

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

Head Teacher Friday Blog (14) – 28 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we approach the end of November, the festive season is beginning to appear on the horizon, hopefully bringing with it a sense of excitement and anticipation. With only three weeks remaining until the Christmas Break, it feels like the right moment to pause and reflect on the hard work, dedication and community spirit that continue to shine across McLaren High School.

I have been particularly impressed with how our Senior Pupils have conducted themselves throughout the current exam diet. Their focus, determination and mature approach are a real credit to themselves and to the school. Alongside this, it has been wonderful to see so many of our senior learners taking advantage of the Wednesday evening study sessions. This week, numbers were especially strong, with pupils working purposefully across five classrooms in the Maths and ICT corridor. My thanks go to the staff who have given their time so willingly to support these sessions— their commitment makes a significant difference to our young people.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the members of our Extended Leadership Team, who have generously supported the smooth running of exams by assisting with invigilation during their non-contact time. Their professionalism and teamwork are greatly valued.

Important Dates

Thursday 11 December - 1st S1 Data Drop to Parents

Thursday 18 December – Art Exhibition, 4pm-7pm and Christmas Concert 7pm, McLaren High School Assembly Hall

School Contact List

Please find below a link to a helpful document containing useful contact details for school staff who you may need to contact at different points in the school year. This is also available on the school website.

[Contact List](#)

Report from the McLaren Parent Council Chair

The November Parent Council meeting was a whirlwind of productivity on Monday! In just over an hour, we accomplished quite a bit.

Firstly, we finalized our parent-friendly constitution with a simple one-word adjustment. Look for it on the school website soon!

Next, Mr. Campbell introduced us to new Pupil Support Case Studies that will soon be available online. These case studies offer parents a valuable glimpse into pupil support at our school. Plus, a

comprehensive email contact list for all academic departments will be posted alongside them on the school website.

Lastly, we delved into the important topic of Home and Family Learning, which research shows, has a very significant impact on pupil attainment! We identified several areas for collaboration between the parent council and the school. To better understand parent needs, we'll be sending out a questionnaire early in the New Year.

Mark your calendars for our next meeting on January 26, 2026. We'll focus on the Home & Family Learning Questionnaire and also start planning our Internet Safety Evening for Parents, scheduled for the spring. We encourage you to join us and share your thoughts!

St Andrew's Ceilidh Night

A St Andrew's Ceilidh Night will be held on Saturday 29 November to help raise funds for Fia Watkin 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.

Christmas Dances

A reminder that 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. 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

Festive Jumper Day & Food Parcel Appeal

As in previous years, we are once again creating **food parcels** for local families to be delivered during the last week of term. On **Monday 15th December**, we will host our annual **Festive Jumper Day**, and pupils are encouraged to wear something festive over their school uniform. Alongside the fun, we are asking each year group to contribute a suggested donation to help fill our parcels—though all contributions are very welcome.

Suggested Donations by Year Group

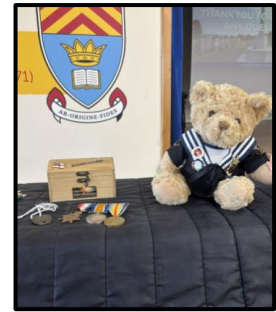
- **S1:** Tins of soup
- **S2:** Tinned meat, tinned macaroni, tinned Bolognese, etc.

- **S3:** Pasta or pasta sauces
- **S4:** Tinned fruit or vegetables
- **S5:** Biscuits or selection boxes
- **S6:** Pasta or pasta sauces

Thank you in advance for your generosity—your donations make a real difference to families in our community and help spread festive cheer.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Visit

On Tuesday, we were delighted to welcome a volunteer from the **Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)**, who delivered a powerful and informative presentation to all of S2, along with some S1 and S3 classes. The visit was expertly organised by **Ms McCormick**, and we are grateful for her efforts in bringing this valuable learning opportunity to our pupils.



During the session, pupils learned about a former McLaren High School pupil who lost his life during the Second World War, whose father also served our school community as a chemistry teacher. This personal connection made the history particularly meaningful, helping pupils understand the profound impact of global events on local families and communities.

The speaker also explained the vital role of the CWGC in remembering those who died in conflict and preserving war graves and memorials around the world. Pupils were introduced to an app that allows them to locate their nearest war memorials and explore historical records, including how to search for relatives on the CWGC website.

Visits such as these are incredibly important—they deepen our pupils' understanding of history, encourage empathy, and help young people make meaningful connections between the past and the world they live in today. They also enrich the curriculum by bringing learning to life through real stories, expert insight, and powerful reminders of the importance of remembrance. We extend our sincere thanks to the CWGC volunteer and to Ms McCormick for providing this thoughtful and engaging learning experience.

Book Week Scotland Celebrations



Mrs Wilson has shown exceptional dedication in organising a fantastic programme of events to help our BGE pupils celebrate **Book Week Scotland**, which took place from 17–23 November. Her commitment to promoting reading across the school has ensured that pupils enjoyed a rich and memorable experience throughout the week.

Our S2 pupils had a brilliant time interviewing staff about their reading habits, sparking thoughtful conversations and showcasing just how much reading is valued across our school community. Pupils also took part in an engaging **Authors Live** event and enjoyed a lively **'First Lines'** activity, where they rated the opening lines of novels and discussed what would make them want to read on.

To top it off, the **Bookbuzz** books for S1 arrived just in time to be included in the celebrations — a direct result of the significant preparation and organisation Mrs Wilson put into introducing and coordinating this initiative.

A huge thank you to Mrs Wilson for her hard work, creativity, and passion. Her efforts have brought Book Week Scotland to life for our young people and helped to foster a love of reading across our school.

Paired Reading Scheme

Our Paired Reading Scheme continues to be a real highlight of the week. On Monday and Wednesday mornings, a dedicated group of S6 pupils have been giving their time during registration to sit with ten carefully selected S1 pupils, reading together and building confidence gradually.

This has been a genuinely positive shared experience. The S6 pupils have demonstrated exceptional commitment, patience, and encouragement, helping to create a calm, nurturing atmosphere where their S1 partners feel supported and able to thrive. The impact is clear—this approach is proven to boost confidence and develop key literacy skills.

I am incredibly proud of our S6 mentors for their maturity and compassion, and equally proud of our S1 pupils, many of whom find literacy challenging but continue to show wonderful determination. Thanks to Ben Hart, Gordon Crichton, Tabitha Mackenzie, Holly Frame, Tilly Kunz, Sarah Johnston, Lieke Van De Coterlet, Sam Ashworth, Alicia Tait and Isabella Kennedy for being such amazing ambassadors. My thanks also goes to Mrs Jackson who has shown great dedication in supporting this great initiative.

Bringing Skills for Work to Life



Forth Valley College visited Mr Anderson and our Technical Department to deliver an exciting STEM Augmented Reality Welding Workshop. This innovative experience brought the world of welding to life for our young people, offering an engaging and highly educational insight into a key industry skill.

Across six sessions, 44 pupils took part in hands-on learning that linked directly to Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and potential future career pathways. Pupils used an AR welding mask, protective gloves and a realistically weighted TIG welding electrode to practise welding techniques. Inside the mask, they experienced real-time simulation and instant feedback, with the software assessing accuracy, technique and speed.

To progress to welding with real metal in college courses, learners must achieve a score of 90%. We are delighted that our pupils rose to the challenge—most achieved over 90%, with the highest score reaching an impressive **97%**. Those with the strongest overall performance across all welds were awarded a medal from the college. This was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to apply STEM skills in a practical context and to gain insight into pathways within engineering and the wider world of work. Our thanks go to Forth Valley College for providing such a valuable and inspiring experience.

DYW Opportunities

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

Pupil Shout Outs

Gymnastics Success for Stella Currie (S2)

A huge well done to Stella, who travelled to all the way to Surrey to compete in the British Finals of the Bronze Classic Challenge, proudly representing Scotland in gymnastics. Stella performed brilliantly, achieving the fourth-highest vault **score** of the entire competition. What an incredible achievement and a wonderful experience – we are all so proud of her.

McLaren High Pupils Compete in Schools Show-Jumping Competition

On Sunday 16 November, five of our pupils represented McLaren High School at a **Schools Show-Jumping competition** in Fife. They competed both as individuals and, in some cases, as part of teams.

Although we did not achieve any placings this time, our pupils showed **determination, resilience, and great sportsmanship** throughout the day. Each pupil brought their own experience and expectations to the competition, and they should all be incredibly proud of their efforts.

- **Gracie Mackie** – competing in her first ever event!
- **Bonnie McCallum**
- **Annika Latimer**
- **Tara Lee**
- **Amie Stewart**

A special mention goes to those competing in the first class, who were up bright and early with alarms set for **5am**! We are also hugely grateful to the **parents and helpers** who supported, transported, and cared for both pupils and ponies throughout the day. Your support makes events like this possible.

Dance Superstars Shine at the Albert Halls



A huge well done to our talented dancers who competed last Wednesday at the Albert Halls in Stirling. The commitment they have shown—practising every week and even choreographing their own routines—truly paid off on stage. A special thank you to our fantastic senior dancers for supporting and helping to create the junior routine. Your leadership makes all the difference.

Amelie & Sophie – 1st Place Senior Duet, Junior Small Group – 1st Place, Quaide, Lavinia & Alixe – 3rd Place

Senior Trio, Amelie, Sophie & Anna – 2nd Place Senior Trio

Congratulations to all involved—you represented McLaren High School brilliantly, and we are incredibly proud of you! Keep dancing and keep shining.

U15 Regional Football Team

Congratulations to **Autumn Luiti Adams**, who has been selected for the final squad of the U15 Regional Team. Autumn impressed coaches across two highly competitive trials, earning her place from an initial group of around 60 players. This is a tremendous achievement — well done, Autumn! We are all incredibly proud of you.

Girls' Football

Well done to our **S1/S2 Girls' Football Team**, who recently took part in a tournament at Stirling High School. The team showed great determination and teamwork throughout, securing a win, a draw, and a loss across their matches. A fantastic team performance — congratulations to all involved!

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

'Don't count the days, make the days count.'

Muhammad Ali

Kind regards,

Marc Fleming
Head Teacher