



# WELLINGTON SCHOOL, AYR

## INFORMATION UPDATE FOR PARENTS

The central purpose of this mailing is to distribute the Turret Newsletter. I hope you like the new format; it seems to grow bigger with every edition, but this is perhaps simply a reflection of the volume of exciting events going on at Wellington. Just looking at the Turret should give you a small taste of the opportunities available to all our pupils from Nursery to S6.

### **Electronic communication**

Many parents and pupils are already regular users of the School web site [www.wellingtonschool.org](http://www.wellingtonschool.org). If you are not a user, I would urge you to make use of the facility as it provides a wealth of important (and up-to-date) information.

The News Stories section contains many stories (including pictures) of recent activities and successes. News stories are kept on the web site for just over a year before they are archived to allow visitors to get some flavour of the yearly cycle at the school. The 'Information for Parents' section contains copies of newsletters and school policies, and the Newsflash section gives details of upcoming events.

Our intention is to use e-mail to communicate any newsworthy items to parents. As per legal requirements, there will be a facility to 'unsubscribe' from this facility contained within the e-mail. To make this facility effective (and in any event, in the interests of Health and Safety) it is essential that all parents fill in the Data Capture Form fully. If your details change in any way, I would be grateful if you could contact the School Office to inform them of the changes.

### **Development Work**

The School Development Plan (2007-2010) was updated to take account of feedback from the Parents' Questionnaire, in particular better documentation and communication of our procedures.

We have released a whole-school Information for Parents booklet to provide detailed information of school procedures and rules. The school uniform and dress code is detailed therein, with details of our suppliers. Feedback already suggests there has been an improvement in the availability, choice and quality of school uniform.

We have also produced Individual handbooks for Nursery, Infants and Junior Departments, and 'Homework Guidelines' to give parents a better understanding of our requirements and how they can help. Our Child Protection Policy, Pupil Welfare and Guidance Policy, Racial Equality Policy, Gender Equality Policy and Action Plan have all been updated and should give a very clear picture on our position in creating a safe environment for all our pupils.

The Careers Guidance Policy gives a detailed account of our new articulated and comprehensive infrastructure to help pupils in their choices throughout Senior School. We are currently looking at additional, imaginative ways to enhance and extend this service. Alongside the careers system, Form Teachers monitor the extracurricular involvement (both inside and outwith school) and the career developments of all pupils as they move through the senior school.

A School Travel Plan has been published, and alongside this we have seen developments in the road safety arrangements around the school. This work is ongoing and we are seeking additional measures at Racecourse Road. These measures should give us more scope in driving forward our 'walk to school' and 'cycle to school' programmes. In the latter case, this is will complemented by an expanding cycling awareness and proficiency programme. In addition, the reallocation of bus routes and the consideration of a new Alloway bus route, appropriate for almost 100 pupils, should improve pupil safety directly - and indirectly as traffic is reduced as a consequence.

Lunch menus are available online and reflect our drive to improve the quality and choice of school meals, including a wide range of healthy eating options. To improve the dining experience we have also introduced a new layout and lunch rotas for the dining hall.

The Eco Schools Scheme continues to thrive in school, with all areas of the school participating actively in the scheme. After a busy year of working on a Curricular Audit in the Senior School and Environmental Reviews and Action Plans in all three areas of the school, we eagerly await our visit from the Eco Schools assessors on Wednesday 9th June to see if we receive our first Green Flag Award.

Various newsletters and Term Calendars are also available online to give a clearer picture of what is happening, and an updated Complaints Procedure to detail the steps to take if you have any concerns.

## **A Curriculum for Excellence**

The main focus of the previous and current School Development Plan was on Curriculum for Excellence, now overseen by Mr Green. A new Working Group was established with membership drawn from all the 3 – 18 age stages. This group has met regularly to monitor progress on the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and to drive forward this initiative in the school, and a three year strategic plan has been developed with the idea of moving the school forward at a pace that mirrors the expectation of the Scottish Government.

The general ethos of Curriculum for Excellence is now embedded in learning and teaching approaches throughout the school. Content mapping and curriculum migration, from 5-14 to the Experiences and Outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence, is in an advanced state and plans for a phased move towards systems of assessment, recording and reporting that embrace the ideas behind the Scottish Governments document 'Building the Curriculum 5', are in place. We now look forward to the release of the new National Assessment Resource bank in August 2010 and full details of how the new National Qualifications are to be introduced.

Mr Green led a very well attended Open Evening for Parents (from all areas of the school) to describe progress towards the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence. He emphasised the strong position of Wellington School in relation to the breadth and depth of its current curriculum and how this translates onto the new expectations. He stressed that this is an evolutionary not a revolutionary process and we would not be abandoning that which we currently perceive as good practice as we moved forward to a future under this important initiative.

## **Extracurricular Excellence**

You will all grasp that our ongoing commitment to a broad and varied extracurricular programme is central to a Curriculum for Excellence - indeed, so much so that the term *extra* curricular is almost becoming redundant. We are a small school and it is vital that all pupils embrace fully the ethos of participation and commitment - and striving for excellence in all that they do.

Team sports and activities are central to life at Wellington, and I believe that the developments at Doonside have had an impact on performance and perception. The drainage work on the rugby pitches involving the 'injection' of hundreds of tons of sand has had a significant impact on the state of the pitches - much to the delight of all parents and, as a consequence, my own delight!

We have a firm belief that to foster the 'right attitude' towards rugby will lead to improvements in the long term, and current successes at all levels - most particularly the sevens and 1st XV results - are perhaps vindication of this strategy.

The provision of an Astroturf pitch has certainly revitalised hockey, and we are looking at expanding our coaching team, as we have done in rugby to such good effect, to give pupils the best possible development experience. Cricket is sometimes seen as the 'poor neighbour' of our team sports, but this season has seen us take on 1st XI fixtures against major opposition - and win. Recent stories of the exploits of our equestrian team, the superb performance of our swimming team, coupled with athletic team success (most notably our S2 team winning the Hutchesons' tournament) are very warming indeed. As I write this, the South Ayrshire Schools Golf Trophy has just arrived on my desk.

The outdoor experience for pupils continues to expand and we now are looking at ways of 'filling in' the gaps from Arran and Barcaple in P5 and P6 to the start of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in S3.

Art and Music are evolving in new ways and building on existing strengths. The Art Spectacular and School shows will be joined by a new 'Art in the Making' event, and the 'Celebrate Music' week.

## **School Contact Points**

I would stress once again that contacting the correct member of the Senior Management Team will invariably mean that your concerns are dealt with more effectively.

Mr Stovell (Deputy Head) oversees all school events, quality assurance, option choices and timetabling. In the Senior School the three Assistant Heads act as Year Heads and have other specific whole-school remits: Mrs McMahan looks after all S5/S6 issues (including UCAS and Careers); Mr Green is in charge of S3/S4, and as 'Director of Studies' oversees all exam and curriculum issues throughout the school; Mrs O'Connell is in charge of P7-S2 and has the overview of Pupil Welfare for the whole school. For Primary years, Mrs McLaren is Head of Infants and Mr Robinson is Head of Juniors, and Mrs Allan is Head of Nursery. In addition, in promoted posts but not on the SMT, Mrs Clark is Head of Remove (P7) and Mrs D McLaren is Head of Learning Support.

**RM Parlour, Headmaster  
25 May 2010**