



Parent/Carer Update 6 December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Our National 5 Prelims examinations are going well. Well done to pupils who have undertaken these assessments and whose conduct during assessments has been excellent. Prelims continue next week. Our Higher and Advanced Higher prelims take place week beginning 13 January.

As we begin the countdown to our Christmas Holidays, I want to thank all of our school community for supporting our school. We are very proud of all that we have accomplished this session so far and we continue to make good progress with our School Improvement Plan. I have briefly summarised progress with priorities to date:

School Improvement Plan

- 1 You Said: Improve S1-3 curriculum and develop meta skills – we are making good progress in this area and are just about to carry our reflections with our S3 cohort so that they are tracking skills; we have also introduced more interdisciplinary learning opportunities for S1-3 pupils and will evaluate these as we go along
- 2 You Said: Improve pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy to improve life chances - our data from session 2023-24 showed improvements in levels of literacy and numeracy, where we reached and exceeded 85% of pupils achieving 3rd level literacy and numeracy by the end of S3. We are closing the gap between the most and least disadvantaged pupils in S3 and have one of the smallest gaps in the local authority; we are also working hard to achieve an increase in positive destinations leaving school
- 3 You said: Improve pupils' attendance to improve wellbeing and success we set our school target at the national target of 90% average – we saw a 3% drop between August to October (in line with national and local trends) but have seen a 1% increase in November, still just under 4% away from our overall target.
- 4 You Said: Develop a shared understanding of our school's vision, values and aims to build pride in our community – our pupils are better informed and this was demonstrated in our S1-3 wellbeing interviews, where almost all pupils said they felt safe and were enjoying their learning; we have also held several successful events to bring lots of families into school to share the learning and promote our values

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Our school values are important to us and this week we saw them in action in a variety of ways:



Compassion: Our pupils have told us that our staff are compassionate and supportive in the lead up to prelims by taking account of their individual anxieties and circumstances

Fairness: We had a dress swap event to ensure that pupils had the opportunity to choose clothes (free of charge) for the forthcoming school, dances, so that they felt included and able to participate

Respect: I have been impressed with the very good manners I have seen in school this week from our pupils: holding doors open, helping with tasks to respect staff and others and saying "Please" and "Thank You."

Ambition: Our pupils took part in an engineering challenge at the bridge this week and showed ambition in their learning

Responsibility: Our Senior Committees are making great progress with organising school dances

These are just a few examples of how Dumfries Academy pupils are doing themselves and the school proud. Keep up the good work!

Dates for the Diary

Monday 2 December – Friday 13 December – National 5 Prelims

Monday 9 December – Pupil Council Bake Sale, Morning Break, Minerva

Thursday 12 December – School Christmas Lunch, Lunchtime, school cafe

Saturday 14 December - Coffee and Carols 10 AM-2 PM, Main Hall

Save the date

Tuesday 17 December, Junior Christmas Dance

Wednesday 18 December, S1-3 Tracking Reports issued; S3 Parents Meetings

Thursday 19 December, S1 Science Trip to Glasgow, Senior Christmas Dance

Friday 20 December, Christmas Breakfast (special hot chocolate); Christmas Services (St George's Church); last day of term; non-uniform day



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Staffing

We are delighted to have appointed Mr Rosie to the post of full time Teacher of Craft, Design and Technology. Mr Rosie will start early in the New Year

Ms Reid has joined us temporarily as Teacher of Modern Studies and will be with us into next term until Mrs Sykes will join us on 13 January on a full time basis

School Uniform

The standard of school uniform is satisfactory but could be better. We are one of very few schools that has provided ties free of charge to ensure that every pupil has a tie at the start of S1. I would ask for your support in ensuring that your child wears a school shirt, tie, appropriate skirt/trousers and black footwear to school every day. 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.

In January we will be monitoring the standard of uniform and contacting parents to see how we can support families to ensure that pupils are dressed appropriately for school and following our policy.

Parent Council

Our Parent Council and Loreburn Parent Council met with representatives from the school estates team on 4 December. There is £32.5 million available for Dumfries Academy refurbishment and the co-location of Loreburn Primary School. Designs have been shared with staff and Parent Council members. Early in the New Year a project bid will be made and we will know more at that point about likely timelines for the project. I hope to share more news in the New Year and to involve parents and pupils in the discussions around what the plans for the refurbished site look like.

On another note, our Parent Council is hosting a **Burns Night on Friday 24 January**. Please save the date. Tickets will be on sale in the New Year. Last year's event was a real success and we would love to see even more families joining us for this event.

The Parent Council has created a new Facebook page. You can find the link to this and to all the latest information on our school website:

[Parent Council – Dumfries Academy](#)

Mobile Device Policy

As of Monday 3 December, we re-launched our mobile device policy

We welcome your views on our on revised policy and would appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey below:

<https://forms.office.com/e/RMV4nN9Bcn?origin=lprLink>



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Updates to our policy will be shared via our weekly parental update from Mrs Dillon, our parent portal, and our school Facebook page.

The full policy can be accessed in the PDF file attached in last week's update.

Winter Weather

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

[Winter Weather – Dumfries Academy](#)

Equity Boxes

As the winter weather creeps in, we want to remind you that we provide socks and tights free of charge in our equity boxes. We also provide toothpaste, toothbrushes, toiletries, stationery, sanitary products and shoe laces. Pupils may take what they need.

School Café

All S1 pupils must remain on site at lunch time. Please advise your child that he/she must remain on site and use the school café.

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](#)

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