



CASTLEHEAD HIGH SCHOOL



Camphill, Canal St, Paisley, PA1 2HL

Tel: 0300 300 1300

e-mail: castleheadhighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk

web address: www.Castleheadhigh.com

Head Teacher: Mr Gordon Menzies

**Children's Services
Director: Janie O'Neill**

Dear Parent/Carer,

NEW SESSION 2026/27

It is a pleasure to write to you with information about the new 2026/27 session. All the staff at Castlehead High School are very much looking forward to welcoming your child or children when term begins on Tuesday 18 August 2026. We are also delighted to welcome our new cohort of S1 pupils into our school community. It is my hope that all our pupils enjoy a happy and successful school career, and that they make the most of every aspect of school life. I believe that children and young people are most likely to thrive at school when there is a strong partnership between the school and your family. With that in mind, I would greatly appreciate parent and carer support across a range of areas, outlined below.

1. PARENT PAY AND PARENT PORTAL

Our school is 'cashless' and uses Parent Pay to allow parents and carers 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 soon. 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 also uses Parent Portal. This is an online method for schools to communicate with parents and carers, 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. 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.

2. FIRST WEEK BACK ARRANGEMENTS

All pupils will return on Tuesday, 18th August at 8.40am (doors open) for an 8.50am start. As highlighted prior to the summer break, 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



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one registration. During Tuesday 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, our trained 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. 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 and carers 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.

5. VISITORS/PARENTS 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 and Pupil Support 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 the main reception.

6. EXTRA CURRICULAR PROVISION

Castlehead has a proud tradition of extracurricular activities. We will be offering a range of extracurricular clubs and activities this session, starting over the first few weeks of term. Please encourage your child to sign up. Similarly, 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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7. 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. In April 2023, we conducted a full consultation of our new school vision and values. This vision and values underpin our high expectations. Please see below our school's shared vision and values. This is the foundation of our school and plays a crucial part in the experience of our young people:

School Vision

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

School Values

Ambition

Respect

Kindness

8. 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 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).

9. 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.

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 come to school with a school bag containing a water bottle and a pencil case.

10. ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY



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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 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.

11. LATECOMING

Pupils are frequently reminded of the importance of being on time for all classes. Where a pupil is persistently late without a suitable explanation, parents/carers will be contacted by Pupil Support staff. If late coming continues beyond this stage, the 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, but with no further action taken.)

12. 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.**

Minor accidents are dealt with by the school's qualified first aiders. If a pupil takes ill or has an accident that requires 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**



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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.

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13. 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 QS qualifications. Our online home learning platform is Satchel One, and this allows parents to monitor homework being issued and completed. We will also use SatchelOne for promoting positive behaviour, where pupils will accumulate House points for their engagement in lessons. Please download the SatchelOne app to enable you to follow your child's home learning and participation in lessons. We also use MS Teams to support learning in the class and at home.

14. 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 the surrounding (residential) environment. Each year, we receive several 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 continue to participate in community litter picking exercises, and there will be more information provided over the course of the session.

15. 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 spoke to your child/children about this. I would also request your consideration when dropping your child/children off at school. For safety, parents should park some distance from the school. If necessary, some parents should park in the lower car park. Pupils should not cross the car park 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.**



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16. 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 we 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. We follow our mobile phone policy in the classroom. 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

17. CHILD PROTECTION

Renfrewshire's Child Protection Committee works to ensure that local agencies work together to



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protect children. It promotes the message that the 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 at 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.

1 st 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, our Child Protection Co-Ordinator is Ms Wilson, Depute Head Teacher (DHT).

18. CONTACTING US – OUR STRUCTURE

This session, we have moved to a Year group structure. This change has been carefully considered and is intended to help provide even more focused support for pupils at each stage of their school journey. By working closely with specific year groups, DHT's will be able to build a deeper understanding of the experiences, challenges and milestones that are unique to each age and stage. We hope this will support earlier interventions where needed, closer tracking of progress and more targeted support to help all young people achieve their potential. Our Pupil Support Principal Teachers will continue to play a central role in pastoral care and supporting young people and families. Their knowledge of pupils and the wider school community remain invaluable, and this new structure is designed to complement and strengthen support. **Please see below the structure breakdown:**

DHT	YEAR GROUP
Ms C Wilson (Mon-Thur) & Miss C Donnachie (Fri)	S1
Mr D Dunlop	S2 & S6
Ms G Whitnall	S3
Mrs S Wallace	S4 & S5
PUPIL SUPPORT	HOUSE GROUP
Mrs C Duggan & Mrs J Campbell	Camphill
Mrs P Stewart	Oakshaw
Mrs G MacFarlane	Maxwellton



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19. FINAL POINTS

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

The updated 3-year School Improvement Plan and Standards and Qualities report will be posted on our school website in September 2026. 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 to school news. Please remember that 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.

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 2026/27.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Menzies

Head Teacher



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