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Education and Families
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Dear Parent / Carer

I wanted to write to you about a few things.

Whole School Awards Ceremony

This takes place on **Tuesday 19 September at 7.00pm** in the games hall. We will send invitations to young people and families involved in the next few days.

S1 Parents Welcome Mass – save the date

This takes place on **Wednesday 27 September at 7.00pm** in the school theatre. All S1 families are warmly invited, and we look forward to seeing you. Again, we will write to parents and carers of young people in S1 in the days ahead.

S1 Parents' Evening – Tuesday 3 October 4.00pm-6.30pm

S1 parents and carers - please save the date. We will send information on how to book your appointments.

School Action Plan 2023/24

The first version of our school action plan has been agreed and published. You can see a full copy of the action plan on the school website. The plan will be reviewed and updated as the session progresses.

The main themes of our school plan are:

- Cluster work with our primary schools
- Transitions (all stages)
- Developing the curriculum
- Better pathways to National Qualifications in Maths and PE
- Improved tracking and monitoring of pupil progress so we can involve parents and take appropriate action sooner
- Whole school consistent approaches to effective teaching and learning
- AABOUT Programme with a particular focus on approved attendance
- Developing in Faith / House Identity
- Catholic Leadership
- Pupil Equity Fund Plan (Numeracy, Literacy, Digital Learning, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), Outdoor Learning)
- Improving our Future Friday Programme



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SQA National 5 Qualifications – Introducing Applications of Mathematics in session 2023/24

The provision of alternative curricular pathways and national qualifications for young people is a constant feature of our school improvement plans.

Allowing some young people to study Applications of Mathematics will provide them with additional opportunities to achieve qualifications at Level 5 mathematics and beyond.

As the year progresses, some young people find the demands of the National 5 Mathematics course become too much for them. If they go on to be presented for National 5 Mathematics, we know from experience, that they will not achieve success. We need to do better for them.

Over the past two academic sessions the maths department have been planning alternative routes to success in mathematics for our young people. This includes looking very carefully at the content and how we could offer the *Applications of Mathematics* course in Cardinal Newman High School.

We would like to offer some young people the opportunity to be presented for *Applications of Mathematics* during the 2023/24 SQA Examination Diet.

We will identify young people who might not be on track to pass National 5 Mathematics. We will give them the opportunity to sit a prelim examination in *Application of Mathematics*; look at their performance in that paper, and then decide with them and their parents if the best option is to move from National 5 Mathematics to National 5 Application of Mathematics.

This alternative provision will not affect any young person who is following the traditional route to the National 5 Mathematics qualification.

We might also decide, following conversations with young people and parents, to offer some young people the opportunity to sit an additional prelim examination in *Application of Mathematics* if they wish to do so. Following subject department feedback from the prelim exam the young person together with their teacher and their parents may decide to sit National 5 Applications of Mathematics alongside National 5 Mathematics. This would allow some young people to have a fall-back position if required, and for other young people to achieve 8 National Qualifications.

Some parents and young people will decide that the study of seven National 5 subjects is enough of a workload during S4. Other young people and parents may wish to be presented for the additional qualification. The decision will rest with them.

We are always looking to provide as many additional qualifications and awards and experiences for our young people as possible, for them to include in their applications and CVs to universities and employers given the stiff competition they face with other young people from across Scotland. We believe the offer of *Applications of Mathematics* will help us to do this.

AABOUT Programme (Attainment, Attendance, Behaviour, Opportunities, Uniform, Timekeeping)

We will be continuing with our AABOUT Programme this year. As I said to you recently, almost all young people have returned from their summer holiday in full uniform, with only a few exceptions. The standard of uniform has greatly improved since we began our AABOUT Programme, and I thank you very much for your

support with this. If you need any help with items of uniform please let us know. We can supply new items from our uniform bank.

Attendance – we achieved a 2% increase in whole school attendance from 84% to 86% last session. That is a massive achievement, and again I wanted to thank you for your support in helping us move closer to our school target of at least 90% for all young people. For many young people, their biggest obstacle to attainment and achieving their potential is absence from school. Last session we introduced some new attendance and absence supports and these are achieving some success. A major contributing factor to our absence figures, is the amount of time some young people are absent from school due to family holidays arranged during term time. I understand the economic reasons why some families arrange this, and there may be other factors, including parental occupations etc.

The simple message is that holidays during term time, even relatively brief breaks away from the classroom, affect young people's learning and their ability to catch up with what they have missed and can have longer term effects on their attainment.

Behaviour – school merit and rewards system

We introduced our CNHS Merits and Rewards system last session. We use the AABOUT Programme to reward the vast majority of our young people who go about their school lives quietly, with no fuss and follow school rules religiously. These young people deserve to have their daily behaviours recognised and rewarded.

Our Merit Team note the number of merits achieved by each pupil and each House every week. Pupils and Houses qualify for reward events depending on the merits they receive. Merits are awarded to young people who are following the principles of the AABOUT Programme. Reward events take place during the year and at weekly House Assemblies.

Developing in Faith / House Identity

Last Monday was the first day of our Catholic Leadership Programme for senior pupils. This took place in the Conforti Centre and was led by colleagues from the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), Pupil Support Staff and the RE Department.

The young people are looking at our school vision and values and ways in which to develop House Identity for all young people through the lives of our 4 House Saints – Andrew, Columba, Kentigern and Ninian. The day was a great success and you will be hearing more about the leadership programme as the year progresses.

If you would like to know more about any of the news items in this letter, please contact the school.

Every best wish



Robert Smith
Head Teacher