

# Dalry Secondary School



## Message from the Headteacher

As session 2021-2022 draws to a close it is good to be able to say that school is, at last, beginning to return to a much more normal rhythm. Let us all hope that the disruption of lockdowns and the devastations caused by the pandemic are well and truly behind us. Our senior pupils have coped well with the uncertainty of this session. They were well prepared for their SQA exams and have demonstrated commitment, respect and resilience throughout the SQA exam diet. I hope that they all achieved the grades that their efforts over this session deserve. Compared with the last few sessions this has been a very different term for our senior pupils and I am sure that they will all be ready for their summer break.

The summer term gave parents and staff the first opportunity in three sessions to have a parent/teacher consultation. Parents of pupil in S1-S3 were able to be in school to discuss their child's progress with teachers. For many parents this will have been the first time they had been in the secondary school and the first time that they have had the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at a parent evening since their child was in primary 5 or primary 6. I know that staff valued the opportunity to meet with parents and it proved to be the right decision to postpone parent evenings from earlier in the session so that face-to-face meetings could happen. We have planned a full set of parent consultation evenings for next session and hope that these will be able to happen without incident.

We changed our timetable on the 6<sup>th</sup> June giving young people four full weeks to get started into their new timetables and into their senior options. These weeks in June are really useful as the young people in S2-S3 get a motivational boost from starting their new timetables and the senior S4 pupils, get the opportunity to start working towards their National Qualifications. All pupils then return in August better prepared to progress right from the start of the session.

In May this year the parent forum held a meeting and elected new office bearers to represent parents as a parent council. Mr Michael Owen was elected as the chairperson of the parent council. The new parent council are looking forward to working together to support the school and are always keen to have new faces and new ideas join them. Details of parent council meetings and minutes of past meetings are available on the school website [www.dalrysecondary.info](http://www.dalrysecondary.info)

At the end of this session Mr Michael Collins, teacher of mathematics, will set off on a new path by taking his first steps into a well-deserved retirement. We all wish Mr Collins well and hope that he has a long and enjoyable retirement. We will be joined in August by Mr Iain Stewart as a full time mathematics teacher. Iain is currently teaching at Dumfries High School and we look forward to him joining us at both Dalry Secondary and CDHS.

While not a member of the teaching staff, Rev David Bartholomew has been involved with providing spiritual guidance to the school for many years. David will retire this year and so we wish him well as he and Heidi move on to the next phase of their lives together.

Our S1 pupils took part in the local authority SUMDOG mathematics competition. Their calculations proved to be correct and the S1 team were declared overall winners of the competition. The team were awarded their winners certificate. Well done to everyone who added (or multiplied/divided/subtracted) to this success.



In the first weeks of May, S2 and S3 pupils from CDHS and Dalry Secondary attended the Galloway activity centre to enjoy a range of outdoor experiences. The activities on offer included archery, laser tag, the giant swing, paddle boarding, wind surfing sailing and kayaking. The pupils had a great time and as always conducted themselves in a way that brought praise from the staff in the centre.



This term we saw the return of our annual sports day, the first sports day since June 2019. Many of our S1-S3 pupils were involved in a series of competitive athletics events with the aim of demonstrating sporting prowess and personal achievement whilst also competing on behalf of their house.

The Carmichael sports champion cup was won by Charlie Moore and the Goodwin House trophy awarded to the house achieving the most merits throughout the session - and including achievements on sports day- was won by Goodwin House.

Well done to all of the winners. Some pictures of the sports day and of Charlie receiving his trophy as sports champion and of Dante accepting the trophy for the champion house are below:





In Social Subjects, the S1's are currently learning about UK democracy. To support class learning, we took a trip to the Scottish Parliament. In the parliament we learned about how democracy works in Scotland, spoke with our local MSP and observed a parliamentary debate from the public gallery. Our pupils really impressed with their knowledge of democracy and asked Finlay Carson some great questions. Well done S1.



Our S4 cohort of young people were bid a fond farewell on 26<sup>th</sup> May as they move onto the next phase of their lives in education or the world of work. The event involved the whole school and families of S4 learners and offered a chance for us to recognise the strengths and achievements of each and every pupil as well as to reminisce through a photo montage of earlier years. Some very youthful faces

and funny moments captured raised many a laugh as well as a few tears at the ending of an era for pupils, mums and dads.

We wish them well and will hope to hear of their future successes. Many thanks to Mr Murray for producing the commemorative DVD of the photo montage gifted to the S4 pupils as a keepsake of their time at Dalry Secondary School.

## Senior Phase Curriculum

As part of the South West Education Collaboration Initiative (SWEIC), CDHS, together with all other secondary schools in Dumfries & Galloway, are now offering some Advanced Highers that are delivered online. As a school we have made a conscious decision not to offer all Advanced Highers online but to continue to offer the more practical subjects, like the Sciences, in school. Where we have capacity, we also continue to offer Advanced Higher alongside Higher classes.



Whilst this is new to us all, we are in constant dialogue with the local authority on how well the courses are going and on how well young people are engaging. Pupil evaluation is regularly sought and hopefully any issues are ironed out very quickly.

The Scottish Government is currently proposing a reduction to teacher/pupil contact time from 22.5 hours to 21 hours. If/when this change happens there may be a need to revisit our curriculum offer and restructure how the curriculum is presented to our young people. Please be assured that there will be regular consultation with all stakeholders throughout this process as it will be very important that all stakeholders understand and have the opportunity to shape any changes being proposed. When we return to school in August 2022, we hope to be in a position to invite parents into school on a more regular basis and would aim to hold an evening event to outline current thinking on the shape of our curriculum. This could involve identifying our current strengths and where there are opportunities for improvement. This could be an interactive session with stakeholders able to add their views to help shape the curriculum we are able to offer our young people.

At Dalry Secondary School we will continue to try to meet the need of our learners in each year group and in our senior phase S4 group. At Castle Douglas High School pupils and parents might ask the question 'why are many advanced higher courses being delivered online?' The answer to that is a complex mix of trying to achieve equity of opportunity across the local authority, trying to make more efficient use of staff in schools and trying to release teacher capacity within schools so that schools are able to enhance their curriculum offer for all pupils from S1 to S6.

## School Uniform Consultation

Over the winter months the impact of Covid-19 meant that we had to encourage young people to come to school dressed to keep warm. While the heating was on in the school, windows and doors had to be left open in order to ventilate the building. This meant that our young people have become used to wearing hoodies, coats and non-uniform items of clothing. We would now like to see a return to wearing of school uniform and school colours.



The Scottish government has committed to introduce statutory guidance in Scotland which aims to address equality issues around uniform policy and reduce the cost of school uniform, as this can be a significant barrier to participation in learning. This consultation seeks views on:

- what should be included within the scope of the guidance
- the role that school uniform plays within the ethos, culture and day to day school life
- the considerations available to schools and education authorities in reducing school uniform costs
- the draft principles which are intended to be incorporated as part of national school uniform policy

If you would like to make your views known to the Scottish Government then please use the link below.

<https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/school-uniforms-statutory-guidance-scotland/>

During session 2022-23 across the CDHS/Dalry Partnership we intend to carry out a survey with parent, pupils and staff to look again at our stakeholder's views about school uniform. In school over the last few weeks we have reminded all year groups about our current uniform policy and asked them to ensure that they are dressing appropriately for school. I would like to ask all parents to support the school by encouraging your child to wear school uniform appropriate clothing.

## Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants 2022-23

### Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants (FSM-SCG) for parents/guardians with an active means tested claim for Council Tax Reduction (CTR)

If you have a child or children that has been in receipt of FSM-SCG for the 2021-22 academic year, and you are in receipt of CTR, and you meet the qualifying criteria (as noted below), you do not need to reapply. We have used the information we have on your CTR claim to assess your continued entitlement to FSM-SCGs, and your claim will be carried into the next school year. Payments will begin being received by parents from Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022, and continue being paid into the week after.

If you meet the above noted points, and **have not received your SCG for your child or children in P1 to S4 by 27<sup>th</sup> June 2022**, please contact us for further guidance/information via email at [EducationBenefits@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:EducationBenefits@dumgal.gov.uk)

Please note, if you have an active CTR claim, meet the qualifying criteria, and your child or children is moving into S5 or S6, we will need to wait until their school has confirmed attendance in August before the School Clothing Grant can be paid, and Free School Meals awarded.

### The qualifying criteria for the upcoming school year are:-

Child attends a Dumfries and Galloway Council school, and the parent/guardian is in receipt of:

- Income Support
- Job Seeker's Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Based)
- Universal Credit with a monthly income of not more than £660
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income of less than £7,920
- Child Tax Credit on its own, with an annual taxable income of less than £17,005
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

### Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants (FSM-SCG) for parents/guardians who do not have an active means tested claim for Council Tax Reduction (CTR)

If you currently do not have an active means tested award for Council Tax Reduction, you will need to reapply for Free School Meals and School Clothing Grant, **even if you have received FSM-SCG for the 2021-22 academic year.**

Applications can be made online at [www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals](http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/schoolmeals).

Please remember that Council Tax Reduction is a means tested assessment that you will have had to apply for and provide proof of your household and income details. It is not to be confused with a discount (or standard reduction) to your Council Tax bill, for example a Single Person's Discount. Such discounts are **not means tested**, which means we will not have confirmation of your household income details, and therefore are unable to assess your entitlement to FSM-SCGs.

Parents/guardians that have received FSM-SCG for their child or children for the 2021-22 academic year, who do not have an active CTR claim, will need to reapply, and we will do our best to contact these parents as soon as we can to advise as such. In the meantime, if you know you do not have an active CTR claim, please apply via the above noted link.

If you are unsure of your circumstances, but have been receiving FSMs, please email [EducationBenefits@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:EducationBenefits@dumgal.gov.uk) with any queries you have or for further guidance.

On 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June we will welcome our new S1 pupils to attend for their induction days, to meet their teachers, to follow a secondary school timetable and to have the opportunity to go with the rest of the school to visit the Dark Skies Planetarium and the Viking Hoard in Kirkcudbright.

I encourage pupils, parents and teachers to enjoy their summer holiday, to recharge their reserves of enthusiasm, effort and resilience so that you can return to school in August ready for the challenges of a new session.

Take care and enjoy the summer



#### **School Blog and website**

Keep up to date with what's been happening in school via

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/dg/dalrysecondary/>

[www.dalrysecondary.info](http://www.dalrysecondary.info)

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