



St Kentigern's Academy

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Head Teacher:

Mr Andrew Sharkey

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

Monday, 27 November 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we move into these next 4 weeks before the December break, learning and associated activities continue at pace. There is much to share in this update, so I kindly ask you to take a few moments to sit down and go through it.

Building Update - Our school is safe, open, and fully operational as preparations are underway for the closure and demolition of the Admin Wing and reception, along with the other closed areas. Starting February, the main entrance will shift to the current door to Social Subjects, featuring a new visitor waiting area and office/admin/Senior Leadership space.

Learning and teaching are ongoing, facilitated by six new temporary teaching units that serve as modern, quality spaces for Modern Languages and an indoor PE/multifunctional area.

As Prelims approach, we've ensured comprehensive support for students, and plans are already in motion to conduct the May 2024 SQA Exams at the Blackburn Partnership Centre.

Indoor PE Spaces - we are bussing students to local community venues including the Whitburn Community Centre and the Blackburn Partnership Centre to support our delivery of the full PE Curriculum.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding the building work or its impact on the school, please feel free to email Sally Cameron at sally.cameron@westlothian.org.uk.

Toilets – Over the last five weeks we have been enhancing our out-of-class procedures. This includes the implementation of a system where teachers issue passes to students requesting to use the toilets.

The process, however, is as it has always been, students ask to go to the toilet and a pass is issued. This is then collected in. By collecting these passes, we've minimised aimless wandering around the school, as the purpose for being out of class can be verified. This approach not only facilitates access for students needing to use the toilets but also ensures that individuals do not linger unnecessarily. We've shared this system through student assemblies (S1-S3 last week and S4-S6 this week) and with both the Parent and Student Councils.

In response to feedback from discussions at the Parent Council and individual communications with families, we want to reassure you that there will always be toilets available for students. Our efforts aim to strike a balance, addressing the resource demands resulting from individuals avoiding lessons by congregating in the toilets or causing damage to the facilities.



It's important to emphasise that the main student toilets remain unlocked during the day. Additionally, we have a significant number of new toilets in the learning village, and access to these during class time is managed by the respective departments.

Prelim Exams – Window 1 – The timetable for the first set of prelim exams in December is now available on the school website at - [Prelim Timetable - Window 1 - December 2023 - St Kentigern's Academy \(westlothian.org.uk\)](https://westlothian.org.uk) Most of the exams are for S4 but there a few S5/S6 exams also taking place so please do make sure your child is aware of the exam days and times.

Study Support – The school has a programme off study support on offer in the run up to the prelims. Details of this are available at [Study Support - St Kentigern's Academy \(westlothian.org.uk\)](https://westlothian.org.uk)

On the same page you will see a link to the E-Sgoil [Study Support 2023-24 | e-Sgoil](https://westlothian.org.uk). E-Sgoil has developed into a nationwide community for study support and students can sign up and take part in revision activities, and webinar. There is also access to a range of revision resources appropriate for students studying for National Qualification.

Calendar – A reminder that the parent calendar for the upcoming year is available on the school website at [School Calendar - St Kentigern's Academy \(westlothian.org.uk\)](https://westlothian.org.uk). Please take a moment to review it and note the key dates relevant to you for the coming year.

Parent Portal - Many of you have already signed up to the ParentsPortal system/app through which you can receive notices from the school, complete permission forms/data checks, view your child's attendance and more.

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ONLINE SCHOOL PAYMENTS

From January we will be starting to migrate our letter communications to this channel and therefore kindly ask all parents/carers to sign-up as soon as possible. You will be able to set push notifications so that you are alerted any time a new message comes up relevant to your child or their year group. It will take some time to get everything moving like clockwork but

the first step is getting everyone on board. If you try to sign up and the link to your child fails, please don't give up, instead contact our school office and we will help you with the process.

Parent Council - On Thursday, 7th December we will have our next Parent Council meeting. This meeting will be online. The agenda includes an overview of learning & teaching, our ongoing building works and our plans for the next few years until the works are finished, as well as a number of general items.

P7 Information Evening – On Thursday, 23rd November, we held our P7. Thank you so much to the large number of parents and carers that joined us for the evening. The evening was both informative and engaging, providing valuable insights into the transition from P7 to S1 for our new students. The presentation from the evening is available at <https://tinyurl.com/P7-Info-Evening>

Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) - If your child is looking to apply to go to higher education next year SAAS are running a number of upcoming events to

- explain the funding available from SAAS for those planning to undertake higher education courses (HNC/HND/Degree courses); and
- provide information on the repayment of student loans; and
- provide advice on how and when to submit a funding application to SAAS; and
- have a funding awareness advisor available who can answer any questions that attendees may have.

These free sessions will run from the 4th to the 13th December and can be booked at <https://buytickets.at/studentawardsagencyscotland/1065324>

School Show – Hairspray – Earlier this month our students performed a three-night run of "Hairspray." If you had the chance to attend, you know first-hand that the shows were filled with joy and exceptional performances. The show was a genuine celebration of the remarkable talents of our students, brilliantly supported by our dedicated staff.

The quality of singing and overall performance by our students was nothing short of outstanding, showcasing the incredible depth of talent within our community. It is a true testament to the high calibre of students we are fortunate to have at St. Kentigern's Academy.

Climate Action Success - During our recent Climate Action Week, a group of our talented S3 boys—Finlay, Luca, and Tayab—participated in a challenge to envision the future of our school in 2045. Their ideas were not only innovative but also so impactful that they were chosen to be featured on the Keep Scotland Beautiful website.

What's even more exciting is that their imaginative concepts, such as chicken coops to support the canteen and energy generated by walking escalators, were incorporated into the Parliament assembly slides presented to the First Minister. This recognition is a testament to the exceptional creativity and dedication of these students.

Student Successes - Just as we take pride in celebrating the accomplishments of our students, we also continue to be inspired by their achievements, and we applaud their hard work and commitment.

There are so many noteworthy achievements in our students' lives, and it is challenging to cover everything. Therefore, if you have news to share, please send it directly to me, and I will do my utmost to include this information in future updates. We are proud of all achievements, regardless of their scale.

Self-Care Stations - After consultation with our students and staff, our staff of the School Day Group have set up a number of Self-Care Stations. In these stations there are toiletries (inc. shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, period products, etc.) and a range of other self-care items to help any young people who might need them.

These stations are located in Ms Riley's room, Miss Lawlor's office, the PSW's office and the nurse's room. Students can visit these stations and help themselves if they need any of these items.

In addition, if any student or family are worried about the cost of the school day or any other costs in your life. There are lots of way we can support you as a school. Students just need to speak to their Student Support teacher, a PSW or another trusted member of staff.

Prom Fashion Show – Get ready for glamour as our S6 Prom Committee present a spectacular pre-loved prom fashion show and pop-up shop on Thursday, December 14th, right here at the school. Admission is free, but we encourage attendees to contribute to our community spirit by making a donation to the food bank. Join us for an evening of style, sustainability, and giving back!

Winter Weather - We've received a notice from the local authority reminding all about taking care with travel as winter weather approaches. Planning can make all the difference and we need to think about the safest routes and modes of transport as well as considering if our trips are essential. In addition to local radio and the Met Office weather app information is also available from @lovewestlothian, @trafficscotland and @BBCTravelScot

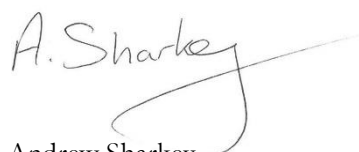
As soon as we have word regarding any severe weather and potential disruption due to snow, we will post this immediately on our own social media feed @StKentAc and our school website. Information about buses stoppages does not always come fast but we will of course share this information as quickly as possible too.

Upcoming key dates:

- Champions League Trip to Manchester 28 November 2023
- Prelim Exams (Window 1) – 4th – 21st December 2022
- Flu Immunisations 6 – 7 December
- Parent Council 7 December 2023
- Student Voice Week 11 - 15 December 2023
- S2 Parents Evening (online)
- Christmas Dinners 20 December 2023
- Christmas Service 22 December 2023
- School Christmas holidays begin 23rd December 2023
- Students Return 8th January 2024

I hope you have a good week, and thanks for taking the time to read this update

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Sharkey
Head Teacher