Committed to Care
and Excellence

Gracemount High School

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Head Teacher
Mr Ross Hunter

Depute Head Teachers
Ms Tania Peters (Tiree)
Mrs Amanda Lyons (Lewis)
Mr Mark Gregor (Skye)

Business Manager
Mrs Anne O'Neil

4 February 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Head Teacher update – February 2025

During the first week 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 am keen to get an idea of how many people read the update I issue. From our last response we had 32 parents/carers who completed the survey to indicate they engage with the update. We are keen to increase engagement with this. If you can, please complete this very brief survey by scanning the QR code or clicking the link below.

If you do read this, perhaps send on to someone you know who is a parent/carer and please do get in touch with any feedback. I'd be keen to hear what you think.

https://forms.office.com/e/925UXLV0nn

Please see updates below.

Title	Details
Pupil Wellbeing – Phone and Toilets	In my January update I wrote to you about changes to our approach with access to school toilets and use of phones in class. We continue to work with our wellbeing ambassadors and pupil parliament representatives on these issues, however I am pleased to report significant progress has been made. Pupils and staff are reporting much less use of phones in class, and we are seeing less anti-social behaviour issues in our school toilets. We will continue to keep you updated on these matters. I will be contacting you shortly on our approach to manage concerns around vaping in school. Please look out for this communication.
Staffing Update	We are beginning our recruitment for next session and looking carefully at subject demands and how this will impact staffing.

	As part of the City of Edinburgh Council approach, we have targeted areas where there may be predicted shortages and have interviewed recently for Maths, Health and Food Technology, and Computing. I will update you on outcomes in the next briefing. **Pupil Support Leader** Congratulations to Catriona Murray who has secured a full-time permanent position at Wester Hailes High School as Pupil Support Leader. Catriona will take up post early March. She will be replaced by Craig Cruickshanks who will take up the Lewis House Pupil Support leader post on a temporary basis until Mrs Wilson returns. Other Updates: 1. Mr Grant Emslie in PE has left us to take up a post in Aberdeen. He has been replaced on a temporary basis by Mr Stevie McLeish. 2. Ms Kayleigh Sutherland with join our support staff team proving administration support to our Pupil Support Leaders
Education Academy (previously Saturday School)	As part of our on-going support for our Senior Pupils I'm delighted to say our partnership with Education Academy (previously Saturday School) continues. After school study classes are available after the February break to students in Maths, English and all Science subjects in National 5 and Higher. If you want your child to sign up, please contact Mr Hunter or the school office who can provide further detail.
Course Choice	All pupils in S2-5 are undertaking course choices. Further information can be found here on our school website Course Choice 2025 - Gracemount High School
Standardised Assessments	Across our learning community schools we will be undertaking Standardised assessments. For Gracemount High School pupils these will take place immediately after the February break. Further information can be found via this link Standardised Assessments - Gracemount High School
Attendance and Punctuality	**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.
Parent Feedback	As part of my ongoing efforts to foster open communication and support for all our students, I am making a public promise to personally call up to 10 parents each week. My goal is to connect with families, listen to your thoughts and feedback and address any questions or concerns you may have. I believe that continuing to build strong relationships with our families is an essential part of creating a positive and supportive learning environment for our students. These calls will provide an opportunity for us to collaborate in a way that goes beyond emails and meetings, ensuring that each of you feels heard and valued. If you are one of the parents I reach out to, I will do my best to schedule a time that is convenient for you. However, if you have any immediate questions or need assistance before that, please do not hesitate to contact me directly via email admin@gracemount.edin.sch.uk or the school's main phone line - 0131 664 7440. Thank you for your continued support and partnership. I look forward to speaking with you soon. To request a priority phone call please complete the link below or scan the QR code https://forms.office.com/e/XNMSsxqUrN

Parent Council Homework Consultation	We had 37 responses to our homework consultation. Feedback has been shared with the Parent Council and will be discussed at our next meeting.
School Supported Self-Evaluation	In December and January, the school undertook a supported self-evaluation visit. A team from the local authority visited the school over 3 days to evaluate our work as a school and a report will be shared with us soon. Details will be shared with the parents/carers in due course.
Key Dates	1. 3 February – Senior tracking 2 issued 2. 4 February – Senior Parents evening 3. 6 February – School dance show 4. 7 February - last day of term 5. 17 February – Pupils and staff return to school 6. 27 February – S1 Parents Evening (1) – Surnames A-M 7. 5 March – S1 Parents Evening (2) – Surnames N-Z 8. WB 3rd March - S3 tracking 2 issued 9. 26 March – Parent Council Meeting

Yours sincerely,
Ross Hunter
Head Teacher