



Dalry Secondary School

Parent Council Meeting 18th March 2021

Headteacher's Report



School improvement plan update

At this time of the year the HT report would normally be about progress with the improvement plan and outlining the plans for next session. However, further Covid-19 issues have made that somewhat impossible. The improvement plan for next session will largely be the same as that for the current session as we are still overtaking the recommendations made by Education Scotland during their inspection in January 2020.

A year has passed since Education Scotland published their inspection report for Dalry Secondary. I was asked to draft a letter outlining the progress the school has made towards overtaking the recommendations of the report. This letter is then finalised by Jim Brown, Head of Education (Quality & Curriculum) and Chief Education Officer, and sent to Education Scotland who publish it and make it available to all parents. The letter was published on Wednesday 17th March 2021 and is now on the school website. The closing paragraphs read as follows:

Since the inspection of January 2020, Dalry Secondary School has taken positive steps to address the recommendations made during the inspection. The work completed and planned for future improvement, while interrupted by the current global pandemic, demonstrates significant capacity for future improvement. The school recognises that the global pandemic has compromised the ability to evidence the impact of developments that have been implemented; however, remains committed to ensuring that the planned activities stated above will remain a priority for the coming sessions when collection of evidence will be possible.

The school has made progress in implementing Education Scotland's recommendations and is in a strong position to improve further. I wish to congratulate all within the school community on the progress made over the last year.

Return to School

Young people have all done really well in keeping engaged with learning remotely from home. Some have coped with this type of learning better than others and some have had to battle with internet connections and aging laptops. However, overall our young people have shown determination to succeed. Teachers will be working hard now to ensure that our pupils can be on track to achieve their learning aims. Teachers have done a fantastic job in adapting quickly to on-line learning again in this second lockdown.

The partial limited return to learning at the secondary school has gone smoothly and the numbers at Dalry have meant that we did not have the same issues as most other secondary schools in being able to accommodate young people while maintaining all of the Covid-19 control measures. The current plans are to see schools open as normal on Monday 12th April after the Easter break.

Senior pupils will be concerned about National Qualifications and the likelihood of facing a great number of assessments after the Easter holiday. We have been honest and up-front with our senior pupils and now with the parent council that there is no way out of this situation. Young people will be required to get ready for the weeks beginning 19th and 26th April where they will be sitting assessments in all of their subjects. These first assessments will provide the initial evidence that schools will use to start to form opinions about the provisional grade that teachers are likely to award. These initial assessments will also be used to provide evidence to SQA that teachers are applying National Standards appropriately and consistently as they carry out the process of arriving at a provisional grade. Young people will then have another assessment window that runs in the weeks beginning 24th May and 31st May. These assessments will be a final opportunity to demonstrate the grade that should be provisionally awarded for each subject. This is not going to be an easy process and young people will feel the pressure that wanting to achieve their best brings. We ask young people to work hard over the rest of this term and next and use their time and opportunity wisely to demonstrate the grade of award that they deserve.

Lateral Flow Testing

From the 15th March, all senior pupils are asked to participate in LFD (Lateral Flow Device) testing, twice per week. This is a voluntary programme but we want to urge as many school users as possible to take part. The LFD tests are another measure that we can take to try to make sure we keep Covid-19 out of the school and out of your homes. From 12 April 2021 all secondary pupils will be asked to participate in this testing. Senior pupils have already received information about this along with consent forms. S1-S3 pupils have also received their information to take home and discuss with parents. S1-S3 pupils will then be able to complete the consent forms return them on the week beginning 22nd March and collect a kit that they can use in preparation for returning to school on 12th April.

Regular testing is only for individuals **without** symptoms – Those with symptoms must continue to follow the usual guidance and contact NHS.

Website update

Please take a moment to visit the school website where a new addition to the website is a virtual tour of the school. This virtual tour was created by the teacher of computing at Castle Douglas High School and is an excellent way of giving anyone a tour of the school and attracting families to send their children to the school. The tour will be updated in the future with some additional inserts from staff and pupils.

www.dalrysecondary.info