



CASTLEHEAD HIGH SCHOOL



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Head Teacher: Mr Gordon Menzies

Children's Services
Director: Janie O'Neill

Dear Parent/Carer,

NEW SESSION 2024/25

It is a pleasure to be writing to you with information about new session 2024/25. All the staff here at Castlehead High School are very much looking forward to welcoming your child/children when term starts on Friday, August 16th 2024. My hope for all our pupils is that they have a successful and happy school career, getting the most out of all aspects of school life. I believe children and young people are most likely to do well at school if there is a strong partnership between ourselves and your family. To this end, I would welcome parent/carer support across a range of areas, outlined below.

1. Parent Pay and Parent Portal

Our school, along with many in Renfrewshire, is now 'cashless' and uses Parentpay to allow parents to pay online for school lunches, trips, and other school events as they arise.

Parents of new S1 pupils will receive Parentpay activation codes by email on Wednesday 14th August. Please be reassured that no child will go without a school lunch if the system is not yet in place (pupils with free school meals will of course receive their free meal irrespective of this).

Renfrewshire Council has also signed up for 'Parent Portal'. This is an online method for schools to communicate with parents, where you can access your child's school details, timetable, attendance records and school reports, report absences, sign permission slips and make payments to the school (it is linked to Parentpay). Parent Portal works with MyAccount, the secure online account from mygov.scot.

Castlehead High will be issuing parents and carers with important documents ONLINE via the school app and website with an email link.

We will also send you an electronic survey to capture your preferences and views on a range of areas, including the following:

- Religious observance opt-out
- Litter pick opt-out
- IT survey to identify any families who need support
- Parent Council / PTA sign up etc

Later in the year, your child's report card will also be issued online via Parent Portal.

There is more information on Parent Portal (including step by step help on how to create an account) on the Council website. If you have any issues creating a Parent Portal or Parent Pay account, please call the school office on 0300 300 1300 and staff will be happy to talk you through the process.



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2. First week back arrangements

All pupils will return on Friday, 16th August at 8.40am (doors open) for an 8.50am start. Pupils in S1 will meet in the auditorium where they began their Primary 7 transition visits.

For pupils in S2-S6, there will be posters directing pupils to which classrooms to attend for period one registration. During Wednesday period one, all pupils will be issued with a fresh copy of their timetable. The bell will then ring at 9.15am and pupils will move to their period 1 class to begin lessons.

3. Support for new S1 pupils

On their first day, S1 pupils will be welcomed from 8.40am onwards and directed to the auditorium.

For the first couple of weeks, S6 befrienders will chaperone the new S1, and S1 will use the Maxwellton house area for breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils will be dismissed at 3.40pm as normal at the end of the first day. At that point, any young people travelling on school contract transport will be accompanied to the bus bay.

Parents/carers of S1 pupils, please note the start and end times of the school day:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 8.50am – 3.40pm

Wednesday, Friday 8.50am – 2.50pm

4. Beginning of the school day

Doors will open at 8.40am. The only exception to this is for children and young people who would like to access our breakfast club.

5. Breaks and Lunchtime

We encourage pupils to access the outdoor spaces at break and lunch as much as possible. Please ensure your child comes to school with appropriate footwear and jacket/coat for our typically changeable Scottish weather.

Please note that **first years should not leave school grounds at interval or lunchtime**, and older pupils who choose to do so should discuss this with their parents first. Pupils who have permission from their parents to go to the local shops at lunchtime must behave in an appropriate manner whilst in the local community.

6. Visitor/Parent access to the school

We welcome visitors and parents into our school; however, we would appreciate parents/carers contacting us first to make an appointment. All our teaching staff have class commitments and making an appointment ensures parents don't have a long wait to see the appropriate person. Our contact details are at the top of this letter and the school number is 0300 300 1300. Pupils being collected for appointments during the school day should be met by parents/carers at main reception.

7. Extra-curricular provision and booster classes

Castlehead has a proud tradition of extra-curricular activities. We will be offering a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities this session, starting over the first few weeks of term. Please encourage your child to sign up. Similarly, each session Castlehead High staff generously give of their time to provide homework clubs and booster classes after school. Once these begin, we will contact you; again, please encourage your child to get involved.



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8. PE Facilities

In October 2023, Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in the roof of our gym halls, games hall and fitness suite facility. In February 2024, Renfrewshire Council informed parents/carers that a decision had been taken to install steel beams in the facility to strengthen the roof. Since October, our pupils have been transported to the Lagoon Leisure Centre to participate in Physical Education and our senior phase pupils completed prelim and SQA exams at alternative venues. Work began on the PE department roof in June and will continue until September. When we return this week, pupils will continue to participate in their PE lessons at the Lagoon and we look forward to returning to our own facilities in September.

9. High Expectations

We always emphasise high, but realistic expectations for all pupils in Castlehead High School and we would welcome parent/carer reinforcement of these expectations. Last session, we conducted a full consultation of our new school vision and values. This new vision and values underpin our high expectation. Please see below the new school shared vision and values. This is the foundation of our school and play a crucial part in the experience of our young people:

New School Vision

Cultivating a community of respect, equity, and kindness, fuelling ambitious minds to thrive and make a positive impact in our world.

New School Values

Ambition Respect Kindness

10. Positive Behaviour

We are committed to supporting all our young people to demonstrate the school values in everything they do, including their behaviour and conduct in school and in the local community. We firmly believe that positive, respectful, nurturing relationships are at the heart of good behaviour, and to this end, we have been moved away from a traditional discipline/behaviour policy to a 'nurturing relationships policy'. At the heart of this is a commitment to support our young people to be 'safe, ready and respectful'. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with your child's Pupil Support teacher (their details are towards the end of this letter).

11. School uniform

At Castlehead High School we are an inclusive community where everyone belongs. A key factor in building a strong school community identity is the wearing of school uniform. If pupils do not wear appropriate uniform, parents will be contacted daily. If any families require support with this, please contact the appropriate pastoral teacher.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement of your child wearing their school uniform.



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We will remind parents and pupils throughout the year about school uniform and when required we will issue pupils with items of uniform to wear. Pupils should also be coming to school with a school bag containing a water bottle and a pencil case.

12. PE department

To be able to take part in PE your child will be required to bring their PE kit on the days they get PE. Please refer to the PE Participation Guidelines which will be included in the information on the school app.

13. Attendance and punctuality

There is a strong link between attendance at school and achievement. Therefore, please, only keep your child off school if it is necessary, and avoid booking holidays during the session. If we are concerned about your child's attendance or punctuality, we will be in touch with you so we can work together to maximise their progress in school.

Absence notes/calls

Please let the school know by letter or phone call if your child is likely to be absent for some time and give your child a note on their return to school, confirming the reason for absence. If there is no explanation from parents/carers, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

SMS text messaging service

When a pupil is marked absent and the school has received no prior explanation for the absence, parents/carers will be sent a text message. Parents/carers are then asked to contact the school to provide a reason for the absence.

14. Late coming

Pupils are frequently reminded of the importance of being on time for all classes. Where a pupil is persistently late without suitable explanation, parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Support staff. If late coming continues beyond this stage, the DHT and Pupil Support teacher will work closely with the family to improve the situation. (Please note that pupils who are late because their school contracted bus is late will still be marked as late, of course, be no further action taken.)

15. Medical issues and health care

Parents should notify the school of any medical requirements or allergies that their child may have. If medication is required it is better if this can be provided outside the school hours but, in cases where it is necessary during the child's time in school, parents should contact the school to make appropriate arrangements. Staff are not obliged to give medicine to pupils. Other than inhalers and epi-pens, pupils should not routinely be carrying medication in school. The office staff will safely store medications for pupils and allow access as required throughout the day. Please contact the school for more information on this – please note that parents will be asked to complete a very short form clarifying dosage etc and giving the school permission to hold the medication. **Similarly, please get in touch with us if your child has a medical condition that requires them to have a pass to access the toilet during lessons.**



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Minor accidents are dealt with by the school's qualified first aiders. If a pupil takes ill or has an accident which requires that they be sent home or for treatment, the school will provide first aid and contact parents or carers. Therefore, **it is very important that the school has contact details for all parents or carers and an additional contact person in case parents or carers can't be reached.** This information should be kept up to date. The school will not send younger pupils home from school unaccompanied. In the event of a serious illness or accident, a member of staff will accompany the child to a doctor or hospital and parents or carers will be notified immediately.

Finally, please help us by making sure we have all the information we require to support your child to the best of our ability. Please **ensure that the medical section in your child's online information pack is completed**, and during the school year please get in touch if there are any issues we should know about – illnesses, injuries (particularly if these impact on mobility/ the ability to write), or any other matters that are impacting on your child's health and wellbeing. All such matters will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

Castlehead is a nut aware school. Members of the school community should not bring any products which include or have traces of nuts into the school building.

16. Home Learning and Digital Access

Home Learning can help bridge the gap between school and home and pupils should be receiving increasing amounts of homework as they progress through school towards their SQA qualifications. Our online home learning platform is Satchel One and this allows parents to monitor homework being issued and completed. We also use MS Teams to support learning in the class and at home. We will also use of SatchelOne for promoting positive behaviour where pupils will accumulate House points for their engagement in lessons. Please download the SatchelOne app to enable to you follow your child's home learning and participation in lessons.

If there are any issues at home around access to digital devices or wifi, we will work hard to support families. If you require support around digital access, please complete the online survey when it comes out at the start of term. Alternatively, please call the office.

17. Litter

There is no excuse for litter not being disposed of appropriately. Parents are requested to encourage their child to dispose of litter correctly. This should apply in and out of school. Please encourage your children to look after our school and surrounding (residential) environment. Each year we receive a number of complaints from local residents about young people dropping litter, and this can cause some distress, particularly to older neighbours. Therefore, we actively encourage pupils to use bins within the school building and in the local community. This session we will participate in community litter picking exercises throughout the session and there will be more information about over the course of the session.

18. Transport, Road Safety and Parental Parking

As you are aware, Canal Street is very busy and occasionally we see or hear reports of Castlehead High pupils taking risks when crossing the road or acting in an unsafe manner. I would appreciate you speaking to your child/children about this too. I would also request your consideration when dropping your child/children off at school, particularly during the time when construction work is being concluded in our PE department and we have limited space in our car park. For safety, parents should park some distance from the school. If necessary, some parents should pick pupils up in the lower carpark. Pupils should not cross the



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carpark at any time during the school day or when arriving or leaving at the end of the day. Furthermore, the buses are struggling to turn and gain access, and this can lead to congestion and potentially an accident.

Home to school bus transport for eligible pupils is provided by Renfrewshire Council and parents should have already applied for this. This can be done via the Renfrewshire Council website. **Please note that the responsibility of ensuring safe and acceptable behaviour remains yours while your child is travelling in the vehicle provided.**

19. Anti-Bullying

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying. Crucially, however, the school can only act if they know that bullying is taking place. Parents and carers have a role to play in working with the school to tackle bullying behaviour. Bullying can cause stress and anxiety, which can affect a child's health and attainment. If you are concerned about bullying, please contact the school (0300 300 1300) and ask for your child's Pupil Support teacher.

Crucially, the child should be reminded by both teachers and parents that it is not their fault, they are not to blame. Your support with actions suggested by the school is greatly appreciated to ensure a genuine partnership approach. Our Equalities policy can be sourced on the school website and was written in consultation with parents, pupils, and staff.

What can parents do if it involves texting or social media messaging?

The increasing use of mobile devices has opened new areas for potential bullying – Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. As a school, we teach pupils through our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme about safe and responsible use of social media, alongside anti-bullying education in PSE and assembly inserts. Last session, we introduced our mobile phones in the classroom policy. All mobile phones must be handed to the teacher at the beginning of the lesson and will be returned at the end.

As cyber-bullying occurs at home and is out with the control of the school, parents should consider contacting the Police. However, there are several practical things parents can do to support their child (in addition to monitoring and supervising their use of technology):

- use the Report Abuse button (if available)
- stop the activity / delete the contact
- block the messages
- never reply
- complain to the service provider
- contact the mobile phone operator
- Keep messages / screen shots and contact the Police

Additional information is available from:

www.antibullying.net

www.betterbehavioursotland.gov.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.respectme.org.uk



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20. Child Protection

Renfrewshire's Child Protection Committee works to ensure that local agencies work together to protect children. It promotes the message that protection of children is a responsibility to be shared by all staff in partnership with the community. In line with Renfrewshire Council's priorities, all staff in Castlehead High School have undergone Child Protection training. This will help to ensure that we can best support our young people. However, it's everyone's job to make sure children in Renfrewshire are safe. If you have concerns about a child's welfare or direct evidence/suspicion of a child being at risk, the only way you can protect the child is to report the concern.

- 1st Response Team - 0300 300 1199 choose option 1
- Evenings/Weekends - 0800 811 505
- Police Scotland - non emergency number dial 101
- Child Protection Line - 0800 022 3222

In school, the Child Protection Co-ordinator is Ms Wilson, Depute Head Teacher (DHT).

21. Contacting us - Our House Structure

Our Pupil Support structure has been created better support our young people and strengthen relationships across the school. This means that DHT's and Pupil Support staff will work closely together in a House system to work with pupils and families to support wellbeing, attainment, and achievement. Should you need to contact us for any reason, our House structure from August 2024 is as follows:

	DHT	Pupil Support
Camphill House	Ms Whitnall	Mrs Duggan/Miss Campbell
Oakshaw House	Mrs Wallace	Mrs Stewart
Maxwellton House	Ms Wilson	Mrs Begg
S5/6 House	Mr Dunlop	Senior Pupils remain with House Pupil Support Staff

Please call the school office on 0300 300 1300 and the first point of contact is typically the Pupil Support teacher. You can also email us via the enquiries line: castleheadhighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk

22. Final points

There will be several items coming to parents with more information. This year we are issuing these via our app, school website and email, but paper copies are available on request via the office if required.

The school's improvement plan and Standards and Qualities report will be posted on our school website in the Autumn term. Any parent wishing paper copies of these should contact the school office to arrange them to be sent home.

Throughout the session, further information will be sent to you via HT updates, emails, texts, and other means. In addition to this, our website, school app and extremely active Facebook page all contain useful information from curriculum updates or school news. Please remember if you have any specific concerns relating to your child/children do not hesitate to call the school, asking for your child's Pupil Support teacher in the first instance.



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In conclusion, I am looking forward to working with all pupils, parents and staff over the coming session and thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support as we approach session 2024/25.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Menzies

Head Teacher



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