



Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your child enjoyed the mid-term break. Thankfully, the weather was good for the early part of it and our pupils who were away on the ski trip were able to return to a dry Dumfries.

Barcelona Trip

A space has become available on the Barcelona Trip. The trip leaves on 1 June 2024 and returns on 4 June 2024. The cost is £820 per pupil. This includes, airport transfers, flights, most meals, accommodation and several guided tours. It is open to any pupil in S4-6. For more information, see Mrs Dillon, Mrs Wilson or Mr Scade.

Learning Walks

Prior to the February breaks our senior leaders carried out learning walks. We visited S1 classes and looked at learners' experiences. We looked at how pupils were responding to their learning, as part of the Dumfries Academy lesson structure of **Ready, Respond, Reflect**. This is all part of the DA Way, where pupils staff, parents and partners should be aware of how we want our pupils to learn and progress. We observed a very high level of engagement and very good opportunities for pupils to respond within lessons. Of course, there are areas to work on and we identified a need to increase the amount of differentiation that takes place in class. During March, we will be showcasing S1 learning. Please check our Facebook Page to see what pupils are up to.

Parent Portal

We are currently in the process of piloting a school app called Parent Portal. This app enables the school to create a better digital communication link with families. The app will introduce basic information about your young person's school and will allow you to:

- Ø Link to your young person;
- Ø Report an absence for your young person;
- Ø View the school's "events" calendar;
- Ø View your young person's class timetable (Secondary only);
- Ø View your young person's attendance record;
- Ø Complete the Annual Data Check process electronically (main contact only);
- Ø Update your own as well as your young person's details at any time of year;
- Ø Complete consent forms for trips, permissions etc.;
- Ø Book Parents' Evening appointments (Primary only initially but this is hoped to be rolled out to Secondary in the near future).

At the moment, we have issued joining instructions to parents of S1 pupils and will be rolling out the use of the app over the next few months.



Staffing

Mrs C Adams, Teacher of Mathematics, joins us on Monday 19 February. Miss Kerr leaves us to begin her maternity leave on Friday 23 February. We look forward to hearing about her new arrival very soon. Miss Bisoni continues to provide supply cover in our Science Faculty. Mr Dillon will be absent from school from next Monday for a few weeks. His remit will be split between Dr Gordon and Mr Drennan. If you usually deal with Mr Dillon, please advise the school office of the nature of your enquiry and they will direct you to the correct Depute Headteacher.

Purple Friday

There will be a non-uniform day on Friday 23 February to raise awareness of LGBTQ+. Pupils are encouraged to wear purple, but please do not feel that they have to specifically buy something new. A suggested donation of £1 should be handed to your child's Tutor. Monies raised go towards supporting our Show Your Colours Group.

Recognising Good Service and Support

Most of our families are familiar with how to contact the school or the local authority when they feel things are not going well; however, we are also aware that our staff often go above and beyond to support our young people. If you would like to recognise this support or level of service, you can do so at the link below. Positive feedback is shared with staff and it also helps us continue to do the things that are going well and make a difference.

<https://forms.office.com/e/HMcANQqJn1>

Dates for the Diary

Monday 19 February – Friday 23 February, S4-6 Prelims (2nd diet)

Monday 19 February - Breakfast Bar, Minerva, 8.30 AM – 8.50 AM

Tuesday 20 February - Breakfast Bar, Minerva, 8.30 AM – 8.50 AM; GRIT Dumfries House, All day

Wednesday 21 February - Breakfast Bar, Minerva, 8.30 AM – 8.50 AM

Thursday 22 February – Breakfast Bar, Minerva, 8.30 AM – 8.50 AM

Friday 23 February –Breakfast Bar, Minerva, 8.30 AM – 8.50 AM; Purple Friday

Save the Date

Thursday 29 February, Parent Council Meeting, G4, 6.30 PM

Tesco Tokens

Please keep voting for us and encourage family and friends to do the same. You can collect Tesco tokens from your local store. Make sure you pick them up from the tubs at the self-service checkouts, too. We are one of three organisations to be featured until the end of

Dumfries Academy Parent /Carer Update

16 February 2024



March. The school could receive up to £1500 to help sustain our breakfast bar, which is available for all pupils 5 mornings a week.

Winter Weather Arrangements

These arrangements can now be found on our school website.

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.

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