

Dumfries Academy

Parent Update 24 November 2023



Dear Parent/Carer

We have had another busy week in school. We are approaching a stage where our senior pupils are completing numerous assessments for SQA. We are also approaching our S3 Assessment diet, which will give those pupils the opportunity to sit some assessments under more formal conditions. These assessments will be held week beginning 4 December. Our S4-6 Parents Meeting will also take place before the Christmas Holidays, with 2 dates available for parents/carers to choose from.

Dates for the Diary

Monday 27 November – Tuesday 28 November – S2 Trip to Belfast

Monday 27 November – Breakfast Club, Minerva, 8.30 AM – 8.50 AM

Wednesday 29 November – P7 Parent Information Evening, Main Hall, 4.00 PM & 5.00 PM; Parent and Player Netball Evening, Games Hall, 6.00 PM – 8.00 PM

Thursday 30 November – School Photographer, Main Hall, All Day (catch-ups for those who missed previous date); Dress Exchange for Christmas Dances, Main Hall, 3.15 PM – 4.30 PM

Friday 1 December – Breakfast Club, Minerva, 8.30 AM - 8.50 AM; Flu vaccinations, All day

Winter Weather Arrangements

As the weather has definitely taken on more of a wintry feel, it is important for all parents/carers to be aware of procedures to deal with adverse weather. As weather conditions can vary across our region, you are best placed to make the decision as to whether it is safe for your child to travel, depending on your own circumstances. Please let the school know if your child is unable to attend school, or is required to be sent home due to change in weather conditions in your area during the school day.

In the case of severe weather, or for any other reason, that necessitates full or partial school closure, you would be notified in the normal way by SMS, on the Dumgal website (www.dumgal.gov.uk), our school app and website (www.dumfriesacademy.org), and on WestSound Radio. Please await these messages from the school rather than reacting to social media posts from members of the community, or phone calls from your child (as they may not have the correct information at that time).

Full school closure is rare. The following steps are usually taken to ensure that closure happens smoothly and safely:

- Pupils from outlying areas are usually called to leave first.
- If buses are running, these pupils will be advised to get the first available bus home and we will let parents/carers know by SMS text message this is happening.
- However, if buses are not running, the school will get in touch with those families directly to ensure that there is an agreement on how and when those pupils affected will travel home safely.

- Pupils who normally walk home from school/travel a short distance by bus (which is still running) will be released to travel home only if we are certain that a parent/emergency contact/adult will be there expecting their arrival. Consideration will be given to the age of the pupil and the distance travelled to reach home/identified safe place.
- If pupils/parents cannot confirm that a child will be able to travel home safely and be met by a responsible adult, the child will remain in school, supervised by available staff until safe collection from school or travel home can be arranged. It is expected that parents/carers will make this arrangement as soon as possible so that all pupils and staff can avoid staying in school any longer than is necessary.
- A date for school reopening will be posted on the Dumfries and Galloway Council website and all of our other communication platforms listed above.

A reminder to ensure your child is appropriately dressed for the weather conditions, as we begin to see cold and wet weather creeping in. Outside jackets should be worn and can be removed when indoors, black cardigans or V neck pullovers can be worn under blazers to provide an extra layer. PE kit should be appropriate for the activity undertaken, whether indoors or outdoors, and kept in a suitable bag.

Army Cadets – Link Detachment

Our Cadet Link Detachment is being launched next Thursday. The fantastic opportunity for young people to build skills and self-confidence through Cadets will now be available as an after-school experience for pupils in S1-6 from 3.30 - 4.30pm in T24. Pupils can sign up via the form on the BGE and Senior Team or be seeing Dr Gordon.

More information about the opportunities that Cadets have to offer your child can be viewed at

<https://youtu.be/smuOQp-3roM>

Dumfries Academy Refurbishment Plans

We await further information on the committed funding from our local authority. This item will be on the agenda of the next meeting of Dumfries and Galloway Council's Education Committee. Our Parent Council met with Education Staff and our elected member, CLLR Campbell to discuss our immediate school priorities. These include our toilet facilities, our PE facilities and our digital infrastructure. Our Parent Council will be working closely with us to gather and represent views to take to local elected members in the near future. We hope new members can come along to share their views.

School Trips

A second letter has been issued for those going on the Barcelona Trip. Please ensure you read this and return the reply slip. This is to advise that the date and flight times have been changed due to a change in the Ryanair flight schedules.

The S3 London Trip has been launched. Pupils will be notified if they have been successful in obtaining a place and must pay a deposit of £100 by Friday 1 December 2023.

Social Areas

Please remind your child of the following arrangements for social areas:

- S1 - Cafe (indoor); rear of school (outdoor)
- S2 - Cafe (indoor); front of link corridor (outdoor)
- S3 - Main Hall (indoor); front of main building (outdoor)
- S4 - Main Hall (indoor); front of main building (outdoor)
- S5 - Minerva (indoor); front of Minerva building (outdoor)
- S6 - Minerva (indoor); front of Minerva building (outdoor)

S1 on site at both break and lunch

S2 -3 on site at break, but allowed off at lunch

S4 -6 allowed off site at break and lunch

We are seeing an increasing number S1 pupils going off site at lunch and S1-3 pupils going off site at morning break. This is not permitted.

Meeting with Staff

A reminder that parents/carers who wish to meet with a member of staff to discuss matters regarding their child's welfare or progress should telephone the school office to make an appointment. We are seeing an increasing number of parents/carers arriving in school requesting to see staff immediately. Whilst we are delighted to welcome parents/carers to the school, the nature of the working day for staff means that unarranged meetings are usually not possible.

Save the Date

S4-6 Parents Meeting – Thursday 7 December, 4.00 PM – 6.30 PM

S4-6 Parents Meeting – Tuesday 12 December, 4.00 PM – 6.30 PM

Senior Dance – Thursday 14 December, 7.30 PM to 10.30 PM, Main Hall

Junior Dance – Wednesday 20 December, 7.00 PM to 9.30 PM, Main Hall

Attendance

A reminder to report pupil absences via the pupil absence line below. You should state the pupil's name, Tutor Group, reason for absence and expected duration of absence.

Pupil Absence Line: 01387 274356

All previous updates will be archived on our new website. You will be able to find reminders about school uniform, social areas, health and safety and other key school information

Joanne Dillon

Headteacher