



THE JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Headteacher's Message

Welcome to the first edition of the Newsletter after the summer break. I hope you had a wonderful summer and enjoyed time away from the school routines to spend time relaxing with friends and family over what was an unexpectedly but welcome warm and pleasant summer.

The pupils are back, enthusiastic and refreshed and we look forward to working with them and yourselves towards ensuring that each and every one aims high and that they do the best that they can.

I am delighted to report that this session has started very positively and we are all now settled into a purposeful routine after the summer break. Pupils and staff who are travelling between both the Darroch and Lauderdale campuses have found the quickest route and with the exception of a few stragglers I am pleased at how smoothly the changeover between classes is working.

This year's SQA results, particularly at Higher, were excellent so I'd like to congratulate everyone on their achievements. Throughout the session our newsletters and website will share with you the many and varied achievements of our pupils. We continue to be immensely proud of the variety of achievements from the young people in Gillespie's.

The **new S1** have settled in well. Staff invariably describe our new charges as polite, well-mannered and sensible. Well done to our new S1! The reintroduction of our S1 residential experience has been warmly received by pupils and the first of these involving pupils in Kyi last week at the Broomlee Outdoor centre was an outstanding success.

It was great to meet so many of our new parents at our social evening on Thursday 29 August. Please

contact your child's guidance teacher if there are any matters that concern you as your child is finding his/her feet at High School. I hope that many parents will come along to our next Parent Council meeting on Tuesday 17 September at 7 Pm.

I am delighted to report that since we resumed in August we have seen a significant improvement in the amount of litter that was being discarded

around the school. Thank you to everyone for your support in this.

You may be aware that we have placed a copy of this year's school improvement plan on our website. This will allow you to view what we are planning to improve. The areas chosen for improvement are based on our ongoing evaluations of how we are doing in tandem with feedback throughout the year from all members of our school community.

Throughout the coming session we will continue to raise money for a variety of worthwhile causes. These will include school based projects and charities at both home and abroad. As has been the tradition over many years, our S6 will lead on fundraising efforts for our link South African schools. A St Andrew's Day event, run by senior pupils, as well as several events throughout the year, will be organised by our Parents' events group and JGHS Trust. In addition, there will be occasional fundraisers sprinkled throughout the year as organised by pupil led committees. Please continue to give generously. I look forward with enthusiasm to working with you all in the coming session.

Donald J Macdonald (Headteacher)

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News from the Music Department



S1 Musical Opportunities

A letter has been issued, and pupils wishing to learn an instrument should return the form to their music teacher so that the department can organize a consultation lesson. S1 pupils will also be asked to come to a meeting on a particular day depending on the instrument they wish to learn. These meetings will take place for interested pupils in B1 during the week beginning 2nd Sept.

Christmas Concert Rehearsals

The Christmas Concert will be returning to the Usher Hall this December, with rehearsals all starting during the first week in September.

Monday:

Jazz/Funk Band during lunch in B1
Wind Band after school in B1
S1 Choir TBC

Tuesday:

Clarsach Ensemble during lunch in B13
Junior Strings after school TBC
Senior Strings after school in B1
Pipe Band in B3
Chanter lessons in B17
Snare Drum lessons in B16

Wednesday:

Percussion Ensemble during lunch in B17
Senior Choir after school in B1

Thursday:

S2/3 Choir during lunch in B3
Junior Guitar Ensemble after school in B3

Friday:

Senior Guitar Ensemble after school in B1

Associated Board Performance Examination Success.

The following pupils achieved grades in their performing examinations in June:

Harriet Phillips: Gr 3 Voice
Angus Noble: Gr 3 Violin
Benjo Duheric: Gr 4 Double Bass
Flora Flinn: Gr 4 Clarinet
Caitlin Beagan: Gr 2 Cello
Sarah Price: Gr 2 Cello

The **JGHS Pipe Band** participated in the Piping World Championships on Sunday 18th August and at North Berwick on Saturday 10th August (see them pictured above).

Rock Night will be held at the Liquid Rooms on 12th September from 7.00 – 9.00pm.

Tickets £5 available at the door on the night.

Doors open 6.30pm

R. Millar

Keep in touch with all Performance Arts items and rehearsal and concert info, by regularly checking the website – pupil bulletin, Newsflash and Performance Arts blog.

Active Schools Sports Membership Update

A warm welcome back to what promises to be a very active year at James Gillespie's High School. With our Physical Education facilities at the Lauderdale Campus no longer available we will be utilising a number of local venues, in addition to Meadowbank Sports Centre, to ensure our diverse extra curricular programme can continue to thrive throughout our decant years.

A copy of the activities on offer, as well as the forms required to sign up to the membership, are available on the school website. Paper copies will also be distributed to all year groups during the first week of September.

To help with the transition to this new programme a number of important headlines are listed below;

Activities will start the WB 9th September. (This may differ by one week from previous communication.) Term 1 activities will run until the WE 13th December. For all activities taking place at Meadowbank Sports Centre, pupils will be bussed to and from the venue. (Buses will leave the Lauderdale campus at 4pm, returning at approximately 6pm.) For all activities not taking place at Meadowbank we are requesting pupils walk the short distance to these facilities. (Safe routes and directions will be provided on the school website.) Payment is set at: £25 for 1 activity; £35 for 2 activities and £45 for 3+ activities. This membership lasts the full academic year.

To participate pupils must have paid the correct amount as well as returned the required EE2 form, activity choice form and a permitted dismissal from Meadowbank form (if required). Club and Match Information will only be available this year through our secure online Noticeboard site www.edmodo.com (parents and/or pupils are encouraged to join our page *Active Schools - JGHS* through the password; l2l8gn).

Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch with myself at:

jonathan.wallace@ea.edin.sch.uk

Thank you,

Active Schools, Physical Education and the Health and Well Being Faculty

Sporting Success

Great news from the last week of our 2012/2013 session as our JGHS Cricket Team triumphed at the Scottish Emerging Schools Cup. A fantastic achievement by all involved and a first for our school - Congratulations!

Active Schools and the P.E. department would like to thank the players for their exceptional behaviour on the day and the invaluable support from both parents and our local Carlton Cricket Club. Congratulations again!

J. Wallace



Our 4th Year weekly Work Experience programme (provided by J+E+T) has got underway for 2013-2014 and at present we stand at having 14 of our young people participating.

In addition to the huge wealth of skill and experience they will gain from their individual placements on Fridays, they will be working towards a National Progression Award in Employability Skills.

We wish all of them a very successful first step towards the world of work!

China Trip

I had the wonderful opportunity of accompanying our young intrepid adventurers to China back in June. Having lived in China for a year in 1998 and visiting several times since, it was a thrill and a privilege to be able to assist in bringing some of our own young people to a land and people that I hold close to my heart. I was worried that the intensity and outwardly chaotic nature of the culture would prove to be an insurmountable challenge to them but I clearly underestimated both their eagerness and resilience; the pupils adapted with ease and made light work of the gruelling timetable! Embracing of the opportunities presented to them, the pupils jumped in head-first and proved to be excellent ambassadors both for our school and for Scotland. Yes we covered all the tourist hot spots and made our obligatory visits to the factory gift shops and restaurants, but the highlights for me were the exchanges between our pupils and the Chinese people - banter with our tour guides, haggling with market vendors, posing for photographs with locals, and even just simply in their observations of what was happening around them. Our young people saw that there is more than only a 'western' way to living and hopefully they too will keep a little place in their hearts for China.

J. Warden

News from the Science Department

The Science department would like to inform parents of our current S3/S4 science students that we would recommend the following textbooks for the National Qualification courses:

How to Pass National 5 Chemistry by Barry McBride (26 Apr 2013)

How to Pass National 5 Biology by Billy Dickson and Graham Moffat (26 Jul 2013)

How to Pass National 5 Physics by Paul Chambers and Hugh McGill (25 Oct 2013)

These can be purchased through amazon.co.uk and other retailers. It should be noted that these books can also be downloaded and accessed electronically for use with smartphones and tablets at a reduced price through the Google Play app store or itunes. We strongly believe these books would be useful for revision purposes.

P. Martin

Welfare Office Update

HPV immunisations

Sessions will be held on-

Monday 23rd September

Monday 4th November

Monday 10th March

Lockers

Application forms are available on the website or from welfare and reception and, at the Darroch campus, from the office.

L. Summers 4

S4 Work Experience Changes!!

After conducting a period of research into the provision of Work Experience in secondary schools, (including surveys and consultation with pupils, Curricular Leaders and our Senior Leadership Team) we will be trialling an alternative approach to Work Experience this year.

4th Year pupils have been made aware of this in PSE classes and will receive further information/instruction over the next month as they complete their Work Experience unit. The key points for parents to know are:

- Pupils will not go out on placement as an entire year group for one week in S4.
- Following completion of their Work Experience unit in PSE, pupils will work with their Pupil Support Leader (Guidance) to identify an appropriate time and relevant placement to be undertaken during their S4-S6 Senior Phase. *It is an entitlement for all pupils to be allowed a week out for a WEXP placement before they are eligible to leave school, however, it is not essential that every individual does it at this stage if it would be more beneficial for them to do it later. (This may allow them to find a more relevant, subject/career specific placement)*
- Pupils who give an indication that they are likely to leave after 4th Year will be targeted to ensure they get a placement opportunity before leaving, however, this does not preclude those who are not leaving to use their entitlement in 4th Year.
- I will work closely with my colleagues in Pupil Support and with class teachers to ensure there is minimal disruption to your child's academic studies when he/she is on placement. This is the concern that is the first and foremost priority.
- The full application process for Work Experience will be provided to pupils in September and they may begin to apply for placements in October. Again it should be stressed that this new approach should provide pupils with the time and support to seek out a more meaningful placement at an appropriate stage in their learning.

All Work Experience enquiries should come directly to me at
Jeff.Warden@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk