



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

Head Teacher Friday Blog (23) – 20 February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important Dates

26 February – 2nd S2 Report 9 (Data Drop)

4 March – S2 Parents' Information Evening 1630-1900

Supporting Our Senior Phase Pupils

As we maintain a strong focus on supporting our senior phase pupils as they approach a crucial stage in their academic journey. With just **29 teaching days remaining until study leave begins**, it is important that pupils stay focused on completing coursework and begin to establish a consistent and purposeful study routine each evening.

Parents and carers play an important role during this time. Providing a calm, well-structured environment for revision—free from distractions and with clear routines—can make a real difference in helping young people prepare with confidence.

Study leave will begin on **Tuesday 21 April**, and **Mr Macmillan, our SQA Coordinator**, will be in touch shortly with further information about the upcoming examinations. By continuing to work together, we can ensure our young people feel well supported and ready to achieve their very best.

S3 to S6 Option Choices

Below are the deadlines for option choices for next year for our current S2 to S5 pupils:

- Monday 23 Feb - Deadline for S3 into S4 Options Form
- Friday 27 Feb - Deadline for S4 into S5 and S5 into S6 Preference Form
- Tuesday 3 March - Anticipated date for issue of S2 into S3 Options Form
- Wednesday 4 March, 4pm & 7pm - Options Information Sessions at S2 Parents Evening
- Tuesday 10 March - Anticipated date for issue of S4/5 into S5/6 Options Form
- Wednesday 11 March, 5pm - Anticipated date / time for online Options Information Session for S4/5 Parents

DYW Opportunities

Please click the link to view opportunities, jobs and courses for young people in our local area.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fvNx0SI8ISW2u2HZudx_GhFyuzUyljGq/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=115414747043687460877&rtpof=true&sd=true

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting young people to achieve their very best, we are continuing to use **ACHIEVE**, an online study and revision platform designed specifically for National 5 and Higher courses. Below is a parent-friendly overview of how the platform works and how it supports learning at home. <https://achieve.hashtag-learning.co.uk>

What is ACHIEVE?

ACHIEVE is an interactive online learning tool that supports pupils studying National 5 and Higher qualifications. It is designed to complement classroom learning and help pupils revise effectively at their own pace. It provides:

- Clear, structured course content
- Practice questions with instant feedback
- Self-evaluation tools to build confidence and independence
- Motivation through badges and progress tracking

Getting Started

Pupils can access ACHIEVE online by:

1. Visiting the website
2. Creating an account using their email address
3. Entering the McLaren High School code
4. Selecting their National 5 or Higher subjects

They can then join their class using a code provided by their teacher. Once set up, everything is organised by subject and level.

How Pupils Use ACHIEVE

1 – Building Knowledge

The Learn section works like a digital textbook.

- Courses are divided into Units, Topics and key Concepts.
- Content is clearly explained and illustrated.
- Pupils can work through areas at their own pace.

This is an excellent starting point when revising a topic or catching up on missed work.

2 - Assess – Practising and Testing Understanding

The **Assess** feature allows pupils to test their knowledge and receive instant feedback.

There are two types of assessments:

- **Teacher-assigned tests** – set by class teachers
- **Self-selected practice assessments** – chosen by pupils themselves

At the end of each assessment, pupils receive:

- An overall score
- Feedback on strengths
- Identification of areas for improvement

This helps pupils focus their revision where it will have the greatest impact.

3 - Self-Evaluate – Building Awareness and Independence

ACHIEVE encourages pupils to reflect on their learning using a simple “traffic light” system:

- **Green** – Confident and secure
- **Amber** – Some understanding, but not fully confident
- **Red** – Needs further work

This supports pupils in taking ownership of their learning and developing the important skill of identifying next steps.

Motivation Through Badges and Streaks

To encourage consistent effort, ACHIEVE includes:

Badges

Pupils earn badges automatically when they answer questions correctly. Teachers can also award badges for effort, progress, leadership and high-quality work. There are 40 levels to work through – giving pupils something to aim for.

Streaks

A “streak” tracks consecutive correct answers. If a pupil answers correctly, their streak grows. If they get one wrong, it resets. This gamified element helps to build engagement and resilience.

How Parents Can Support at Home

You can help by:

- Encouraging short, regular revision sessions
- Asking your child which areas are “red” or “amber”
- Celebrating progress, badges and streaks
- Supporting them to use assessment feedback to guide their revision

Regular use of ACHIEVE, alongside classwork and homework, can significantly strengthen understanding and exam confidence.

At McLaren High School, we are committed to equipping our young people with the tools, strategies and confidence they need to succeed. ACHIEVE is one of the ways we are supporting them to take ownership of their learning and maximise their potential. If you have any questions about how your child is using ACHIEVE in their subject areas, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Campbell at the school.

Pupil Shout Outs

We are absolutely delighted to share that **Ruby Williamson (S1)** has been selected for the **Scottish Waterpolo U14 National Development Squad** — a tremendous achievement at such an early stage in her McLaren journey.

This is a fantastic recognition of Ruby’s talent, commitment and hard work in the pool. She is (quite rightly!) super excited about the opportunity, and we are incredibly proud of her success.

As part of her involvement, there may be one or two days across the year where Ruby is required to attend national training camps or competitions. Well done, Ruby — we look forward to following your progress.

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

'Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.'

George Bernard Shaw

Kind regards,

Marc Fleming
Head Teacher