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**Education and Families**

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I wanted to send you some information following our return to school.

**School Improvement Plan 2025/28**

We have agreed a 3-year school improvement plan which covers the following three improvement themes:

- *Improving attainment including numeracy and literacy and closing the attainment gap*
- *Improving young people's health and wellbeing*
- *Developing skills for sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people*

The plan includes embedding our new School Vision and Values into the life and work of the school. This also includes our plans to embed our newly agreed and published Promoting Positive Relationships Policy into our everyday practice.

Our work this session will focus on:

- (i) **Learning Teaching and Assessment** - a commitment to ensure consistent approaches to effective teaching and learning across all classrooms.
- (ii) **Improving young people's health and wellbeing** – Introducing The LEARN-IT Zone; St. Kentigern and St. Columba Rooms. We will deliver a flexible support pathway that enables learners with neurodivergent profiles, emotional needs, or those requiring bespoke curricula supports to engage in a safe, nurturing and structured school experience. 46% of young people in our school have an additional support need. National data also shows that 15% of the UK population is neurodivergent. There has been a 787% increase in autism diagnoses between 1998 and 2018. Reform Scotland (2023) found that 32% of young people in Scotland have a school attendance of less than 90%. Our whole school attendance last session was just below 87% although this is a year-on-year increase over the past three years from 84%. Our whole school attendance target is 90%. We also know from our transition data that some young people who previously may have accessed specialist provision are now coming to our school. We also know from transition data that some of the young people who are coming to our school in 2025/26 need some intensive, literacy, numeracy, nurture and HWB supports. These learning spaces are one way in which we can provide appropriate support.



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE

Accredited  
2014-2021

LIVE  
LEARN  
WORK  
INVEST  
VISIT

- (iii) **Developing skills for sustained positive school leaver destinations for all young people - SCQF Ambassador School.** We launched a programme to become an SCQF Ambassador School on INSET Day 2 August 2025. We will work with SCQF for us to become an ambassador school. Faculty Heads and Teachers across all subject areas and with staff with whole school responsibility will identify and introduce certification (SCQF Points and Awards) for work which learners are already doing in the BGE; or adapt courses to be eligible for SCQF points or awards. This will ensure that all learners will have a range of SCQF Points and Awards by the end of S3.

The detailed school improvement plan will be available on the school website from week beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>.

You will be able to access our Promoting Positive Relationships Policy, Learning Teaching and Assessment Policy, The Whole School Calendar including liturgical events, and detailed information on our newly refreshed school vision and values.

### Parent Council AGM

This takes place on Monday 8 September at 6.00pm in the Saint John Henry Newman Room. All parents are welcome to attend the AGM.

We need new members and if you think you could attend some of the meetings (6 per year) please come to the AGM or telephone the school office.

Parents and carers of new S1 pupils – I would like to encourage you to join.

### Mass for parents and carers of young people in S1 – hold the date

Please keep Wednesday October 1<sup>st</sup> 7.00pm free. Venue: School Theatre.

### SQA National Qualifications 2025

We are delighted with this year's performance by our young people in national qualifications. Performance has improved in every measure in S4, S5 and S6.

<b>S4 National 5</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
1+	75.29%	79.10%
3+	54.60%	60.10%
5+	37.36%	43.70%

- 22% of our young people in S4 achieved 8 or more National 5 qualifications.
- 15% of our young people in S4 achieved 9 or more National 5 qualifications.

<b>S5 Highers</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
1+	54.97%	55.00%
3+	25.83%	33.00%
5+	12.58%	13.22%
<b>S6 Highers</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
1+	59.33%	60.30%
3+	39.33%	37.00%
5+	24.00%	24.70%

Please note the 2025 S6 Highers figures do not yet include equivalent Level 6 qualifications which many of our young people are now sitting including college courses, HNCs, apprenticeships etc. Once these figures are included, the 2025 performance will be much better than last year.

My congratulations to all our young people for their hard work and efforts, and to you their parents and carers for encouraging and supporting them – and us.

### **Goodbye from me**

As this week draws to an end so does my time here in Cardinal Newman High School. As you will all now know I am retiring, and Friday 29 August will be my last day as headteacher. I have been here for over 20 years, the last 5 as headteacher. My whole career has been an honour and a privilege. I have loved every single day working with the amazing young people of this community. I will miss them very much. They have helped keep me cheerful and optimistic all these years. I retire knowing that our future is safe in their hands – of that I have no doubt.

I also want to thank you the parents and carers of our school community for your unfailing help, support and encouragement. I appreciate your kind thoughts and wishes enormously.

I look forward to speaking to many of you at our Newman Week events which I will be attending, including the awards ceremony on Tuesday 7 October (7.00pm) and at our patronal feast day mass on Wednesday 8 October (11.00am).

Please continue to remember me in your prayers as I will all of you.

Every best wish



Robert Smith  
Headteacher