



## Parent/Carer Update 28 February 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope everyone enjoyed the February mid-term break. We did not issue a Parent Update on Friday 21 February, as it was a pupil and staff holiday. This means that this update contains a lot of new information.

Our pupils took part in a non-uniform day on Tuesday 18 February. We saw a lot of very creative approaches to dressing as their favourite members of staff and this shows the respect and positive relationships that are evident in our school. However, as we do not stipulate an exact amount for pupils to donate, we are finding that we are not making as much money for some very worthy charities. The event raised £60 approx. If every pupil member/staff donated £1 we could raise over £550. We realise this is a big ask, but we would appreciate your support for future events. We usually hold only one non-uniform day per term for different charities (2 between January and March).

We held assemblies this week to remind pupils that from Monday 3 March they can pay for school meals using contactless, Google/Apple pay and a QR code in their phone wallet that is linked to those entitled to free school meals. We hope that this increases uptake of free meals and also encourages more pupils to use our great on-site dining facility.

You may have also read/heard that an extra £10 million has been committed to Dumfries Academy refurbishment. This is very good news and will go some way to ensuring our school building meets the needs of our learners and staff.

### Dates for the Diary

**Monday 3 March –**

**Tuesday 4 March – Do the Right Thing, all day, various workshops for S3 pupils**

**Wednesday 5 March – DYW Trip to Stirling, all day; Parent Council Meeting, 6.00 PM, G4**

**Thursday 6 March – World Book Day visit to Waterstones, periods 3&4; SWEIC Online Parents Evening, 3.30 PM – 4.30 PM**

**Friday 7 March – S1 Tracking Reports issued**

### Save the date

**10-11 March – SQA Music Exams (practical)**

**12-13 March – S2 Options Interviews**

**13 March – Parent Employability Event**

**17 March – HPV Vaccinations**

### Staffing

**Mrs Rennie is supporting us in Business Studies to cover senior classes in Mrs McQuarrie's absence.**

**Mr Aitken has returned to his role as DHT**



## Parent/Carer Update 28 February 2025

**Mr Mika and Miss McGuire have returned to their substantive roles after taking on Acting DHT and Acting PT roles in Mr Aitken's absence.**

**Mrs Miller has returned to her role as Teacher of Drama**

### Learning and Teaching

We recently completed a learning review within our Social Subjects faculty. Parents and pupils views were sought and were very positive indeed.

Key strengths from our recent Faculty Review include:

- Nurture principles are being applied to create a safe, positive and welcoming ethos
- Staff know pupils well and almost all pupils feel respected by staff
- The learning environment is stimulating to encourage motivation and interest. Pupils' learning is displayed visibly in classrooms.
- Successes are recognised through the faculty's rewards systems, which are linked to the school's values
- All teachers are aware of, and implementing, the Dumfries Academy lesson model
- Praise was used effectively to support learners

Our next steps are to:

- Maintain the positive, welcoming ethos whilst increasing opportunities for learners to become more independent and resilient in their learning
- Explain/exemplify BGE levels and involve pupils more in defining learning intentions and success criteria
- Introduce more opportunities for staff to observe and share good practice

### Parents Evenings

We are continuing to gather views of parents about the format of parents evening and pupil progress reports. Once we have gathered sufficient feedback, we will use this to shape next year's meetings and reports. We have already made some minor adjustments based on feedback.

These include:

Introducing a digital booking system

Allowing parents to pose questions for teachers in advance

Moving to a full report in February for S2 pupils this session

Tying S2-6 Parents Meetings into the course choice process

Introducing earlier parents' meetings for S4 pupils, tied into an earlier prelim diet and course choice process

## Parent/Carer Update 28 February 2025

### Guid Nychburris 2025

I am delighted to announce that Connie Hulme has been selected by her peers to be the school's attendant for the Queen of the South during Guid Nychburris. Well done to Connie. I am sure she will be a great ambassador for our school.

### Parent Council Events

The next meeting of the Parent Council is on Wednesday 5 March at 6.00 PM in room G4. All new members are most welcome to come along.

**There is a further event being planned by our Parent Council for Thursday 13 March.** This is a parent employability event in partnership with other organisations. Please save the date. A poster is attached, which provides more details. Parents/carers can come along with their child (info for both parent and child as potential employees) to find out more about applying for jobs, returning to work, training, further study and other aspects of employment. We are also providing creche facilities. **Please drop in between 5-8PM**

**A reply slip is enclosed with this update, should you require a hard copy please collect one from the school office. Please return this slip to the school office if you intend on attending.**

### Vision, Values and Aims

## *Learning together for a better future*



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

**Compassion** – There have been many examples of staff and pupils being compassionate when individuals have faced personal challenges. This can mean asking someone if they are ok, needing support, coping or thanking them for their efforts.



## Parent/Carer Update 28 February 2025

**Fairness – We continue to seek views on our reporting system and will use these to put forward new proposals**

**Respect – All Pupils were respectful to our visiting assembly speaker on Monday**

**Ambition – Our S4/5 pupils have been ambitious in their approach to choosing subjects for next session that are linked to their future career aspirations**

**Responsibility: Our S6 pupils are currently working hard to produce an S6 Yearbook and to organise events to mark their time at Dumfries Academy**

### **School Café**

From Monday 3 March pupils will be able to pay for school lunches using Google/Apple/contactless payments. Pupils entitled to free school lunches will be able to link up to this via the wallet on their phone.

DG 1<sup>st</sup> will send a letter to all parents/carers with information unique to each of your children on how to use the new payment system their team will also be in our school café prior to this date and on 3 March to help with the launch of the new system.

Should you feel you require any financial assistance with school meals or clothing, you can contact us at the school for advice or use the link below to see if you are eligible for assistance:

[Free school meals | Dumfries and Galloway Council](#)

### **School Uniform**

The standard of school uniform has improved over the last 4 weeks and almost all pupils are now wearing our school tie, appropriate trousers/jeans/skirts and footwear consistently. Ties continue to be available at the school office, priced £6.50. We will contact parents/carers if their child is still not in possession of a basic school uniform to see how we can help.

School blazers should also be worn and are particularly needed as an extra layer under an outdoor jacket as we see the colder weather creeping in.

Please let the school office/your child's Tutor know of any short-term mitigations that need to be taken into account.



## Parent/Carer Update 28 February 2025

### **Winter Weather**

Please see link below for a reminder on winter weather arrangements for our school.

[Winter Weather – Dumfries Academy](#)

All previous updates will be archived on our new 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



### **Parents information Evening**

13<sup>th</sup> March 5-8pm

Join us for a warm and welcoming evening. Explore options for you and your young person with complimentary Tea, coffee and snacks. Have access to information on support organisations, employment and volunteering opportunities, including entering work or improving current employment.

Worried about childcare?

Films, pizza and popcorn will be provided for all young people attending

#### **Organizations represented from:**

- Youth work
- Business gateway
- DG Works
- Head teacher
- Citizen's advice
- DAGCAS
- TSDG



## Parent/Carer Update 28 February 2025

- Employability and skills
- DWP
- Parent Council

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**Childs name**.....

**Childs Class** .....

**Number of children watching the film** .....

**Will you be attending the evening? (yes/no)**.....

**Contact the parent council via email if you have any questions regarding the evening:**  
[dumfriesacademypc@gmail.com](mailto:dumfriesacademypc@gmail.com)

**ALL ORGANISATIONS WHO EMPLOY STAFF MUST COMPLY WITH FAIR WORK INCLUDING PAYMENT OF THE REAL LIVING WAGE TO EMPLOYEES OVER THE AGE OF 16 (EXCEPT APPRENTICESHIP)**