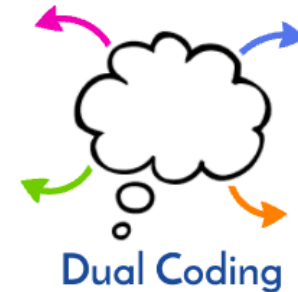


[Click here to view S4 Study Skills Video](#)



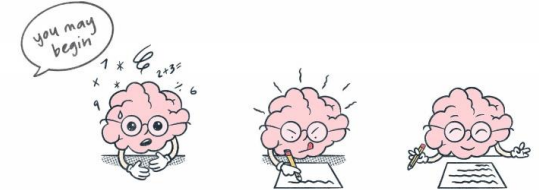
Effective Study Techniques

During yesterday's S4 Study Skills assembly we informed S4 learners about some highly effective study strategies. These include:



Finding the right strategy is key.

Effective Study Techniques: Brain Dump



- Writing down everything you know about a topic without looking at notes in a certain timeframe.
- Retrieval practice activity allowing you to see on paper all the information you remember about a topic or concept.
- Once complete, learners compare their brain dump answer to class notes enabling you to identify areas of strong knowledge and those which require further studying.

Effective Study Techniques: Flash Cards

Best practice:

- One question/term per flashcard.
- Keep your flashcard short and clear.
- Colour coding can be used for key topics/terminology.
- Use the question or key term to prompt yourself to recall the answer from memory.



Effective Study Techniques: Flash Cards

What causes
the
greenhouse
effect?

The increased use
of fossil fuels

What causes
the greenhouse
effect and
what impact
does this have?

The increased use of
fossil fuels causes
the green house
effect. This leads to:

- Global warming
- Rising sea levels
- Flooding

Effective Study Techniques: Flash Cards

- Making flash cards is just the first step.
- The more practice completed, the better the recall of facts and explanation will become.
- The Leitner System can help with this.



Monday - Go through all the cards

✓ = Tue & Thur

✗ = Everyday

Tuesday - Everyday and then Tue & Thur cards

✓ = Tues & Thur or Friday

✗ = Everyday

Wednesday - Everyday

✓ = Tues & Thur

✗ = Everyday

Thursday - Everyday and then Tue & Thur cards

✓ = Tues & Thur or Friday

✗ = Everyday

Friday - Everyday and then Friday cards

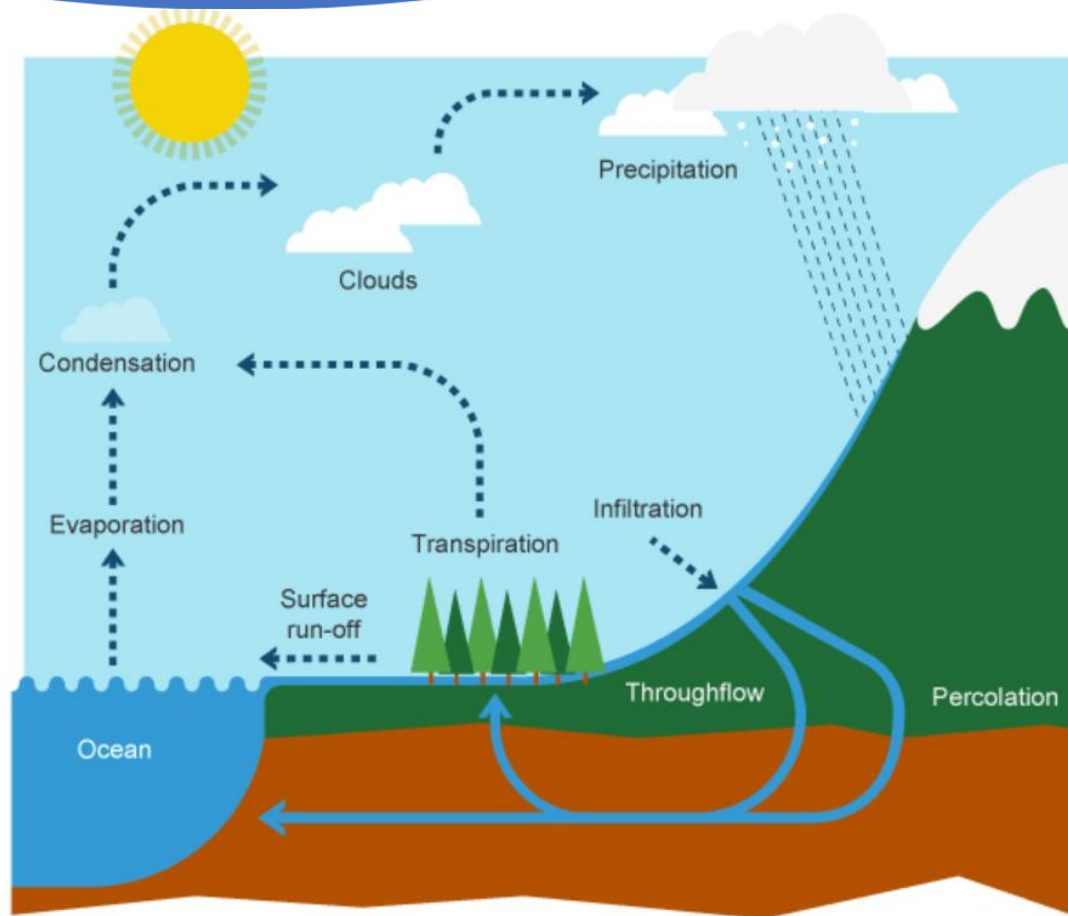
✓ = Tues & Thur or Friday

✗ = Everyday

Effective Study Techniques: Dual Coding

- Dual coding is combining words and visuals including pictures, diagrams, graphic organisers etc.
- The idea is to provide two different representations of the information, both **visual and verbal** to help you understand the information better.

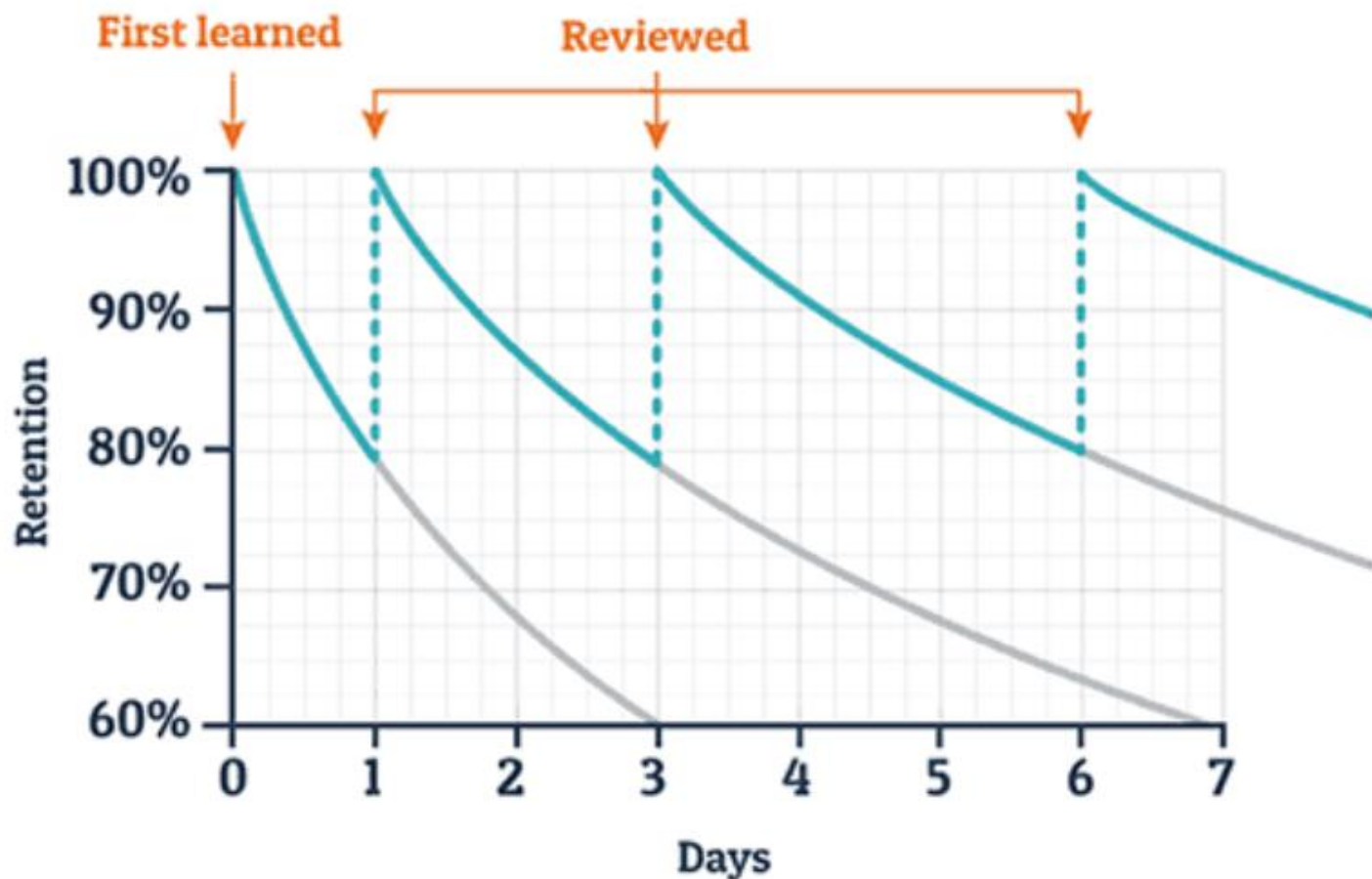
Effective Study Techniques: Dual Coding Example



Effective Study Techniques: Spaced Practice

- Starting to plan early and studying in advance will provide a far better return on revision than last minute cramming.
- Spaced practice involves reviewing knowledge learned but not immediately after class.
- This approach is designed to improve retention of information by getting the brain to return to, review and consolidate information over extended periods.

Typical Forgetting Curve for Newly Learned Information



Study Planner

Name:

Week Beginning:

[illegible]

Achieve

New online attainment programme for the school.
Provides our learners with key benefits including:

- Structured content
- Effective revision
- Pupil engagement and self-evaluation

School Staff Supporting Learners

Each department has a range of support options available:

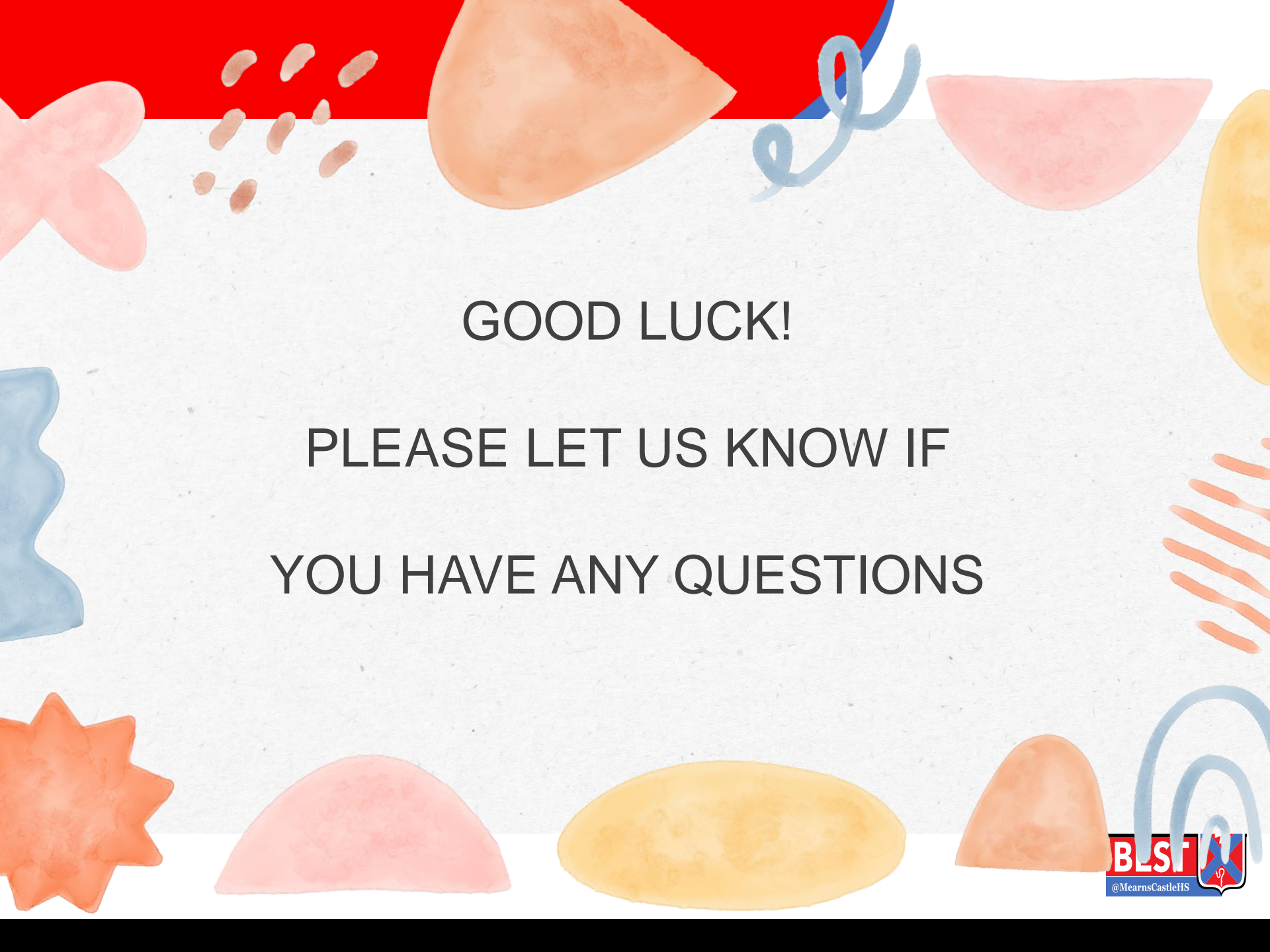
- Revision notes
- Past Paper questions
- Lunchtime support
- Subject Ambassadors
- Small group/1-1 catch up
- Assisted study/Targeted Study/Study Café

Assisted Study

Block one 20 October 2025 – 28 November 2025

A chance to seek extra support before prelims on a specific topic or to practice exam style questions.

The timetable will be posted on the school website, in the pupil newsletter and at the main entrance of the school.

The background is a light gray textured surface. It is decorated with various watercolor-style shapes and patterns. At the top, there is a solid red horizontal band. Below it, on the left, is a pink four-petaled flower. Next to it are several small, brown, bean-like shapes. To the right is a large, light orange teardrop shape, followed by a blue squiggly line. Further right is a pink semi-circle, and on the far right edge is a yellow semi-circle. On the left side, there is a blue wavy shape. At the bottom left is an orange starburst shape. Along the bottom edge, from left to right, are a pink semi-circle, a yellow oval, and an orange semi-circle. On the right side, there are orange vertical lines and a blue arch-like shape.

GOOD LUCK!

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF
YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

Mr Andrew Gilroy

PT Pastoral

UNIVERSAL SUPPORT

Growth
Mindset

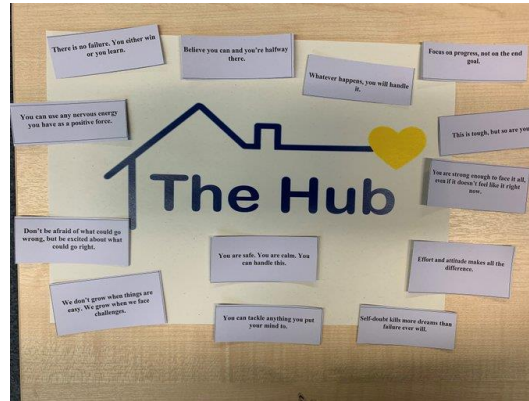


be
Kind
to your
Mind
week

Monday 14th - Friday 18th
February 2022

Pupils and staff will be encouraged to reflect on being kind to our minds with regards to a range of issues from body image to managing stress.

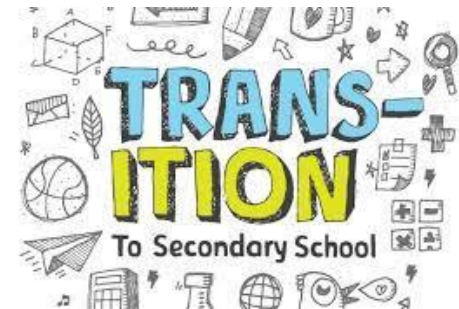
As a school community we recognise the importance of treating our mental health as well as our physical and hope to promote and encourage this during Be Kind to your Mind week!



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Clubs and Activities

Mearns Castle High School

Get Involved...



We welcome your feedback

- An online evaluation will be available from tomorrow

MEARNS CASTLE HIGH SCHOOL



THANK YOU

Please email the school if you have any queries.
Mr Gilroy (Pastoral Support) is the main contact for
S4 parents/carers.