



‘Rooted in Nature, United in Community, Growing in Kindness.’

Head Teacher Friday Blog (3) – 29 August 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important Dates

Tuesday 2 September – S4-S6 Parents’ Evening – An opportunity to hear about how to help prepare your child for their SQA exams and how they will be assessed through the year. Please check an email sent last week from Mr Campbell and sign up.

Thursday 4 September – Senior Awards Ceremony 1900-2030. School Assembly Hall

Learning and Teaching – Our Top Priority

At McLaren High School, Learning and Teaching continues to be our number one priority. During our INSET Day and at our first staff meeting of the session this week, led by Mrs Heel, Depute Head Teacher with responsibility for Learning and Teaching, we focused on how best to meet the needs of all our learners.

Staff explored the theme of *adaptive teaching*—a responsive, high-expectation approach where teachers continually adjust their practice to support every pupil to succeed. This contrasts with more traditional differentiation, which can sometimes limit expectations for learners.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improvement, every member of staff will be undertaking a professional enquiry this year linked to Learning and Teaching. These enquiries will directly inform classroom practice and ensure that the strategies we use have a positive impact on pupil learning and outcomes.

Supporting The Canmore Trust – Street Ceilidh 2025

At McLaren High School, we are proud of our ongoing partnership with **The Canmore Trust**, a charity dedicated to promoting safe spaces and supporting families and communities affected by suicide. Their work is close to our hearts, and we are delighted to help raise awareness of their upcoming community event.

The much-loved **Canmore Trust Street Ceilidh** returns for its **fourth year** on **Saturday 30th August 2025**. From **6–7pm**, Ancaster Road in Callander will once again come alive with music, dance, and a “sea of blue” as the community gathers to *Strip the Willow* and raise vital funds. This is always a wonderful occasion where people of all ages come together in joy and solidarity. I am delighted that our first Interhouse bake sale held on Wednesday this week raised over £300 to support the charity. Well done to Leny House for bringing in the most cakes and goodies.

Transport Update – Pupil Behaviour on School Buses

The safety and well-being of our pupils remain our top priorities. School buses are an extension of the classroom, and it is essential that all pupils follow the same standards of behaviour while travelling,

as they do during the school day. Recently, both Mr Heel and I have received a number of complaints about poor behaviour on school transport, particularly on the M4 Aberfoyle service. As this bus is also used by members of the public, such incidents not only cause upset to others but also reflect badly on the reputation of our school.

It is important that all parents and carers speak with their children about the responsibility they carry when travelling on public transport. Proper conduct ensures a safe and respectful environment for all passengers and allows our bus drivers to focus fully on transporting pupils safely.

To support this, please reinforce the following expectations with your child:

- **Respectful Behaviour:** Pupils should speak politely to the bus driver and to each other. Bullying, teasing, or any form of disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated.
- **Staying Seated:** For safety reasons, pupils must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- **Keeping the Bus Clean:** Pupils should look after their belongings and leave the bus tidy. Littering or damaging the bus in any way is unacceptable.
- **Listening to the Driver:** Drivers are responsible for the safety of all passengers. Pupils must follow their instructions at all times.
- **No Distractions:** Loud behaviour, playing music without headphones, or other disruptive actions should be avoided, as these distract the driver.

We ask for your full support in addressing this matter. By working together, we can ensure that all pupils have a safe, respectful, and positive experience when travelling to and from school. If pupils do not adhere to these expectations then their PASS can be removed for a period of time and it would be parental responsibility to get your child to school.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

In July 2024, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act was passed, making the UNCRC legally binding in Scotland. This landmark decision places the rights of children and young people at the heart of policy and practice across the country.

At McLaren High School, we are proud to play our part in this important journey. One of the ways we do this is through our work on the **Rights Respecting Schools Award**. In April, we were delighted to achieve the **Silver Award**, and we are now beginning our exciting journey towards **Gold**. Currently, only one other secondary school in Stirling Council has reached this stage, so we are determined to lead by example in making children's rights a living, everyday reality in our school.

Our commitment to the UNCRC is not separate from our school ethos — it is deeply connected to our **values of inclusivity, community, kindness, and respect**.

- By valuing **inclusivity**, we ensure that every young person feels safe, seen, and supported, regardless of background or circumstance.
- By fostering **community**, we work together — pupils, staff, parents, and carers — to build a school where everyone's voice matters.
- Through everyday acts of **kindness**, we create an environment where children's rights are not just protected but celebrated.
- And by showing **respect**, we reinforce the belief that every young person has dignity and worth.

Pupils will be able to learn more about the UNCRC and our Rights Respecting Schools work at upcoming Parent/Carer Information Evenings, and by exploring the resources below:

- [Children's Rights Leaflet – Parent Club](#)
- [UNCRC Summary – UNICEF UK](#)

To help drive this work forward, we are also launching a **new Pupil Group** next week. We would encourage as many pupils as possible to get involved. This group will provide an excellent opportunity to meet with others, plan creative activities, and champion children's rights across our school.

The group will meet **every second Wednesday at lunchtime in Room 224** (top floor, Humanities corridor). We are excited to see how our young people will lead the way in shaping a school community rooted in inclusivity, kindness, respect, and a strong sense of belonging.

Flu Vaccinations

A reminder that NHS will be in school on Thursday 25 & Friday 26 September. Consent forms will be handed out in Registration Classes next week, so please check your child's schoolbag. Please ask pupils to return the completed consent forms to their Registration Teacher or directly to the Main Office by Monday 8 September. On the vaccination day, it can be an administrative headache for the nursing staff if they are trying to receive consent over the phone, so please be vigilant in getting these forms returned.

Mobile Phone Policy

A reminder that we ask that phones be switched off and in bags during **all** lessons and that pupils are not permitted to take their phones with them if they have asked to go to the toilet. Pupils can have access to their phones at break and lunchtime. In wellbeing classes, we will be talking to pupils about the respectful and responsible use of mobile technology. This will encourage our pupils to positively embrace mobile technology to enhance learning now and, in the future, whilst helping to protect everyone in our school community from the possible disruptive and harmful consequences of misuse.

Commemoration Event at Stirling Castle



On Tuesday, fifteen of our senior pupils had the privilege of attending the **Victory in Asia Memorial Day** at Stirling Castle. This special event marked the **80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Asia**, providing an opportunity to reflect on the past while promoting the importance of peace in our world today.

During the morning, pupils learned about the work of the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission** and discovered the stories of local soldiers who served during the conflict. They also took part in a symbolic activity by attempting to fold origami peace cranes — a gesture widely recognised as a symbol of hope and peace. Afterwards, pupils explored the castle and visited several exhibits linked to the Second World War, deepening their understanding of the historical context.

In the afternoon, our group was welcomed to a **special reception in the Chapel Royal**, where they had the honour of meeting representatives from the US Consulate and hearing powerful talks, including accounts of the experiences of the **2nd Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders** in the Far East. This was a meaningful and memorable day for our young people, giving them the chance not only to learn about history, but also to reflect on the values of remembrance, peace, and international friendship.

Extracurricular Clubs at McLaren High School

We are delighted to share with you the wide range of extracurricular clubs and activities on offer at McLaren High School this session. You can view the full list of opportunities by clicking on the link below:

[Extracurricular Clubs 25-26](#)

Taking part in clubs is a wonderful way for our young people to make new friends, develop skills, build confidence, and strengthen their sense of belonging within our school community. In particular, we would expect all of our new S1 pupils to get involved in at least one club as part of their wider McLaren experience. I want to extend my thanks to the staff, parents and adult volunteers who freely give their time and energy to run and support these activities – your commitment makes an enormous difference to the life of our school.

Rugby at McLaren – Be Inspired!

We are delighted to celebrate the success of former pupil **Eva Donaldson**, who is currently representing **Scotland in the Women's Rugby World Cup** – an incredible achievement and an inspiration to all our young players. Here at McLaren, we are proud to continue building a strong rugby culture for both boys and girls:

- **S1–S6 Rugby Training**
🕒 Tuesdays, 4.00–5.00pm at the Primary School Pitch, led by McLaren Rugby Club coaches. New players and experienced players all welcome!
- **Youth Training**
🕒 Saturdays, 9.00–10.30am at the Primary School Pitch.
- **Family Touch Rugby**
🕒 Fridays, 6.00–7.00pm at Doune Park – a great way to get everyone involved!

Practical Info

- Mouth guards are available from Room 119 (Miss Rolfe).
- Join the Rugby Google Classroom with code **egsudu5**.
- Any questions? Please speak to your PE teacher or Miss Rolfe.

Duke of Edinburgh Award – Sign up Now

Opportunities are now open for **S4–S6 pupils** to sign up for the **Silver and Gold levels of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award** this session. The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a fantastic opportunity for our young people. It helps pupils to:

- Build confidence and resilience
- Develop leadership and teamwork skills
- Take part in exciting new challenges and outdoor adventures
- Strengthen applications for college, university, apprenticeships, and employment

How to Apply

- QR code links to registration forms can be found on posters in Room 113 and on the DofE Notice Board (ground floor corridor).
- Places are **strictly limited** and will be confirmed once the registration fee has been paid.

- For more details, please speak to **Mr Milligan**.

School Choir – Join the Music 🎵

Our **School Choir** will be starting up again on **Monday lunchtimes from 1st September**.

We are on the lookout for **new members from S1–S6** – so whether your child is an experienced singer or just keen to give it a try, they are very welcome.

- **Taster session:** Monday at 1.40pm
- **No experience required** – just bring your enthusiasm for singing.

Pupil Shout Outs

Climbing Success for Ember Mulhearn



We are delighted to share Ember's incredible climbing journey this year. She has already achieved the amazing feat of becoming both the **Under 19 Irish and Scottish Lead Champion** – a fantastic accomplishment. As part of Team GB, Ember has proudly represented Great Britain in the boulder discipline at European Cups and Championships in Portugal, Italy, and Hungary this spring and early summer.

The lead (roped) season is now underway, and Ember is continuing to shine on the international stage. She has already competed in Italy, will travel to Slovakia this weekend for the European Championships, and is set to compete in Austria (September) and France (October).

Ember is truly embracing every step of this exciting journey, and we are so proud of her achievements.

Celebrating Success at McLaren High School

At McLaren High School, we are immensely proud of our amazing and talented pupils who achieve excellence not only in school, but also within the local community and on national and international stages. Their successes — whether in academics, the arts, sport, leadership, or service — reflect the hard work, commitment, and creativity of our young people.

We are always eager to hear about these fantastic achievements and to celebrate them as a school community. To help us do this, we encourage parents and carers to share any success stories with us using the form below. By recognising and promoting these accomplishments, we can shine a spotlight on the many ways our pupils make a positive difference and inspire others.

Celebrating pupil success is an important part of our ethos at McLaren, as it strengthens our values of **inclusivity, community, kindness, and respect**, ensuring that every achievement is valued and every young person feels a sense of pride and belonging.

<https://forms.gle/QaHeFumjzXopjCFL6>

Free School Meals & Clothing and Footwear Grant

If you have a school age child and are on a low income, you may be entitled to support with school meals, clothing and footwear.

[Free School Meals & Clothing Grant](#)

Educational Maintenance Allowance

This is a payment of £30 a week, for young people who remain in school **after their 16th birthday** and meet the eligibility criteria.

Educational Maintenance Allowance

Quote for the Weekend

‘Champions keep playing until they get it right.’

Martina Navratilova

If you have any questions in relation to this update or any other school matter then please do not hesitate to be in touch with us @ mclarenhs@stirling.gov.uk or on 01877 330156.

Kind regards,

Marc Fleming
Head Teacher