



JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL

HEAD TEACHER/CEANNARD: Donald J Macdonald MBA, BSc, SQH

Lauderdale Street, Edinburgh, EH9 1DD

E-mail: admin@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk

Website: www.jghs.edin.sch.uk

Telephone: 0131 - 447 - 1900 Fax: 0131 - 466 - 7035

Dear Parent/Guardian

I would like to begin by introducing myself as the new Headteacher at James Gillespie's High School. I am absolutely delighted to have been given the opportunity to lead the school and I look forward immensely to working closely with you, your children and staff in the coming years.

I took up office on Monday 9 January 2012 and, since starting, I have had the opportunity to meet some parents, students and staff. Thank you to all who have made me welcome and shared views on what we must do to further enhance the service that we provide to the community at James Gillespie's High School.

In the coming months and years it is my intention, that through working closely with you and the school community, our school will continue to build on the excellent position we are currently in. I am ambitious for the school and will wish to build on a reputation that promotes and celebrates diversity and prides itself on being a centre of excellence for learning. Additionally, it is my firm view that we should continue to emphasise and expect the high but realistic expectations we have of all of our young people so they can fulfil their potential.

I have quickly gained a very positive impression of a school that has pupils and staff who are hard working, purposeful and immensely proud of their school. At assemblies over the past two weeks, I have stressed to pupils the importance of getting the basics right. This includes:

- Arriving on time for all classes
- Completing all homework on time
- Carrying the appropriate materials and equipment to and from school and
- Behaving positively and respecting others

I took the opportunity of reminding all pupils that they are expected to carry a properly equipped schoolbag to and from school each day, which can accommodate an A4 folder. On the surface, these expectations may seem trivial, but, if we don't get these things right, the cumulative effect of several pupils in a class not being properly prepared can be quite disruptive to the smooth running of classes and unfair on the vast majority who are always fully prepared and engaged.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the outstanding leadership that Mr Alex Wallace has provided to Gillespie's throughout his long and distinguished association with the school over the past twenty years. As Headteacher, I will do my best to ensure that we continue to grow as a school so that all of our pupils are

afforded the best opportunities to prepare them for the increasingly competitive world that exists beyond school. I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr Jack Simpson for his hard work in leading the school during the past six months, during a period of transition and close scrutiny during an Authority review.

In the coming sessions several challenges and opportunities lie in store. Our curriculum continues to evolve in line with the principles of Curriculum for Excellence; our new senior leadership team is settling in, and, of course, progress continues towards the building of what will be a first class, state of the art, new school campus. In the coming months we will continue to consult with all our stakeholders on the detail of these and other developments.

Finally, I am pleased to enclose for your attention a copy of the follow up report to the HMIE inspection that took place in 2010. I am delighted to note that the report is very positive and acknowledges the efforts, professionalism and leadership of everyone in the school. The report is testament to the hard work and efforts of all and confirms your child attends an excellent school.

Yours sincerely

Donald J Macdonald (Headteacher)