



August 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

NEW SESSION 2023/24

It is a pleasure to be writing to you with information about new session 2023/24. All the staff here at Johnstone High School are very much looking forward to welcoming your child/children when term starts on August 16th 2023. My hope for all our pupils is they have a successful and happy school career, getting the most out of all aspects of school life. I believe young people are most likely to do well at school if there is a strong partnership between ourselves and your family. To this end, I would welcome parent/carer support across a range of areas, outlined below.

1. Parent Pay and Parent Portal

Our school, along with many in Renfrewshire, is now 'cashless' and uses ParentPay to allow parents to pay online for school lunches, trips and other school events as they arise. New S1 pupils should have ParentPay details sent through the post by Renfrewshire Council. Please be reassured that no child will go without a school lunch if the system is not yet in place (pupils with free school meals will of course receive their free meal irrespective of this).

Renfrewshire Council also encourages parents to sign up for 'Parent Portal', this is an online method for schools to communicate with parents. Through Parent Portal you can access your child's school details, timetable and attendance records. Parent Portal works with MyAccount, the secure online account from mygov.scot.

From the 16th of August 2023, your child's annual data check will be available to parents and carers ONLINE via Parent Portal. This updates us with a range of important info e.g. your child's emergency contacts – essential if we need to contact you regarding illness or accident.

As we did last session, we will also email S2-6 parents the new session info pack on 16th August. We will also send you an electronic survey to capture your preferences and views on the areas covered in the info pack, including the following:

- Religious observance opt-out
- Litter pick opt-out
- Video/photographic consent
- Parent Council sign up etc

Please note that all S1 will be issued with a paper version of the new session info pack (as we do not yet have S1 parents' email addresses), and any parent of an S2-6 pupil can request a paper pack by calling the office.

If your email address has changed, please let us know by calling the office on 0300 300 1331 – this will ensure the new session info pack is sent to you.

There is more information about Parent Portal (including step by step help on how to create an account) on the Council website. If you have any issues creating a Parent Portal or ParentPay account, please call the school office on 0300 300 1331 and staff will be happy to talk you through the process.

2. First week back arrangements

All pupils will return on Wednesday 16th August at 8.45am (doors open) for an 8.50am start. Pupils should enter via their house group doors, however S1 can enter via the front door for the first week of term.

ARRAN:	canteen door	IONA:	music door
SKYE:	front door	MULL:	dance studio door

On arrival, there will be posters directing pupils to which classrooms to attend for period one registration. During Wednesday period one, all pupils will be issued with a fresh copy of their timetable. Lessons start as normal Wednesday period 2.

3. Support for new S1 pupils

On their first day, S1 pupils will be welcomed from 8.40am onwards at the front door and escorted to the canteen/assembly hall.

For the first couple of weeks, S6 befrienders will chaperone the new S1 from class-to-class, and S1 will use the assembly hall for breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils will be dismissed at 3.40pm as normal at the end of the first day. At that point, any young people travelling on school contract transport will be accompanied to the bus bay.

Parents/carers of S1 pupils, please note the start and end times of the school day:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday	8.50am – 3.40pm
Wednesday, Friday	8.50am – 2.50pm

4. Beginning of the school day

A warning bell will go at 8.45am to signal to pupils that they should start making their way to class via their house group door. Doors will open at 8.45am. The only exception to this is for young people who would like to access the breakfast service.

5. Breaks and lunchtimes

We do encourage pupils to access the outdoor spaces at break and lunch as much as possible. Please ensure your child comes to school with appropriate footwear and jacket/coat for our typically changeable Scottish weather.

No pupils should leave school grounds at break. Please note that **first years should not leave school grounds at lunchtime until September weekend**, and older pupils who

choose to do so should discuss this with their parents first. Pupils who have permission from their parents to go to the local shops at lunchtime must behave in an appropriate manner whilst in the local community.

6. Visitor/Parent access to the school

We try to ensure Johnstone High School is a welcoming environment for visitors and parents/carers, however we would appreciate parents/carers contacting us first to make an appointment. All our teaching staff have class commitments and making an appointment ensures parents don't have a long wait to see the appropriate person. Our contact details are at the top of this letter and the school number is 0300 300 1331. Pupils being collected for appointments during the school day should be met by parents/carers at main reception.

7. Extra-curricular provision and booster classes

We will be offering a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities this session, starting over the first few weeks of term. Please encourage your child to sign up. Similarly, each session Johnstone High staff generously give of their time to provide homework clubs and booster classes after school. Once these begin, we will contact you; again, please encourage your child to get involved.

Twice per year we will ask parents and pupils for updates on the wider achievement activities the young people are involved in, both in and out of school. This allows us to celebrate success through our 'colours' programme – youngsters can achieve awards at various levels which leads up to the half colour school tie (silver) or full colour school tie (gold) for pupils who have competed or represented at a national level.

8. High Expectations

We always emphasise high, but realistic expectations for all pupils in Johnstone High School and we would welcome parent/carer reinforcement of these. Our school values underpin these high expectations:

Determination	Friendship
Honesty	Respect
Responsibility	Trust

9. Positive Behaviour

We are committed to supporting all our young people to demonstrate the school values in everything they do, including their behaviour and conduct in school and in the local community. We firmly believe that positive, respectful relationships are at the heart of good behaviour, and to that end we have been moved away from a traditional discipline/behaviour policy to a 'relationships policy'. At the heart of this is a commitment to support our young people to be 'safe, ready and respectful'. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with your child's pastoral teacher (their details are towards the end of the letter).

If any young person gets involved in behaviours in school that cause concern, we will be in touch with families to discuss next steps to support the child and maintain a calm and orderly school environment.

10. School uniform

At Johnstone High School we are an inclusive community where everyone belongs. A key factor in building a strong school community identity is the wearing of school uniform. This is also a safeguarding measure – uniform helps us identify who should and should not be in our school building and campus.

Uniform details are contained in the leaflet included with this letter.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement of your child wearing their school uniform.

We will remind parents and pupils throughout the year about school uniform and when required we will issue pupils with items of uniform to wear. Pupils should also be coming to school with a school bag containing a water bottle and a pencil case.

11. PE department

To be able to take part in PE your child will be required to bring their PE kit on the days they get PE. Please refer to the PE Participation Guidelines which will be included in your online information pack.

12. Attendance and punctuality

There is strong link between attendance at school and achievement. Therefore, please, only keep your child off school if it is absolutely necessary and avoid booking holidays during the session. If we are concerned about your child's attendance or punctuality, we will be in touch with you so we can work together to maximise their progress in school.

Absence notes/calls

Please let the school know by letter or phone call if your child is likely to be absent for some time and give your child a note on their return to school, confirming the reason for absence. If there is no explanation from parents/carers, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

SMS text messaging service

When a pupil is marked absent and the school has received no prior explanation for the absence, parents/carers will be sent a text message. Parents/carers are then asked to contact the school to provide a reason for the absence.

13. Late coming

Pupils are frequently reminded of the importance of being on time for all classes. When a pupil is late for school they should come in through the main door and be issued with a late slip by a senior member of staff. Where a pupil is persistently late without suitable explanation, parents/carers will be contacted by Pastoral Support staff or Depute Head Teacher. If late coming continues beyond this stage, the DHT and Pupil Support teacher will work closely with the family to improve the situation. (Please note that pupils who are late because their school contracted bus is late will still require a late slip but there will, of course, be no further action taken.)

14. S6 registration

Where S6 pupils have no classes at the start of the school day, they do not have to attend school for 8.50am. However, S6 must sign the register at the school office by 9.40am at the latest. S6 also require to sign-out if they leave the school the day so that we have accurate records of who is in the building.

15. Medical issues and health care

Parents should notify the school of any medical requirements or allergies that their child may have. If medication is required it is better if this can be provided outside the school hours but, in cases where it is necessary during the child's time in school, parents should contact the school to make appropriate arrangements.

Please note that school staff are not obliged to give medicine to pupils.

Other than inhalers and epi-pens, pupils should not routinely be carrying medication in school. The office staff will safely store medications for pupils and allow pupils access as required throughout the day. Please contact the school for more information on this – please note that parents will be asked to complete a very short form clarifying dosage etc and giving the school permission to hold the medication. **Similarly, please get in touch with us if your child has a medical condition that requires them to have a pass to quickly access the toilet during lessons.**

Minor accidents are dealt with by the school's qualified first aiders. If a pupil takes ill or has an accident which requires that they be sent home or for treatment, the school will provide first aid and contact parents or carers. Therefore, **it is very important that the school has contact details for all parents or carers and an additional contact person in case parents or carers can't be reached.** This information should be kept up to date. The school will not send younger pupils home from school unaccompanied. In the event of a serious illness or accident, a member of staff will accompany the child to a doctor or hospital and parents or carers will be notified immediately.

Finally, please help us by making sure we have all the information we require to support your child to the best of our ability. Please **ensure that the medical section in your child's online information pack is completed**, and during the course of the school year please get in touch if there are any issues we should know about – illnesses, injuries (particularly if these impact on mobility/ the ability to write), or any other matters that are impacting on your child's health and wellbeing. All such matters will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

16. Homework and Digital Access

Homework can help bridge the gap between school and home and pupils should be receiving increasing amounts of homework as they progress through school towards their SQA qualifications. Our online homework platform is Satchel One and this allows parents to monitor homework being issued and completed. We also use MS Teams to support learning in the class and at home.

If there are any issues at home around access to digital devices or wifi, we will work hard to support families. If you require support around digital access, please contact your child's Pastoral teacher.

17. Litter

There is no excuse for litter not being disposed of appropriately. Parents are requested to encourage their child to dispose of litter correctly. This should apply in and out of school. Please encourage your children to look after our school and surrounding (residential) environment. Each year we receive a number of complaints from local residents about young people dropping litter, and this can cause some distress, particularly to older neighbours. Therefore, we actively encourage pupils to use bins within the school building and in the local community. Johnstone High School will continue to participate in community litter picking exercises throughout the session and there will be more information about this in your new session information pack.

18. Transport, Road Safety and Parental Parking

As you are aware, Beith Road is very busy and occasionally we see or hear reports of Johnstone High pupils taking risks when crossing the road or acting in an unsafe manner. I would appreciate you speaking to your child/children about this too. I would also request your consideration when dropping your child/children off at school. For safety, parents should park some distance from the school. As a result, there will be no parental car access up the hill at the start and end of the school day. Furthermore, the bus companies have requested that cars no longer park across from the bus bays. The buses are struggling to gain access, and this can lead to congestion and potentially an accident.

RESPECTFULLY, PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO PARK/DROP OFF IN THE HUB CAR PARK, AND NOT THE BUS BAY / ROUNDABOUT AREAS.

Home to school bus transport for eligible pupils is provided by Renfrewshire Council and parents should have already applied for this. This can be done via the Renfrewshire Council website. **Please note that the responsibility of ensuring safe and acceptable behaviour remains yours while your child is travelling in the vehicle provided.**

19. Anti-Bullying

Bullying is an unacceptable behaviour. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying. Crucially, however, the school can only act if they know that bullying is taking place. Parents and carers have a role to play in working with the school to tackle bullying behaviour. Bullying can cause stress and anxiety, which can affect a child's health and attainment. If you are concerned about bullying, please contact the school (0300 300 1331) and ask for your child's Pastoral Support teacher.

Crucially, the child should be reminded by both teachers and parents that it is not their fault, they are not to blame. Your support with actions suggested by the school is greatly appreciated to ensure a genuine partnership approach. Our 'Respect For All' policy can be sourced on the school website and was written in consultation with parents, pupils and staff.

What can parents do if it involves texting or social media messaging?

The increasing use of mobile devices has opened up new areas for potential bullying – Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. As a school, we teach pupils through our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme about safe and responsible use of social media, alongside anti-bullying education in PSE and assembly inserts.

As cyber-bullying occurs at home and is out with the control of the school, parents should consider contacting the Police. However, there are a number of practical things parents can do to support their child (in addition to monitoring and supervising their use of technology):

- use the Report Abuse button (if available)
- stop the activity / delete the contact
- block the messages
- never reply
- complain to the service provider
- contact the mobile phone operator
- Keep messages / screen shots and contact the Police

Additional information is available from:

www.antibullying.net
www.betterbehavioursotland.gov.uk
www.childline.org.uk
www.respectme.org.uk

20. Child Protection

Renfrewshire's Child Protection Committee works to ensure that local agencies work together to protect children. It promotes the message that protection of children is a responsibility to be shared by all staff in partnership with the community. In line with Renfrewshire Council's priorities, all staff in Johnstone High School have undergone Child Protection training. This will help to ensure that we can best support our young people. However, it's everyone's job to make sure children in Renfrewshire are safe. If you have concerns about a child's welfare or direct evidence/suspicion of a child being at risk, the only way you can protect the child is to report the concern.

1 st Response Team	-	0300 300 1199 choose option 1
Evenings/Weekends	-	0800 811 505
Police Scotland	-	non emergency number dial 101
Child Protection Line	-	0800 022 3222

In school, the Child Protection Co-ordinator is Mrs O'Malley, depute head teacher (DHT).

21. Contacting us - Our House Structure

Should you need to contact us for any reason, our house structure from August 2022 is as follows:

	DHT	Pastoral
Arran House	Mrs O'Malley	Mr Rainey
Iona House	Ms Cole	Miss McCormack
Mull House	Mr Anderson (acting)	Miss McFadden
Skye House	Mr Henderson	Mr Kennedy

Please call the school office on 0300 300 1331 and the first point of contact is typically the Pastoral teacher. You can also email us via the enquiries line:

johnstonehighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk

22. Final points

There will be a number of items in your new session information pack. This year we are issuing these via your email address, but paper copies of the pack are available on request via the office. Some items require a return - should you choose to do so, you can print off reply slips and send them in via your child, however we recommend that you complete the **survey you will receive via text – this will capture your responses in a ‘one stop shop’**.

The school’s improvement plan and standards and qualities report will be posted on our school website in the Autumn term. Any parent wishing paper copies of these should contact the school office to arrange them to be sent home.

Throughout the session further information will be sent to you via HT updates, texts and other means. In addition to this, our website, twitter feed and new Facebook account all contain a lot of useful information from subject information or school news. Please remember if you have any specific concerns relating to your child/children do not hesitate to call the school, asking for your child’s Pastoral Support teacher in the first instance.

In conclusion, I am looking forward to working with all pupils, parents and staff over the coming session and thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support as we approach session 2023/24.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Hollywood
Head Teacher