



Parent/Carer Update 31 October 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

Happy Hallowe'en!

I hope everyone had a lovely October Break. The first week back has flown by and has been very busy. We have had netball and football successes, a cluster roadshow to highlight family supports, an S1 information evening, important assemblies on applying to university and Holocaust Education. The week has ended with a successful non-uniform day, bake sale and raffle, which has generated over £300 for school projects and provided a significant number of donations for local food banks. Well done to everyone for their efforts!

Dates for the Diary

Monday 3 November – Regional Schools Disability Boccia Festival, 9.20 AM -2.30 PM; S1 & S3 Remembrance Assemblies, Main Hall Period 3; Making Sense of Politics, Easterbrook Hall, 1.30 PM – 3.40 PM

Tuesday 4 November -

Wednesday 5 November – S5/6 Remembrance Assemblies, Main Hall, Period 3; S2 Trip to Etihad Stadium, 12.00 PM – 1.30 AM

Thursday 6 November – School Photographer (all day); Trip to Scottish Parliament, 8.30 AM – 5.30 PM

Friday 7 November -

Save the date

Monday 10 November- S2&S4 Remembrance Assemblies

Wednesday 12 November – Parent Council Meeting, 6 PM

Thursday 13 November – Dumfries Academy v's Dumfries High School Basketball, 3.20 PM

Tuesday 25 November – Flu Vaccinations

Wednesday 26 November – N5 Prelims begin

Friday 28 November – School photographer (catch-ups)

Learning and Teaching

Last term we reviewed our learning and teaching in our Language, Literacy and Drama Faculty. The findings were very positive. We invited representatives from other schools, departments and our local education team into lessons to observe and evaluate learners' experiences.

Strengths included:

- Positive, caring relationships
- Consistent and clear implementation of the DA lesson structure
- The school's aims, values and vision are embedded in lessons
- Effective use of praise



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- The purpose of learning was clear and explicit
- Almost all pupils are able to discuss learning and progress
- Teachers are knowledgeable and motivated

Next Steps included:

- Improved differentiation for most able learners
- More consistent use of plenaries (summing up discussions at end of lessons)
- More targeted approaches towards support in classes

Breakfast Bar

Our breakfast Bar continues to be well used in the mornings and on rotation during Tutor Time. We have given pupils the opportunity to evaluate the provision. We are subject to certain restrictions regarding what we can provide as we need to ensure that we avoid sugary items, etc. Pupils have indicated that they like most of what is on offer, with bagels and hot chocolate being the most popular food items. To provide a little more variety, we are introducing some weekly menus and some themed days. Please see below for what's on offer:

Weekly

Mondays - Cereals, Toast, Bagels, Crumpets, Hot Chocolate, Tea, Coffee, Juice

Toastie Tuesdays - Toasties (cheese), Cereals, Toast, Bagels, Crumpets, Hot Chocolate, Tea, Coffee, Juice

Wellbeing Wednesdays - Yoghurts, Cereals, Toast, Bagels, Crumpets, Hot Chocolate, Tea, Coffee, Juice

Hearty Thursdays - Scrambled Eggs, Beans, Cereals, Toast, Bagels, Crumpets, Hot Chocolate, Tea, Coffee, Juice

Fridays - Cereals, Toast, Bagels, Crumpets, Hot Chocolate, Tea, Coffee, Juice

Events

Friday 28 November – St Andrew's Breakfast

Friday 19 December – Hot Choc Friday

Friday 23 January – Burns Breakfast

Tuesday 27 February – Shrove Tuesday Breakfast

Friday 27 March - Spring into Summer Breakfast



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Attendance

As we begin new term, 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 will be writing to parents/carers to advise of the impact of attendance and lateness on overall success in school at the start of next term.

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.

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