

# CASTLE DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER



Dear School Community,

We are off and running again into a new session. Over the summer, the weather was largely kind to us and I hope that you and your family were able to enjoy the holiday period. Unfortunately, we have returned to school still facing the spectre of Covid-19 affecting how we are able to do business in school. The Covid19 pandemic meant that session 2020-2021 again ended without the usual celebrations and opportunities to bid farewell to the S6 pupils who missed so much of the traditional end to their time at school. We were not able to have our usual transition activities and visits for P7 pupils who are now our new S1. We also did not have the opportunity as a community to bid farewell to colleagues who would not be returning to Castle Douglas High School for this new session due to moving on to new challenges or because they had decided to take the step into the world of retirement. Sadly, I had to report to you at the start of the school holiday the tragic death of our colleague and teacher of mathematics Mrs Claire Johnston. This was such a shock to many in our community who had either been taught by Mrs Johnston or who had formed a friendship with Claire. Our thoughts continue to be with Mrs Johnston's family and we will look to the future to some positive way of marking her contribution to Castle Douglas High school.

With some staff retiring, other staff moving on to new opportunities and some on maternity leave we have been fortunate to be able to appoint several new staff to the school.

Miss. Rhianna Shaw	– Teacher of English
Mr. Stuart Templeton	– Teacher of mathematics
Miss. Joanne Bertram	– Teacher of music
Miss. Natasha Humphries	– Additional Support for Learning Teacher - Temporary
Miss. Dominick Todd	– Additional Support for Learning Teacher - Temporary
Miss. Nicole Templeton	– Teacher of home economics – Temporary

It is always good to welcome new staff to the school and to hear their new ideas about how we can continue to improve what we do for our young people.

Mrs Elizabeth Sime will leave us at the October holiday to take up a position at Dalbeattie High School, we all wish Mrs Sime well in her new post. We are currently following the recruitment process to fill the vacancy created by this move in our English department.

Staff retirement and the recruitment process has also resulted in changes to our pupil support team. The pupil support team and their contact details are shown below:

**Contact the pupil Support Team:**

For pastoral issues, careers advice or to raise a general concern regarding an issue with your child's learning, please telephone 01556 502821 or use the e-mail address below for your child's Pupil Support Teacher

Mrs Genna Parker (Solway)	<a href="mailto:gw11parkergenna@ea.dumgal.sch.uk">gw11parkergenna@ea.dumgal.sch.uk</a>
Miss Julia Fulton (0.4) (Threave A-J)	<a href="mailto:gw12fultonjulia2@ea.dumgal.sch.uk">gw12fultonjulia2@ea.dumgal.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Sara Clive (0.6) (Threave K-Z)	<a href="mailto:gw08clivesara@ea.dumgal.sch.uk">gw08clivesara@ea.dumgal.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Susan Cathro (Kelton)	<a href="mailto:gw08cathrosusan@ea.dumgal.sch.uk">gw08cathrosusan@ea.dumgal.sch.uk</a>
Mrs Gemma Sellers (Additional Support Needs)	<a href="mailto:gw08sellersgemma@ea.dumgal.sch.uk">gw08sellersgemma@ea.dumgal.sch.uk</a>

Returning to the subject that has been at the forefront of all of our lives for the past 18 months or so, Covid-19. The same control measures that were in place before the summer holiday will remain in place until we are given further information from the Scottish Government. For young people this means that they must wear a face covering when in class or when moving around the building. The one-way system in school must be followed as this prevents, as much as possible, young people from meeting face-to-face. We also continue to encourage young people to be outside of the building during interval and lunchtime as they are much safer from the potential to catch or pass on the virus when they are outside.

Again this session we have not published a calendar of events such as parent evenings or school dances as we are not yet able to hold these events. We would normally have a parent evening for parents of our new S1 pupils towards the end of this first term, unfortunately, that will not be possible. Hopefully, the number of cases in Dumfries and Galloway will start to fall so that more restrictions can be lifted and a more normal experience for the school community resumed.

It is to the young people's credit that, while many aspects of school are so different, they have been able to return to learning and are settling in well to the routines of school. For staff in the school, getting to know our new S1 pupils is a challenge as it is often difficult to recognise young people when they are always wearing a mask. I am sure this has also proved to be a challenge for our new pupils getting to know their teachers.

For the first term of this session, we have continued to operate our restrictions on using the changing rooms for PE. However, after the October holiday we will return to the normal established routines for changing before and after PE lessons. This will have the knock on effect that when we return after the October holiday, young people should once again be wearing their school uniform and following the Dumfries & Galloway and school dress codes.

I have copied the Dumfries & Galloway and CDHS dress code statements below:

## **Dumfries and Galloway Education Authority Policy - School Uniform and Dress Policy**

All Dumfries and Galloway schools must have a dress code that encourages pupils to dress in a way appropriate to attendance at school. This code must not lead to direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender, disability or poverty. Prior to drawing up the dress code, parents, pupils and staff should be fully consulted, and it is the expectation of Skills, Education and Learning Directorate that parents will be supportive of the dress code. Clothing which is unacceptable in school under any circumstances would include items which:

- Could potentially encourage factions (eg football colours).
- Could cause offence (eg anti-religious or political slogans).
- Could cause health and safety difficulties (loose-fitting clothing, dangling earrings)
- Are of flammable materials which may be a danger in certain classes.
- Could cause damage to floors.
- Carry advertising, (such as alcohol or tobacco)
- Could be used to inflict damage on other pupils.

Parents in receipt of a grant for footwear and clothing from the authority will be encouraged to purchase items which are in accordance with the school dress code.

### **Castle Douglas High School - School Uniform and Dress Policy**

Following an extensive consultation exercise with pupils, parents and staff an agreement was reached on school uniform policy. There was broad agreement from all stakeholder groups that the basic uniform requirement should stay the same. The only change universally asked for was that in warm weather it is acceptable for tailored black shorts to be worn.

However, for school uniform to be successful it is important that parents take the lead in ensuring that their child leaves from home appropriately dressed for school. Staff in school will challenge young people who are not following the agreed dress code but staff cannot enforce a school uniform policy without parental support.

For all pupils, a white shirt with the appropriate house tie should be worn, along with black trousers or skirt.

**Black shoes must be worn. Trainers etc. are acceptable as long as they are predominantly black.**

Each house tie has the traditional set of gold stripes on a black background, but with a counter stripe in red for Threave, blue for Kelton and green for Solway.

Staff / Parents / Carers should note the following:

- Denim jackets, shirts and jeans are not allowed.
- Clothing which displays offensive words or diagrams should not be worn.
- Sporting slogans are not permitted.
- Necklines and hemlines on uniforms **must** be appropriate for a school environment.
- Jumpers can be worn: these should be black V-necks without logos or patterns.
- Outdoor jackets, hats and scarves cannot be worn in class and must be removed; hats cannot be worn indoors at all.
- In warm weather it is acceptable for tailored black shorts to be worn.

## PE Kit

A change of clothing must be provided for PE consisting of:

- Round-necked tee shirt or round-necked sports top that complies with the Dumfries & Galloway policy statement above
- Shorts, tracksuit trousers
- Sports socks
- Change of trainers (not black-soled)
- Towel

Pupils must also bring suitable clothing to go outside in cold weather.

Covid restrictions mean that we will still have to maximise ventilation in classrooms and so windows will be open. As the weather begins to cool young people need to be aware that their classrooms might be cooler than normal and so should make sure they have a suitable jumper or sweatshirt to help them to keep warm.

## Sports Leaders Netball

You may have viewed the videos and looked at the photographs on the Castle Douglas Facebook page of our S6 netball leaders who, along with Active Schools, are delivering an after school cluster netball club. The S6 leaders have invited all girls in primary 7 across all Stewartry primary schools to participate in netball. The club runs on a Monday evening from 5:00pm-6:00pm and is an excellent way for primary 7 girls to have some fun playing or learning to play netball while getting the opportunity to start preparing for transition to the secondary school. Make friends, develop confidence, develop skills, fantastic transition, don't miss this opportunity, sign up now.

The first evening of the netball club saw 28 young girls participate in some fast paced, high-energy skills and drills. Well done to all our S6 sports leaders and thank you to Active schools for helping to make this happen.



## **For parents of our new S1 pupils**

### **Introduction to Skills Development Scotland (SDS) for parents and carers of S1 pupils Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 6.30pm**

Want to know more about SDS career information, advice and guidance support for your young person throughout their time at school? Join our careers advisers Lesley and Gordon to hear about SDS, the role of SDS careers advisers in schools and information to support career planning. The online session will also introduce our careers web service [My World of Work](#), which has a dedicated area for parents and carers.

Parents and carers can register for the session [here](#).

### **If your child feels unwell during the school day**

Pupils who feel unwell during the school day should report to the School Office. Please note that a young person who is not feeling well should not use their mobile phone to contact home directly requesting to come home. When a young person reports to the school office feeling unwell, a member of the pupil support team or a member of senior management will talk with the young person to try to determine the best and most helpful action to take. Should it be necessary to send your child home, you will be contacted to arrange this. In this connection, you will be asked to inform us how to contact you in an emergency or whom we should contact if you are not available.

### **Safe and responsible use of technology, Bring Your Own Device, Digital Image Policy, Safe and responsible use of mobile phones in school.**

The four policies listed above are discussed with young people in personal social education lessons and in Information Technology lessons. It is then usual for these policies to be sent home in paper format for parents to read with their child. Parent and pupil are then asked to sign that they have read the policies and will adhere to the safe and responsible messages within each policy. With the Covid-19 need to avoid sending paper home and to avoid handling paper that has been returned to the school, we would like to bring this process into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by emailing you a link that will allow you to read the policies and acknowledge them on-line. Please look out over the next few weeks for an email asking you to participate in this process.

### **Safe and Responsible use of Social Media**

We would like to address some negative social media posts. We would ask you to consider how negative posts on social media impact on the school staff, the parent body, pupils and the wider community. Dumfries & Galloway Council believes that customers have the right to be heard, understood and respected and likewise, staff have the same rights. The Council also considers that inflammatory statements and unsubstantiated allegations can be considered as abusive behaviour. Please think about the impact of your words. Children in our schools are asked to consider how they express views and it is important that this is modelled by parents/carers.

## School Improvement Plan

One aspect of our school improvement plan is to complete work that was delayed because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The school inspection for Castle Douglas High School, published in May 2019, and the inspection of Dalry Secondary School published in March 2020, recommended that we take a close look at our learning and teaching policy with a focus on developing a shared and common understanding of what a good lesson looks like in Castle Douglas High School and Dalry Secondary School. As this aspect of our improvement plan restarts, we want to take account of the views of staff, pupils and parents/carers. To that end, I want to ask you to look out for opportunities that will be coming to provide your input as parents/carers into shaping this policy.

## Queen's Platinum Jubilee

2022 will see the platinum jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. To celebrate the platinum jubilee there will be a long weekend holiday from Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> June through to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022. In order to achieve this holiday the education calendar for Dumfries and Galloway has been changed. The pupil school year has been given one extra day of holiday, allocated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June. To achieve the second day of holiday on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June one day has been removed from the Christmas 2021 holiday. **Pupils will now return to school on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022.**

## Dress as you please day

Referring back to the opening paragraphs of this newsletter I mentioned that as a school we intend, over the course of this session, to try to mark the sad passing of Mrs Claire Johnston in a positive way and in a way that would have brought some joy to Claire. Consequently, we intend to have a non-uniform, dress as you please, day on the last day of this term. If possible, we would like to ask young people to wear bright colours on the non-uniform day as that was the request from Claire's family on the day of her funeral. Pupils will be given the opportunity to contribute to a collection for two charities that were close to Mrs Johnston's heart. These charities are 'Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland' and 'Myasthenia Gravis'. Any parent who wishes to contribute to these charities is welcome to send that contribution with their child.

It has been a busy and productive start to this new session. Our new S1 pupils now know their way around the school and have settled into the different routines of the secondary school. Senior pupils are progressing well with their National Qualification courses and working in hope towards a normal SQA diet of exams in the summer of 2022. The Scottish Government has provided updated advice about Covid-19 restrictions in schools. While there has been some change to the advice around the identification of close contacts in classrooms there has been no change to the basic messages of wear a face covering, sanitise your hands and maintain social distancing where possible. This advice is now in place until at least the 25<sup>th</sup> of October. If there are any changes beyond that date, information will be circulated.

I am sure all of our young people will maintain their good efforts for the rest of this term, enjoy a well-deserved October break and return after the holiday ready for the winter term up to Christmas.