



JAMES GILLESPIE'S HIGH SCHOOL

Interim Head teacher / Ceannard: Neil McCallum B.Ed (Hons), SQH

Address: 120 Warrender Park Road, Edinburgh EH9 1DD
e-mail: admin@jamesgillespies.edin.sch.uk
Website: jamesgillespies.co.uk
Telephone 0131 447 1900

JGHS Parent council 31st January 2024

Staffing

Incoming

Mr Gillies Brown	History
Mrs Kate Bowbelski	Modern Languages
Ms Lucy McVicar	Business Management

Outgoing

Mrs Julie Summers	Modern languages (maternity leave)
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Prelims

The S5/6 prelims have progressed well, and they were complete in the main on Friday 26th January. There are still some assessments taking place for the practical subjects over the course of the week beginning 29th January.

The invigilation team have been very complimentary of the pupils and their focus in the assessments.

School Improvement Planning

I am pleased to share that the School Standards and Quality Report, as well as the school Improvement Plan are now available on the school website at the following address:

[Standards and Quality Report – Àrd-Sgoil Sheumais Ghilleasbuig \(jamesgillespies.co.uk\)](http://jamesgillespies.co.uk)

Homework

The working group is continuing to review the policy and link with faculties for the approach on homework. We are working on resources to support parents and carers to have a clearer understanding on how they can support their young people with homework. We will share the updated policy with parents and carers as soon as we can.

Communication

The communications group have been working on several aspects. These include – Letters to parent's and carers being updated, school app being utilised to share news, messages and the school calendar, the website continues to be progressed and a part of this process we are reviewing the purpose of the website, where information can be found. As these are progressed, we will update all parents and carers.

S6 Study Space

Mr I Porter, DHT, has been linking in with the pupil voice about the availability of space. The S6 have spaces and study booths on the ground floor of the Malala building and are free to access these spaces when there is not a class in the adjoining space. At these times, they can access the additional spaces including the Forum, Library and canteen space in the Sparks building. Mr Porter is linking in with the pupil voice about additional space at Darroch in addition to that already available.

Social space

All year groups have social space to access at break and lunchtime and they are able to access the various buildings across both of our campuses.

Toilets

We have received the quotes for work to install partition walls at the toilets to give privacy for the hand washing facilities. The signage is also being updated to ensure that our pupils know which facilities they are allowed to access. I am hopefully the works will be carried out as soon as is possible.

Work Experience

Pupils begin their work experience education at the end of S3 in PSE, where they engage in research and complete the pre-placement section of the National 5: Self and Work unit. There is then a further PSE work experience insert in the autumn term for all S4 pupils that supports their understanding of the work experience opportunity and their right to take 5 days out of school over their senior phase (S4-S6) from the age of 16 to pursue a self-found placement.

Pupils can be supported in this process by both their PSL and the DYW co-ordinator to help find placements for pupils, where they are not able to access the type of opportunity in the field they would like to enter. All placement paperwork, available to pupils on the whole year group TEAMS page, needs to be completed 4 to 6 weeks prior to the placement start date to allow the DYW team at Edinburgh Council to carry out appropriate health and safety checks. When out on placement, pupils will complete a short enquiry project and will then complete reflection tasks upon their return to school to complete the National 5: Self and Work unit. This should then be submitted to their PSL for accreditation.

Parents Evening.

We will be consulting parents and carers across all year groups in relation to the format of these, for academic session 2024-25. These will then be included in the school calendar, which will be issued to parents and carers in August, as well as being accessible on the school website and app.

Apologies for the short notice for booking appointments for the recent S4 parents and carers consultation evening. Staff absence and some technical issues with the system, delayed the issuing of this information and the opening of the portal for parents and carers to be able to book appointments. We have taken appropriate steps to ensure we do not have this issue going forward.

Parent / Carer Survey

As shared at the last parent council meeting, we will be reintroducing the parent and carer survey. We are currently updating this and I propose to share this with the parent council at the meeting at the end of March. This will allow an opportunity for feedback before it is sent out in the summer term. This will provide feedback to be linked into the School Improvement plan for academic session 2024-25.

School Policies

We are working on a section of the school website, to be able to share all appropriate policies that parents and carers would require access to. We hope to have this in place as soon as is possible. We will then update with new or revised policies as appropriate. As discussed previously we will be seeking feedback from parents and carers in relation to new or revised policies going forward.

Edinburgh Local Heroes Awards

We were nominated in two categories:

- Sustainable School Award – Runner up and highly commended
- Nature Award - Runner up

VEX IQ Robotics Competition

The competition for Scotland is being held at the National Robotarium, Edinburgh, on Tuesday 30th Jan. I am delighted to share that the team won the following:

- Robot Skills Champion Award
- Teamwork Champion Award

As overall winners, they go forward to compete in the British Finals.

Dates

February

- 01 S4 Consultation Evening
- 09 Break for February Holiday (12.55)
- 19 All resume
- 29 Young Musician of the Year.

March

- 06 S5/6 Consultation Evening
- 12 S3 Consultation Evening
- 15-17 S1 residential
- 19 Parent council meeting.
- 21 Mental Health and Wellbeing Information Evening
- 26 Spring Fling
- 27 Spring Fling
- 28 End of term (15.40)

April

- 16 All resume.