Viewforth High School

Newsletter - 30 August 2024

Head Teacher Update

I hope this update finds you and your families well.

Our S1 pupils are settling in well to their new surroundings and are creating a very positive impression with their attitude towards learning, engagement, general conduct and high standards of school uniform. As a year group they have been challenged to be known for their kindness and support of each other, for being hard working and displaying the best version of themselves each day and for their politeness; following instructions every time, first time. These are qualities which complement our whole school 'REACH' values and will support our learners to create the best environment for their learning and to develop positive relationships with peers and staff.

Earlier this week, S1 pupils received information regarding the Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT) which they will complete during their IT lessons between Monday 2nd and Friday 13th September. A Groupcall message has also been sent home to parents/carers with detailed information. The test is designed to provide staff with information covering literacy, numeracy and problem solving including practical abilities linked to more practical subjects. This supports staff to build a picture of each young person's current learning and plan appropriate, progressive learning. The test generates data rather than a traditional grade therefore it will not be reported home as an assessment.

Like their S1 peers, the S2 pupils received information this week regarding the middle years test (CEM - MidYis) which they will undertake to provide staff with data that will support planning for learning. Information regarding the S2 test has also been sent home to parents/carers via Groupcall.

Our school photographs will take place during the week beginning Monday 9th September. The S5 and S6 group photographs are scheduled for Monday 9th September and the S1, S3 and S5 pupils will have their individual photographs taken on Wednesday 11th September.

As always, if you have any questions or if there is anything we can help with, please contact us via the school office.

SQA Exam Timetable 2025

It is our understanding that the SQA exams in 2025 will begin on Monday 28 April. SQA are planning to publish the timetable on their website on Thursday 5 September.

Pupil Attendance at School

At Viewforth HS we support and challenge all young people to achieve their very best. Consistently high attendance at school and in classes is vital for young people to succeed. Research tells us that a 1% drop in attendance leads to 3% lower achievement in school.

You may think that an attendance rate of 90% is a good rate of attendance, however it actually equates to almost four school weeks missed. This is a lot of learning time and is enough to significantly affect a young person's ability to succeed in school.

This is why we work with all families to support young people to have the best attendance possible. Please remember to inform us of all absences and try to arrange appointments outwith school time. You can contact our attendance co-ordinations (Cheryl and Wendy) directly via the school office number and our dedicated attendance text number in the key contact section of this Sway below.

If your child is experiencing difficulties in attending school we are ready to help. Whatever the reason, our Support for Pupils team is committed to removing any barriers to a young person's attendance. If you would like to discuss possible support to improve your child's attendance please phone the school to speak to the relevant guidance teacher or ask for our Family Support Worker.

Reporting Calendar

Please see below the key dates for reporting this session. For each year group you can see when they will receive their reports. There is also the date for Parents' Evenings to help with planning/work. All Parents' Evenings are held in school between 4.30pm and 7pm.

Your young person will receive their report on the date mentioned and there will be a tear off slip for you to provide feedback or comments.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's guidance teacher if you have any questions.

S1 - Reports issued - 04.10.2024 and 20.05.2025

S1 - Parents' Evening - 05.12.2024

S2 - Reports issued - 28.11.2024 and 25.04.2025

S2 - Parents' Evening - 22.01.2025

S3 - Reports issued - 07.11.2024 and 04.06.2025

S3 - Parents' Evening - 04.02.2025

S4-6 - Reports issued - (target grade only) 26.09.2024, 16.12.204, 07.02.2025 and 28.03.2025

S4-6 - Parents' Evening - 23.10.2024 or 29.10.2024 and 20.02.2025

Primary 7 - S1 Transition

Our transition programme for the current Primary 7 pupils begins next week with our 'VHS Roadshow'. The S1 and S2 Year Team will visit each of our Cluster Primary Schools to introduce themselves to parents / carers, answer questions and publicise the calendar of transition events for

this session. The roadshows will take place between 3pm and 3.30pm at Sinclairtown PS on Thursday 5th September, Dysart PS on Monday 9th September, Kirkcaldy North PS on Tuesday 10th September and Pathhead PS on Wednesday 11th September.

Hot on the heels of the roadshows is the first formal transition event of the year, the 'P7 Showcase'. This was a hugely popular event last year and provided an opportunity for pupils, parents and carers to visit the school for a tour of our Campus, visit departments and gain an insight into the learning pupils can look forward to experiencing during S1 and beyond. This event will take place between **5pm and 7pm on Wednesday 18th September**. More information will be distributed via Primary Schools over the next couple of weeks.

Extra-Curricular Programme

With the recent change to the pupil school week and school closing to pupils at 1.05pm on a Friday, Active Schools and staff in Viewforth HS are looking to gain some insight as to what extra-curricular activities our young people are interested in taking part in. Can you please take a couple of minutes to fill out this form as best you ca https://forms.office.com/e/UDV6yterWz.

This will allow us to appropriately plan activities that suit the majority of pupils and maximise participation and engagement.

S5/6 Funding Fitzgerald Trust

All senior pupils in S5 and S6 have the opportunity to apply for the annual Fitzgerald Trust grants. Whilst a small amount, these grants will support senior pupils to continue their studies here at Viewforth HS.

All pupils have had the opportunity to apply during their PSE lessons, however if they are yet to do so they can apply via this link https://forms.office.com/e/KpSCt2zybu

The only criteria is that applicants must be attending a secondary school in Kirkcaldy and must be resident within the former Burgh of Kirkcaldy at the time the award is made.

Closing date for the form to be submitted is no later than Friday 6th September 2024.

Digital Device Policy

Our Digital Device policy will continue this session and I'm pleased to say that pupils have responded well this week, making good choices to keep their phones in their bags. This is having a positive impact on their attention during lessons and we will continue to remind the young people of these expectations. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for your support in reinforcing the message at home with regards digital devices during lessons.

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Cost of the school day

As a school we work to ensure that all young people can attend without having to worry about the cost of anything in school. This also includes things that they might need to help them attend school. There are a range of services we offer that all young people are welcome to use.

- Breakfast Club – open from 8.30 - 8.40 daily in the school café
- Sanitary Products – our Support Hub have a range of sanitary products that are free to take if needed. Many classrooms have these in class as well for young people to help themselves. These are signposted in the classes.
- School uniform – the Support Hub has a range of uniform that young people are welcome to have if needed. This includes shirts, trousers, tights, socks and jerseys among other items. Whilst pupils can ask themselves, if parents would prefer, they can phone and ask for this support on their young person's behalf.
- Toiletries – we also hold a stock of toiletries for anyone who may need them this includes shampoo, shower gel, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes.
- All families who are eligible, are encouraged to apply for free school meals. You can check your eligibility and to apply via this link: Free school meals and school clothing grants | Fife Council[1]
- Also, your child may be eligible to apply for Educational Maintenance Allowance if they are over 16. You can check eligibility and apply via this link: Education Maintenance Allowance | Fife Council[2]
- S4-6 students are also reminded that there is a stock of study materials held in the Depute Head Teachers' office that they are welcome to use. This includes cue cards, post-it notes, highlighters and resource guides.
- Whilst all young people are encouraged to come equipped for school with their own pens and pencils, if they need anything like this they can be provided at school.

[1] https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/education2/schools-in-fife/free-school-meals-and-school-clothing-grants
[2] https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/docs/articles/education2/schools-in-fife/funding/educational-maintenance-allowance

If you, or your child, have any concerns around costs associated with school you are welcome to contact the school and speak with their Principal Teacher of Guidance.

Fife Council provides a range of supports related to cost of living. More information can be found about this here: Benefits and money advice | Fife Council[3]

Alternatively, the our Fife Council website has a range of advice and links to support available for families.

Mobile Phones

We are working to reduce the amount of time young people are spending on their mobile phones during lessons. To support us with this, it would be very helpful if parents / carers could refrain from messaging your child(ren) during lessons. If there is an emergency, please call the school office who will arrange for your child to be contacted. If it isn't an emergency, please limit the communications to interval **(10.20am - 10.35am)** and lunchtimes **(1.05pm - 1.45pm)**.

Key Staff

Your child's Guidance Teacher plays a key role in supporting them to achieve success throughout their school career. They will monitor attendance, time keeping, behaviour and progress and will liaise closely with both your young person and the family home. The Guidance Team from August 2024 and the key staff are listed below. If you have any questions or concerns, please get in touch with the relevant Guidance Teacher below.

S1 and S2

[3] https://www.fife.gov.uk/kb/welfare,-benefits-and-money-advice

Mrs Campbell for classes 1C1, 2C1 and 2C2

Mrs Beesley for classes 1M1, 1M2, 2F1, 2M1

Mr Wilson for classes 1C2, 1F1, 2F2

The Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for S1 and S2 is Mr Kowbel.

S3 and S4

Mrs Barr for classes 3M1, 3M2, 4F1

Mr Bowman for classes 3F1, 3F2, 4F2, 4M1, 4M2

Ms Harris will support 3C1, 4C1 and 4C2

The Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for S3 and S4 is Ms McNamee.

S5 and S6

Mrs Lara Robertson

The Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for S5 and S6 is Mr Wilson.

Contact details

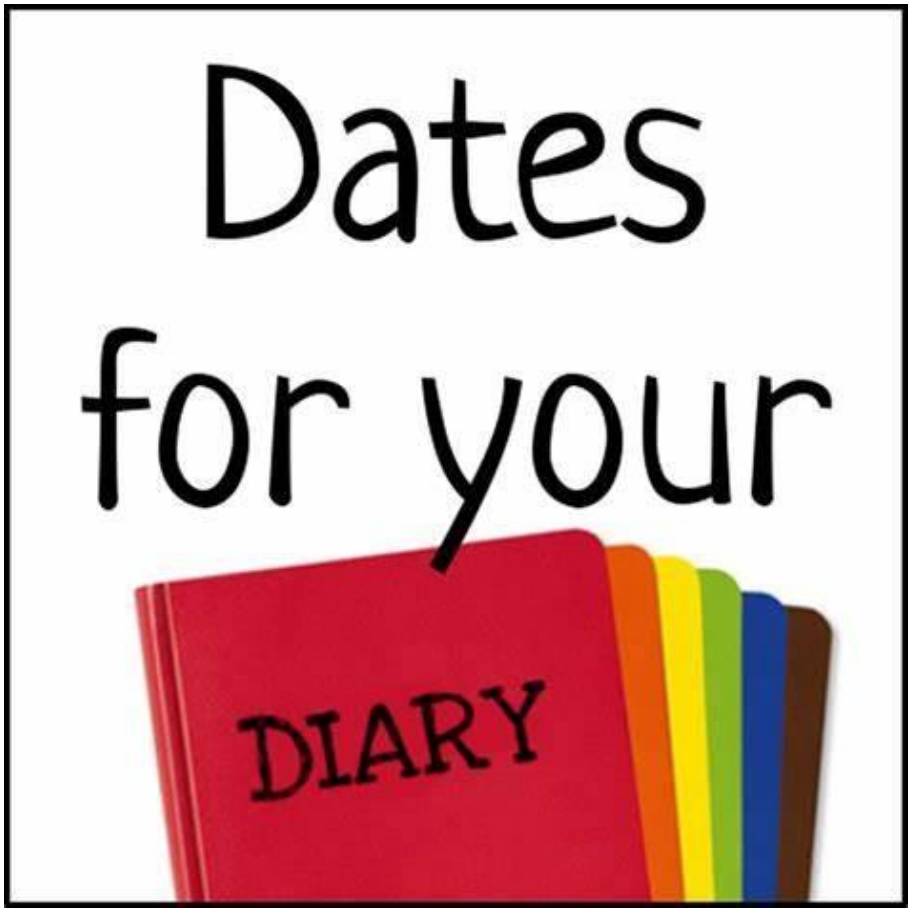
There are a variety of ways you can contact the school and we would encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

As we continue to work to improve pupil attendance at school, a reminder that if your child is unwell or has an appointment and is unable to attend school, please telephone the school office on **01592 583408** and select **option 1** for the attendance line. If the line is engaged, there is the facility to

leave a message. Alternatively, you can send a text message to **07860 030879**, stating your child's name and the reason for the absence. If your child does not arrive to class, you will receive a Groupcall message informing you of their absence.

If you require support with your child's attendance, please contact your child's guidance teacher who will be happy to provide support and advice.

Dates for your diary...



Term Dates 2024/25 (all dates are inclusive)

Autumn - Wednesday 21 August - Friday 4 October 2024

Winter - Monday 21 October - Friday 20 December 2024

Spring - Monday 6 January 2025 - Friday 4 April 2025

Summer - Monday 21 April 2025 - Thursday 3 July 2025

In-Service Days 2024/25

In-service day 3 - Friday 15 November

In-service day 4 - Wednesday 12 February

In-service day 5 - Tuesday 3 June

Parents' Evenings

Our parents' evenings take place in the Viewforth High School building and are a great opportunity to meet staff and to hear more about your son / daughter's progress. They run from 4.30pm - 7pm and we will be in touch in advance of each evening with information regarding how to book appointments.

S1 - Thursday 5 December

S2 - Wednesday 22 January

S3 - Tuesday 4 February

Senior Phase Parents' Evening 1 - Wednesday 23 October

Senior Phase Parents' Evening 2 - Tuesday 29 October

Senior Phase Parents' Evening (follow up) - Thursday 20 February

Respect - Equity - Ambition - Community - Health