



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

Head Teacher Friday Blog (24) – 27 February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Today we marked **Purple Friday** – an important moment in our school calendar and one that speaks directly to the heart of who we are as a community.

Purple Friday is a national day of awareness and celebration that supports LGBTQ+ young people across Scotland. Led by organisations such as LGBT Youth Scotland, it encourages schools, workplaces and communities to stand together in visible solidarity. By wearing purple and talking openly about inclusion, we send a clear message: everyone is welcome here, everyone belongs here, and everyone deserves to feel safe, respected and valued.

At McLaren High School, this is not simply a symbolic gesture. It is rooted firmly in our core values of **Inclusivity, Community and Kindness**.

- **Inclusivity** means creating an environment where difference is embraced and diversity is celebrated.
- **Community** reminds us that we are stronger together and that every individual contributes to the richness of our school.
- **Kindness** calls on us to act with empathy, to challenge prejudice and to look out for one another every single day.

Marking Purple Friday gives us the opportunity to reflect on how we live these values in our classrooms, corridors and wider community. It is about ensuring that every young person knows they are seen, supported and able to thrive.

As we look ahead, our focus also turns increasingly to the upcoming SQA examinations, which begin on **22 April**. The countdown is well underway, and this is a crucial period for our senior pupils. Success in these final weeks depends on consistent effort, careful preparation and strong partnership between school and home.

It is important that we all work collectively to ensure our young people are as well prepared as possible. This includes:

- Completing assignments to the highest standard
- Meeting all internal deadlines
- Finalising any SQA project work linked to courses
- Attending supported study and making effective use of revision time

When we work together — staff, parents and pupils — we create the conditions for success. Clear communication, encouragement at home and high expectations in school will make a real difference during this important time.

Finally, we are very much looking forward to welcoming our S2 parents and carers on **Wednesday 4 March**. This is a valuable opportunity to meet with you to discuss your child's progress, outlining their strengths and identifying next steps in learning. These conversations are central to ensuring that every young person continues to grow in confidence, capability and ambition.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our school community. Together, through inclusivity, community and kindness, we ensure that McLaren High School remains a place where every young person can achieve and belong

Important Dates

4 March – S2 Parents' Information Evening 1630-1900

S3 to S6 Option Choices

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

- Friday 27 Feb (today) - 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

Scottish Apprenticeship Week

Next week we will be celebrating **Scottish Apprenticeship Week**. This year's theme, "**Working for Scotland**," highlights the incredible variety of career paths available to our young people, from Modern Apprenticeships to Graduate Apprenticeships that offer a university degree with no tuition fees and a full-time salary.

Throughout the week, our pupils will be engaging in daily digital workshops, "myth-busting" quizzes, and live vacancy searches during registration. We know that parents and carers are the biggest influencers on a young person's career journey, so we invite you to learn more about these opportunities alongside us.

Join the Online Parent Information Session: To help you navigate the different levels and benefits of apprenticeships, a dedicated online session is being held for parents and carers by DYW Scotland. You can register and join via the link below:

[Register for the Apprenticeship Parent Info Session Here](#)

Latest local vacancies can be found at [Apprenticeships.scot](https://www.apprenticeships.scot/).

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&oid=115414747043687460877&rtfpo=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>

Pupil Shout Outs

Celebrating Ember Mulhearn's (S6) International Success



I am absolutely delighted to share some fantastic news about one of our S6 pupils, Ember. She has been selected to represent **Great Britain** in the Under 19s boulder discipline for the third consecutive season. This is an exceptional achievement and a testament to her dedication, talent and unwavering commitment to her sport.

Representing GB once again, Ember will compete internationally in Portugal, Austria and Belgium, with the exciting prospect of the European Championships beginning in April. To compete at this level is remarkable; to do so while successfully managing the demands of senior school life makes it even more impressive.

Bouldering is one of the most dynamic and technical disciplines of competition climbing, governed internationally by the International Federation of Sport Climbing. To be selected repeatedly for Great Britain reflects Ember's resilience, focus and elite performance on the national stage.

As Ember prepares to leave McLaren High School later this year to dedicate a year or two to her climbing before progressing to university, it feels particularly important to recognise the collective effort that has supported her journey.

My sincere thanks go to Miss Casey and Miss Close for their encouragement and belief in Ember's ambitions. Thank you also to our teaching staff for ensuring learning materials were shared promptly, allowing Ember to continue her studies between training sessions and competitions — sometimes even in the car en route to events. And to our reception team, whose warm words of encouragement never went unnoticed — thank you for playing your part.

Balancing the pressures of school alongside international training and competition is no small task. Throughout this journey, Ember has developed extraordinary resilience, impressive time management skills, and a maturity beyond her years. Most importantly, she has grown into a confident and happy young person who exemplifies determination and grace.

Ember, we are immensely proud of you. You represent not only Great Britain, but the very best of McLaren High School. We look forward to following your progress this season and cheering you on every step of the way. Warmest congratulations Ember.

Good Luck, Miss Ainsworth

We are absolutely delighted to share some very special news about one of our own. Miss Ainsworth flew to America this week to represent Scotland in rugby league — and will be earning her very first international cap.

This is an extraordinary achievement and a true testament to her dedication, talent and commitment to her sport. To reach international level is something many aspire to, and we could not be prouder that a member of our McLaren High School staff is achieving this honour.

Miss Ainsworth is a fantastic role model for our young people, demonstrating the power of hard work, resilience and ambition — values we encourage in all of our pupils. I know our entire school community will join me in wishing her every success. We will be cheering you on every step of the way, Miss Ainsworth — good luck from us all!

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

‘Diversity isn’t just skin deep; it’s cultural, religious, political and beyond.

Barack Obama

44th US President

Kind regards,

Marc Fleming
Head Teacher