

**Education Resources  
Executive Director Carole McKenzie  
Head Teacher Waheeda Huq  
Strathaven Academy**

**Our ref:** IF/CD  
**Your ref:**  
**If calling ask for:** Mr I Fleming  
**Phone:** 01357 524040

Dear Parent/carer

### **Welcome**

As we near the end of the third full week of the school term, I would like to take this opportunity to not only share key information but to set the expectations for all pupils in S4, as they embark on a particularly important year in their learning.

I have been delighted to welcome our pupils back after the summer break and I am impressed by how quickly they are settling into S4. As a school we encourage our learners to take pride in being part of Strathaven Academy and to ensure their conduct within the school and local community is both responsible and respectful. Our school vision 'Together We Thrive', along with our values of 'Responsible, Respectful and Resilient', give our pupils a sense of belonging to a community where each learner is valued for the contributions they make. We make every effort to support, challenge and nurture our young people to ensure they develop key skills which will lead to success both in school and beyond.

### **Attendance and Timekeeping**

In order to achieve qualifications and success in school, we expect all pupils to attend regularly and arrive promptly.

If your child has an appointment during the school day, please contact the school office to inform them prior to the appointment. Pupils should be collected by the parent/carer and are reminded to sign-out before they leave. Where possible, we expect pupils to return to school after an appointment, to ensure valuable learning and teaching time is not lost. Pupils are reminded to sign-in on return to school.

### **School Dress**

We appreciate your support in encouraging your child to attend school wearing full school uniform which includes white shirt/blouse, school tie, blazer, black trousers/black skirt/school tartan skirt and plain black footwear.

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## **Senior Phase Winter Assessments**

Our National 5 winter assessments start on Thursday, 7 December 2023 and take place over a two-week period. Our Winter Assessment Diet is important in preparing pupils for their final SQA exams by providing an opportunity to sit assessments under SQA exam conditions. These assessments will provide young people with an understanding of their progress to date, allowing them to set targets, identify areas of strength and focus on areas for further study. More detailed information on these assessments will be issued to pupils during November.

## **Online Platforms**

Many of the Google Classrooms from S3 will continue into S4. However, pupils should ensure that they have joined any new S4 Google Classroom pages, if required. Every S4 pupil should also be a member of the year group information Google Classroom. We share important information and opportunities on this page throughout the year and therefore pupils should check regularly for updates.

We are currently working on the launch of a homework tracking app for all parents/carers and pupils to use as an online homework tool. Further information will be shared over the coming weeks.

Parentsportal.scot is a new digital service to help replace the traditional 'school bag run' by providing direct communication to parents and carers through a growing suite of online services. I would encourage all parents/carers to access this service to help us improve our communication with home.

To access parentsportal.scot go to <https://parentsportal.scot/home/>. If you have a mygovscot account, click the link to Sign In or if you don't have a mygovscot account, click the link to register. Once registered you will be prompted to link your child.

## **Support with Career Planning**

Pupils in our Senior Phase will be encouraged by our guidance team and Skills Development Scotland to research and plan for future study and careers. Any pupil in S4 who is considering leaving school at the end of this academic session should ensure their guidance teacher is aware of their intention. We will then ensure each young person is fully supported to develop the experiences and skills required to make a successful transition.

## **Key Dates**

Please find below key dates in relation to reporting, assessments and supported study. As a school, we value the support of parents/carers to ensure pupils are revising regularly and making use of the resources available as they prepare for their SQA examinations.

Date	Event
Friday, 3 November 2023	S4 Tracking Report Issued to Parents/Carers
Tuesday, 7 November 2023	S4 Parent Consultation Evening
Thursday, 7 December 2023	S4 Winter Assessments Begin
Thursday, 21 December 2023	S4 Winter Assessments End
Friday, 2 February 2024	S4 Full Report Issued to Parents/Carers
Thursday, 29 February 2024	Senior Phase Tracking Evening
Tuesday, 2 April 2024	Easter School Supported Study Begins
Thursday, 11 April 2024	Easter School Supported Study Ends
Monday, 22 April 2024	SQA Exams Begin
Friday, 31 May 2024	SQA Exams End

A full school calendar detailing school holidays is available on the school App. Please remember that SQA exams can take place in the May bank holidays and the May in-service day so S4 pupils may have to attend school on these days should they have an exam.

Our study support section on the school website is updated throughout the year with resources to help pupils prepare for their assessments and a direct link is found here.

### **Parental Engagement**

Parents, carers and families are the most important influences in a child's life. Their support can play a vital role at all stages of their child's education.

We aim to help parents be involved with their children's education and learning, feel welcomed in our school and feel encouraged to express their views. In addition, we aim to encourage family members to learn together and learn how to support their children's learning.

This session we have a number of activities planned to help you feel more involved in our school including:

- Reading café
- Numeracy workshops
- Creative & Aesthetics showcase
- Christmas Concert
- Barista café
- STEM Family Challenge evening
- Mental Health Awareness workshop
- Sports Awards

In addition, you will have the opportunity to take part in activities to plan and support school improvement.

Further details will be shared in due course. If you are keen to play an active role in our school community, please consider joining the Parent Council or PTA.

### **Questionnaire**

This session we are looking to examine the systems and processes that we use to ensure that young people feel both safe and included within our learning community. We would be grateful if you took the time to share your views on how well we accomplish this at Strathaven Academy. Scanning the QR code below will take you to a questionnaire that will allow you to give us feedback and, if you would like to do so, volunteer to become part of a range of focus groups. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school and ask for Mr Brown or Mr Dunn.



### **Standards & Quality Report**

Our Standards and Quality Report for session 2023-2024 has been published on our school website and can be accessed by clicking [here](#).

### **School Community**

My aim for this year is to continue to maintain the strong ethos that we have established over the last few years. I am confident that we can work together, staff, pupils and parents/carers to ensure that all pupils in S4 achieve their potential and have a successful year.

On behalf of the Senior Leadership Team, I would like to wish your child every success in the coming session.

Warmest regards,

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Fleming'.

MR I FLEMING  
Depute Head Teacher