

Head Teacher: Mr Liam Coyle

7th October 2021

Be all we can be! Be proud of who we are!

Dear Parents, Carers and Families

It is a great pleasure to be able to write to you as we move into our October Week holiday from school and look back on our return to school since August. Firstly, I would like to praise our young people at Mary Russell who have worked hard and responded well to the demands of returning to school after the Summer holiday. They are a credit to themselves and to their families.

Since returning to school, we have reintroduced breaks at lunchtime and interval and the use of the dinner hall at lunchtime, our pupils have responded enthusiastically to these social opportunities and to the space and freedom this allows them.

In the secondary department we have reintroduced class rotation, allowing our secondary specialists to deliver their subjects in the appropriate subject specialist room. This allows for better teaching and better learning and a richer experience for our pupils.

This week we celebrated our Harvest Service, many thanks to everyone who contributed with donations to the Paisley foodbank, the volume of donations is a great testament to the caring nature of our school. We were also able to celebrate an extremely kind and generous gift from one of our S4 pupils, Vegas MacBeth, who donated a cheque to the school fund for £1520. Vegas asked friends and family to donate to the school instead of buying her birthday presents for her 16th birthday! Quite a remarkable act of kindness and one for which we are very grateful.

It has been a rewarding term as the school has begun to emerge from the restrictions necessitated by the pandemic. We are still functioning using mitigations and carefully following National and Local Authority guidelines and these safeguards will continue into the new term.

Parents Evenings

Due to Local Authority advice we have had to suspend our usual November parents evening. Instead, staff are working on Interim reports which will be sent home for every Secondary age pupil. Secondary year heads will then contact parents over a 2 week window and discuss the Interim report.

Our Primary parents will also have an arranged telephone conversation in order to update on pupil progress.

As always our Pastoral care team are available at any time to answer any questions you may have.

Welcome to New Staff

We have had a number of staff changes this session and a warm welcome goes to our new Social Studies Teacher Miss Kane, our new Step Unit/Calm base teacher Miss Carter, and our new Modern Languages teacher Miss Muir. We have also had a few changes in the management team with Mrs Methven acting Depute Head for the Step Unit, Mrs Clark acting Principal Teacher for Employability and year head for S5. In the Secondary department we have Mr Smyth as acting Depute Head and Miss O'Connor acting Principal Teacher with responsibility for S3. We also have a new Janitor to welcome to the team – Mr John Ibbetson. All are settling in well to their new roles within the Mary Russell team.

School Catering/Clothing Grants

If you think you might be eligible, please make sure you apply for free school meals and for the clothing grant for young people. The application process has moved online, and forms can be accessed via the following link:

<http://renfrewshire.gov.uk/Freeschoolmealsandclothinggrants>

Parent Pay

As we are now back with a fully functioning dinner hall, I would encourage you to set up a Parent Pay account with the Council, this allows money to be loaded via the internet and for the school to move towards a cashless system. You can set up an account at the following link: <https://myaccount renfrewshire.gov.uk> If you have lost your Parent Pay details letter and need a note of your parent pay details, please contact our school office who will be happy to help.

Pupils over 16 – Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

EMA is a means tested weekly benefit of £30 which is paid to any young person over 16 who qualifies. Applications and further information can be found via the following link:
<http://wwwrenfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3366/Education-Maintenance-Allowance>

If any of our Parents or Carers require support with any of the above applications, please contact your pupils Pastoral Care teacher/year head who will contact our Homelink Colleagues for support.

Social Media

Moving forward we intend to continue to utilise our Social Media as effectively as possible for communication and I would encourage you to follow us on Twitter and Facebook and to download our App. Details, information and links can also be found on our School website –
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/maryrussell/>

I would encourage you to look at our Website for information on the **Paisley Wee Spree Festival** which runs over the October Break and is packed with activities across Paisley, there is something for every age range and interest.

You can also find details of our **Active School** partners activities over the October break and beyond. There are **ASN specific Sporting activities** at both the Lagoon in Paisley and the Onyx in Linwood

Our website also has information on a new family support service – **Parental Employment Support**, this offers support in boosting income including benefit advice, part time working opportunities and training and development information.

I hope everyone in our school community has an enjoyable, peaceful and restful break over the October holiday and that everyone returns refreshed and ready to continue the good work which has taken place in term 1.

With all best wishes.
Kind regards.

Liam Coyle

Liam Coyle
Head Teacher

Our Values:
Respect, Achievement, Care, Trust, Responsibility, Co-operation

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