



## Parent/Carer Update 2 May 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

It has been lovely to see the sun shining this week. This has meant that our pupils have enjoyed being outside and we have been able to use our playing fields as a social area at lunch times.

Talking of lunch times, we have seen an 8% increase in pupils paying to use our school café facilities since new payment opportunities were introduced at the start of March. There has also been a slight increase in the number of pupils who are using their entitlement to free school meals (75% uptake, which is the third highest uptake in the authority in secondary schools). However, we would like to keep reminding those with Free School Meal Entitlement that our café offers a great range of meals and snack and that they can use their entitlement in the café before school, at morning break and at lunch time, as well as during study leave.

It was lovely to see so many parents at our S1 Parents Evening last night. Our turnout was 63%. We would like to continue to encourage parents to come along to meetings, as partnerships between home and school are very important in ensuring all of our pupils are happy, safe and achieving in school.

This week S1-3 pupils are embarking on new courses. This has gone well and pupils have been enjoying new classes. However, the formal move to the new school day structure takes place when our senior pupils return from study leave on 2 June. We will start at 8.50 AM and finish at 3.20 PM (5 minutes later than we currently do). The main change, however, for Dumfries Academy, is that Tutor Time increases to 15 minutes per day and moves from 8.50 AM to 10.20 AM. This means that if pupils are late in the morning, they will miss learning time in curricular areas, as they go straight to class at 8.50 AM. **I cannot impress strongly enough that 5-10 minutes late each day equates to between 3.5 and 6 days of lost learning each year.** Communication about the structure of the school day, start and finish times and school buses will be issued during May via the local authority communication platforms.

Thank you to everyone in our school community who helped support the school from January – March as part of the Tesco Blue Token scheme. We are delighted to say that we finished in first place and received £1500. This is fantastic news. Monies will go to supporting our nurture provision in school.

A massive well done to our U13 football team. The team beat Lockerbie 6-3 in the U13 Semi-Final of the Gordon Cup and now go on to face Dumfries High School in the final. I am sure we will all be cheering them on.

The SQA exam diet is going well. Please ensure that your child is familiar with exam protocols and that he/she arrives in plenty of time. There are various traffic works around



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Dumfries and these should be factored into travel time. The SQA will not make allowances for latecoming.

### Dates for the Diary

**Monday 5 May – May Day Holiday**

**Wednesday 7 May – Healthy Minds, Bright Futures Workshops (new S2), all day**

**Thursday 8 May – Healthy Minds, Bright Futures Workshops, (new S3) all day**

### Save the date

**Wednesday 14-Friday 16 May – S3 London Trip**

**Monday 19 – Friday 23 May – Health Week**

**Wednesday 21 May – Parent Council Meeting**

### Social Areas

Social Areas for pupils from 27 April to 1 July are as follows:

S1 (New S2) – Café (indoor), rear of school (outdoor)

S2 (New S3) – Café (indoor) until 29 May, then Main Hall, front of link corridor (outdoor), town centre for lunch time only

S3 (New S4) – Games Hall until 29 May, then Main Hall (indoor on wet days), front of main building (outdoor), town centre for lunch time only. Will also be allowed off site at break from August.

S4 (New S5) – Minerva (Indoor), front of Minerva (outdoor)

S5 (New S6) – Minerva (indoor), front of Minerva (outdoor)

\*Please note S1-3 pupils are not allowed off site at morning break

S1 pupils are also not allowed of site at lunch time. They will be allowed off site at lunch time from August

### Parents Evenings/Pupil Reports

We have had much discussion about the timing and nature of parents' evenings and reports. This term, we will send out our revised plans for next session, once these have been agreed with all staff. We thank you for sharing your views, and appreciate that there will be a range of opinions. We have taken these into account and hope that our model for next session works for the majority of our community.

### School Uniform

We are looking to revise our policy slightly over the next 12 to 18 months and are excited to share some of our proposals with our Pupil and Parent Council later this term. As always, we try to be mindful of cost to parents, but whilst retaining the school's identity and heritage.

A reminder that pupils should wear black footwear. **Crocs are not permitted.** All pupils were gifted a school tie on starting with us. If ties have been lost, replacements can be purchased

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from our school office at a cost of £6.50. We do have a stock of pre-loved uniform items and any parent/carers should contact us should they wish financial support/advice with uniform.

We would be delighted for pupils to donate any items that they have outgrown or no longer need, e.g. junior and senior ties, school blazers, etc. We are looking at a more effective system for uniform exchange/donations.

A reminder that tights, socks and shoe laces are available in our equity boxes.

## Vision, Values and Aims

### *Learning together for a better future*



Each week we highlight examples of how our school community ensures that our values are embedded in our culture:

**Compassion:** Our school community has shown compassion by taking part in the Tesco Blue Token scheme to ensure that we were awarded monies to help pupils feel safe, happy and included in school

**Fairness:** Pupils have been helping themselves to items from our equity boxes to ensure everyone has the items they need to have a successful day of learning

**Respect:** Our junior pupils have been respectful to those sitting SQA exams and have made sure that they are quiet around school

**Ambition:** Our U13 football team showed ambition and determination to move forward to the final of the Gordon Cup

**Responsibility:** Our S3 pupils have applied to take on buddy/prefect duties with younger pupils and are beginning their duties next week, including breakfast bar from 8.15 AM



## Parent/Carer Update 2 May 2025

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

Joanne Dillon

Headteacher