



Parent/Carer Update 28 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Our National 5 Prelims have gone well, and we have been impressed with how our pupils have approached them. These prelims are important in helping pupils prepare for SQA exams and enabling better pathways to a positive destination in the future.

We have seen success in several sporting events and pupils have enjoyed trips too. We had the Big Dog Author event for S1 pupils. We also hosted a very successful St Andrew's Day Breakfast and are very grateful to ***The Butchery*** for kindly donating the food for the second year in a row. Well done to those who organised our Friday Kindness Café. Our invited guests were very impressed with the food, and fun activities.

Dates for the Diary

Tuesday 2 December – Rotary Children's Christmas Party

Wednesday 3 December – S3 Subject Reports Issued

Thursday 4 December – Family Cooking Event (see poster attached for details)

Save the date

Tuesday 10 December – S3 Parents Evening (with subject teachers), 4 PM – 6.30 PM; School Photographer (re-scheduled)

Thursday 11 December – School Christmas Lunch (Meal Deal Price); Higher History Trip to Glasgow

Monday 15 December – Junior Christmas Dance (7-9PM)

Wednesday 17 December – Senior Christmas Dance (7.30-10.30PM)

Staffing

Mr Aitken, Depute Head Teacher, leaves us to take up a secondment as Depute Head Teacher at Dumfries High School on Monday 1 December. We wish Mr Aitken every success in his new post. Mr Dillon and Dr Gordon will subsume Mr Aitken's remit. We will update the DHT roles on our school website from Monday.

Family Cooking

Our last family cooking event was a great success. On Thursday we are hosting another event. This time, we will be cooking soup and a dessert. Please see poster below for more details:

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School Trips

We try to provide a range of school trips to enhance pupils' learning and experiences. We do try to plan up to 3 years ahead and aim to allow pupils the opportunity to participate in at least one residential trip in the BGE and in the senior phase. This might be in the UK or further afield. We try to make trips as affordable as possible and will try to accommodate requests for financial assistance where possible. This usually means signposting parents/carers to organisations that provide funding. Occasionally, we can apply for grants or funding for small groups and have managed to keep costs very low for some trips.

We have just launched an S2 Trip to Paris. This is open to 44 pupils. The trip runs over a weekend, so that pupils only miss 2 school days in total. Improving school attendance is a priority. Thus, any child who attends a school trip must meet our school attendance target of 90%. Similarly, we expect standards of behaviour to be very high. Our pupils' have been great ambassadors for the school on such trips in the past. The health and safety of all pupils and staff participating on trips is also a priority.

In order to plan ahead for future trips, we will be seeking parental views at the start of next session.

Winter Weather

We have seen a change in the weather recently, which could bring about more severe winter weather in the coming weeks and months. Our winter weather guidance can be found at the link below. This contains information on how we communicate school closure to parents in the event we have to take that action at any point (this rarely happens. It also contains advice on ensuring your child is dressed appropriately for school in cold/wet weather.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/dumfriesacademy/winter-weather/>

Parent Council



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Our Parent Council Minutes and accounts can be found on our school website at the link below.

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/dumfriesacademy/parent-zone/parent-council/>

The next meeting of our Parent Council takes place on **Wednesday 7 January at 6 PM**.

We are planning a **Burns Night on Friday 13th February at 6.00 PM** and would ask that you save the date. We will be publicising this on our social media feeds shortly. Tickets will be on sale early in the new year and it promises to be a great family night out.



Attendance

I would ask you to support the school by ensuring your child's attendance does not fall below our expected levels. As you know, good attendance is a very significant factor improving chances of success in SQA courses. At the moment, our overall average attendance is 87%. Our S1 & S5 pupils are doing really well and are above 90%. However, S2,3 and 4 have dipped below this minimum target. This means many pupils are at risk of underperforming. Good attendance and timekeeping are vital for success.

We realise that there are times when illness and injury prevent pupils attending school and understand that they may need to rest and recover.

We would also like to remind families that term-time holidays are unauthorised absences.

Pupils who achieve 90% attendance or higher are recognised through our SMS messaging system.

We are currently looking at strategies to reduce latecoming. A reminder that period 1 begins at 8.50 AM. Please ensure your child arrives in school on time. Latecoming is disruptive and has an impact on your child's learning, as well as the learning of others that are interrupted as a result.



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Please note that thresholds for attendance and latecoming must be met if your child wishes to participate in extra-curricular events and trips. If pupils are missing school (unless for valid reasons), we cannot permit them to miss even more learning by participating in events/activities which are not part of the usual school day.

We understand that some young people have been subject to winter illnesses and take account of any short or long-term health issues.

Uniform Consultation

Please note that any new policy will not come into effect until session 2026-2027. We will allow time to phase out any items that may not be part of the new guidelines.

Initially, we have sourced maroon hoodies and cardigans and will work with our supplier to make these and sweatshirts available. We will also look to price unbranded items from local suppliers and hope to have samples to later this term.

We are considering the place for blazers in the senior school and as an option in BGE. For instance, our S6 pupils want to raise the question of whether blazers should be compulsory for Head Persons and Prefects. Blazers will be part of further discussion this term before finalising the guidelines to come into effect for session 2026-2027.

Joanne Dillon

Headteacher