Committed to Care and Excellence

Gracemount High School

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Head Teacher
Mr Ross Hunter

Depute Head Teacher
Mrs Dee Scott
Ms Julie Wilson (Acting)
Mr Mark Gregor

Business Manager
Mrs Anne O'Neil

7 October 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Head Teacher Update (2) – Session 2024/25

On the first Monday of every month, I release a Head Teacher update with important and relevant information for parents and carers. This will be sent by email and text with a link to the school website page.

I hope you find the update informative, and I would welcome any feedback you may have at all. You can contact me by calling the school on **0131 664 7440** or by email at Admin@Gracemount.edin.sch.uk

Our school website link is here and is an excellent way to keep up to date with events in the school as is our school Facebook page is used to keep you informed too. (4) Gracemount High School | Facebook

Please see updates below.

Title	Details
School Improvement	Our School Improvement Plan can be found here
Key Adult Time (KAT) – Changes for next Term	After evaluating our approach in term one we are making a slight change to our KAT plans. 1. Morning KAT will be 10 minutes instead of 5 minutes, finishing at 8.40am. This gives our pupils a 10-minute soft start to the day. 2. Each period will begin 5 minutes later that they currently do e.g. Period 1 will begin at 8.40am instead of 8.35am. 3. We will no longer have a 5-minute KAT at the end of the day. 4. Almost all pupils will be allowed to take their iPad home however some will have the option of leaving it in school. 5. We will continue to finish school at 3.30pm Monday-Thursday and 12.20pm on Friday.
Education Academy (previously Saturday School)	We will be starting our in-school classes after Christmas but for now Gracemount students have free access (normally £20) to Monthly Master classes for all Sciences, Maths and English at National 5 and Higher. Book now | Saturday School (saturdayschoolglasgow.com) This is an excellent opportunity to top up on your skills. **Gracemount is the only school in Scotland offering free access to its students.** Interested students should give their name to their class teachers to sign up.
Attendance and Punctuality	Attending school and being on time can help your child achieve their potential. There will continue to be an increased focus on these areas

	as we move into the next term. Please continue to do all you can to get your child to school and to be on time. **Reporting an absence** If your child is unable to attend school for any reason it is important you contact the school on their first day of absence to inform us. This can be done by calling 01316647440, emailing admin@gracemount.edin.sch.uk or by responding to the absence text stating their name, year and reason for their absence. **School Actions:** 1. We will text if your child is absent, please reply to this text. 2. A text will also be sent if your child is missing from a period in school. Sometimes there can be errors with this due to late coming, supply staff etc. Please do contact us if you feel this is incorrect. 3. If your child is late to class more than 5 times in a week, we will contact home to discuss. 4. Please expect contact if your child's attendance is less than 85%. We are determined to work with our families in a supportive way. Please do reach out if you want to discuss any aspects of support that might help your child come to school and arrive on time. If you are requesting absence during the school term-time please contact the school office who will supply a form that you should complete and send to me. This is an updated procedure and is in place across all schools in Edinburgh.
Celebrating wider achievement	One area we want to improve on is celebrating our pupils' achievements in and out of school. To do this we aim to gather information on what our pupils achieve out of school. Please scan the QR code below and tell us about your child's achievements out of school. Thank you to everyone that has made returns so far.
Staffing update	There have been some changes to our staffing recently which are detailed below: 1. Mrs Scott, Depute Head Teacher, has successfully been appointed as Depute Head Teacher to Trinity Academy.

	Her last day will be Friday 8 November. 2. As a result, we have made 2 Depute Head Teacher appointments a. Mrs Amanda Lyons will join us from Kings Park School in Glasgow where she has been acting DHT. b. Ms Tania Peters will join us from James Gillespies High School where she was Senior Development Officer. 3. Ms Murray has been appointed as maternity cover Pupil Support Leader for Lewis house. Ms Murray will stay in this post, as Mrs Wilson will continue as acting DHT until she goes on maternity leave early November. 4. Mrs Alawiyyah Ilyas continues to cover for Ms Iona Alexander's absence in Social Subjects. 5. Ms Sharon Croome has taken over as Support for Learning as Mrs Natasha Foster has begun her maternity leave.
Senior Team and Pupil Support	Key staff that will link with your families are below: **Lewis House** Dee Scott – Depute Head Teacher and Head of House Catriona Murray – Pupil Support Leader **Skye House** Mark Gregor - Depute Head Teacher and Head of House Jasmine McKay – Pupil Support Leader **Tiree House** Julie Wilson - (Acting) Depute Head Teacher and Head of House Ellie Manczak – Pupil Support Leader **Senior Development Officer and Care Experienced Lead** Zelda Reynolds
School Reports for your child	We continue to get used to our new tracking system. Senior target grade reports have successfully been issued. S3 reports have been issued this week and S2 reports will be issued very shortly after the October break.
School Dress Code	Thank you for your continued support as we implement our procedures. These are largely working well with almost all students meeting our expectations.
Behaviour	Having safe and productive classrooms with a focus on learning is a critical feature of a successful school and any behaviour that prevents this from happening will be managed as per our school policy which can be found here. along with other school polices. We are reviewing this, this session and will keep you briefed on any suggested changes. Our SEEMIS merits are working well and if your child achieves 5 or more merits in a month then you will receive a text home congratulating them. Our September text went out last week. Head Teacher awards are issued every month to those students that achieved the most Merits in their year groups. September awards will be issued this week.

Empowered Learning – iPads	More and more lessons are dependent on your child having their iPad in school. Not having this can lead to significant disadvantages and whilst teachers can provide alternatives in it in everyone's interest to have this on their person. Please do all you can to ensure your child arrives with their iPad.
Mobile Phone Policy	In some classes mobile phones continue to be an issue. We did undertake a significant consultation last session, and our mobile phone policy can be found here We will keep this under review, and we will individually target some classes and young people who persistently fail to follow procedures. Recent guidance issued by the Scottish Government. Mobile phone guidance for Scotland's schools - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)
Key Dates	1. Week beginning 7 October – S3 reports sent home 2. Friday 11 October – last day of term 3. Monday 21 October – School Inservice Day for staff 4. Tuesday 22 October – Pupils return to school 5. Week beginning 4 November – Senior Tracking Issued 6. Wednesday 13 November – Parent Council Meeting

I hope you've found the information above useful. I look forward to working with you all over the coming months and doing everything we can to support your child(ren) to reach and exceed their potential.

Kind regards,
Ross Hunter
Head Teacher

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