



'Rooted in Nature, United in Community, Growing in Kindness.'

Head Teacher Friday Blog (13) – 21 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this Friday update finds you and your families well as we reach the halfway point of Term 2. We wish our S4–S6 students the very best as they start their Senior Phase Assessment Block next week, and we hope they feel fully supported throughout the process. It is essential that they take time to engage with the feedback provided and reflect on the next steps in their learning journey.

As we begin to prepare for the holiday season, you will find information below outlining the arrangements for our Christmas Ceilidhs and our Community Christmas Concert. These events are always highlights of the school year and offer a wonderful opportunity to highlight the exceptional musical talent of our young people.

Important Dates

Monday 24 November at 6.00pm – Parent Council Meeting. Held in school in the McLaren Room, just off Main Reception and via Google Meeting Link: meet.google.com/smr-osfe-ccw.

St Andrew's Ceilidh Night

A St Andrew's Ceilidh Night will be held on Saturday 20 November to help raise funds for Fia Wadkin and Ossian de Artotxa Dougall (S6) as they prepare for their World Challenge expedition. The event will take place in the Rural Hall in Doune from 7.30pm to 11pm. There will be a raffle on the night, and guests are invited to bring their own bottle.

To book tickets or find out more, please email kerrywalker2000@yahoo.com. This is a life-changing opportunity for Fia and Ossian, and we hope to fill the hall for what promises to be an excellent evening of music, dancing, and community support.

Opportunity to Join Our Team at Katrine House

We are delighted to share that an advert is now live for a Support for Learning Assistant (SLA) position within Katrine House at McLaren High School. This is an excellent opportunity to join our dynamic and dedicated team who work every day to support young people with complex additional support needs.

At McLaren High School, we are incredibly proud of the nurturing, inclusive environment we have built within Katrine House. Our staff work closely with pupils to ensure they feel safe, supported, and empowered to achieve their full potential. The successful candidate will play a vital role in this; contributing to meaningful learning experiences and helping our young people thrive both in and beyond the classroom.

If you have a passion for supporting learners, a commitment to inclusion, and the desire to make a genuine difference in young people's lives, we would be delighted to hear from you.

You can find full details and apply via the link below:

[Support for Learning Assistant - McLaren High School - 101540 - 449854 | Stirling Council | myjobscotland](#)

Book Trust's Bookbuzz Initiative

Our S1 pupils were thrilled this week to receive a brand-new book of their choice through the Book Trust's **Bookbuzz** initiative. Each young person selected a title from a curated list of sixteen high-quality, contemporary books, and the excitement was clear as they opened them for the first time. It has been wonderful to see how engaged they have been with their reading — in fact, during Mrs Wilson's DEAR session on Wednesday afternoon, her class was so absorbed you could quite literally have heard a pin drop!

A special thank you to our **PTA** for their generous support in making this opportunity possible. Their continued commitment to enriching the learning experiences of our pupils is greatly appreciated. As always, my thanks also go to our staff teams for taking the time to talk about reading, recommend books, and share their enthusiasm. Their passion plays a key role in helping develop a strong reading culture across the school.

Christmas Dances

Our Christmas Dances are a much-loved tradition at McLaren High School and provide a fantastic opportunity for pupils to celebrate the start of the festive season. These events are always well attended, and we are very grateful to our staff who kindly volunteer their time to supervise.

Tickets will be available to purchase via ParentPay from today. We hope to see many of our pupils joining in the festivities and encourage families to support their child in attending. For our Junior Dances (S1–S4), the dress code is smart-casual, while the Senior Dance (S5–S6) is a more formal event, with many pupils choosing Highland dress or elegant attire.

Festive Activity Dates

- **S1/2 Dance** – Wednesday 10 December: 6pm–8pm (£5)
- **S3/4 Dance** – Thursday 11 December: 6pm–8:30pm (£5)
- **S5/6 Dance** – Wednesday 17 December: 6:30pm–9pm (£10)
- **Thursday 18 December** – Community Christmas Concert, 7pm (£5), with an **Art Department Exhibition** from 4pm–7pm

Help Your Child 'ACHIEVE' with Exam Preparation

As we approach the S4-S6 Formal Exam Diet next week, I also want to remind parents about ACHIEVE, an online revision resource designed specifically for Scottish students. ACHIEVE offers digital courses that break down key topics and concepts, with clear explanations, illustrations, and hundreds of links to free resources, including SQA exam questions and solutions. Interactive assessments help students gauge their understanding, identify strengths, and target areas for improvement. Using ACHIEVE can boost pupils' confidence, helping them prepare more effectively for exams.

Benefits of an ACHIEVE Student Account:

- **Comprehensive Study Resources:** Digital textbooks cover a range of National 5 and Higher courses.
- **Interactive Assessments:** Instant feedback helps students check their understanding.
- **Self-Evaluation Toolkit:** Allows students to identify strengths and focus on areas for growth.

- **Extended Learning:** Access to carefully selected web links by subject specialists.
- **Exam Technique Practice:** SQA past paper questions and solutions provide valuable practice.

Pupils can sign up using the link below, and the access link is shared on Google Classroom. If they have any trouble logging in, please contact Mr. Campbell, Depute Head Teacher.

<https://achieve.hashtag-learning.co.uk>

Supported Study Sessions for Senior Pupils – S4-S6

A reminder that study support sessions will once again be running after school for senior pupils. These sessions have been extremely valuable in previous years, providing pupils with a focused space in school to work on their revision, receive support from staff, and prepare effectively for their assessments.

Supported study offers a range of benefits for pupils. It allows them to:

- **Access help and guidance** from teachers in a supportive environment.
- **Work collaboratively** with peers who are revising for the same subjects.
- **Structure their revision time** more effectively, reducing last-minute stress.
- **Build confidence** through regular, focused study sessions.

We strongly encourage all senior pupils to take advantage of this opportunity to help them achieve their best in the forthcoming assessments.

DYW Opportunities

Please click [here](#) for local job, apprenticeship and career opportunities for young people in our local area.

Pupil Shout Outs

YPI Excellence

I would like to give a very special shout-out to three of our S5 pupils — **Ben Black, Nathan Thomas, and Aidan McDonnell** — for the outstanding way they represented McLaren High School as part of their Youth Philanthropy Initiative project.

We received wonderful feedback from **Paul at Action in Mind**, who had the pleasure of meeting with the group earlier this week. He shared that they were *“fantastic to deal with, really well-prepared and a credit to themselves and the school.”*

This is high praise and very well deserved. Ben, Nathan, and Aidan—thank you for your professionalism, maturity, and dedication to your chosen charity. You exemplify the spirit of YPI and reflect the values we are proud to see in our young people. Well done to all three of you!

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

‘We must believe that we are gifted for something, and that this thing, at whatever cost, must be attained.’

Marie Curie

Kind regards,

Marc Fleming
Head Teacher