



# Christmas Newsletter

Madras College Newsletter

December 2021

## Rector's Message

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I'm delighted to be writing to you in December as we head towards the Christmas holidays and the end of a second school term in our new school. Time flies and it's hard to believe that we are four months into the school session. I'd like to take the chance to thank our young people, families, staff and wider community for your support over the past two terms.

It's easy for us to forget that we have been living through this pandemic for a long time now and I'd like to acknowledge the continuing hard work, support and cooperation from all of our school community that has helped to keep us moving forward safely this session.

Moving from two school buildings into one, effectively merging two schools into one, is a huge undertaking and adjustment for a school community. It has been superb to see our young people from S1-6 thrive in this new environment and have the opportunity to learn together for the first time. We'll continue to identify opportunities to promote this important aspect of school life as we work together to realise our vision of a single site with shared values and a strong ethos.

It is also important for me to recognise the efforts of staff who go above and beyond every day to ensure continuity of learning in what are, at times, challenging conditions. I

know that you'll join me in wishing our staff team a very well-deserved Christmas break.

In reviewing SQA performance from last session it is very pleasing to be able to report positively on work done which resulted in such high levels of attainment for young people across S4-6. Almost 74% of all S4 learners achieved 5 or more National 4 passes, with almost 55% achieving 5 or more at National 5 level. In the senior school, almost 60 % of all learners achieved 5 or more awards at Higher Level at point of leaving with over 95% of leavers going on to a positive post-school destination. After a sustained focus on our most at risk young people, it is pleasing to see a 22% uplift on the young people achieving 5 at National 3 level.



Home Economics News.....	4
Mathematics News .....	6
Modern Languages News.....	6
Music Department News .....	7
ECO Update .....	8
Other News .....	9
Information.....	12

Continued on page 2

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S4 learners have just completed their assessment diet and first experience of sitting assessments in the assembly hall. Assessment performances will be carefully reviewed by teachers to ensure that strengths and areas for development are clearly communicated and shared. Teachers will also be working hard with S5/6 to ensure they are ready for their assessment diet at the end of January 2022. Study Support details have already been shared and are available to view on the school website. Further information on the timing of the S5/6 assessments will come to you prior to the end of this term.

We continue to plan and prepare for the SQA examination diet in April/May 2022. The exam timetable is available to view on the SQA website and can be accessed using the following link. I strongly encourage all S4-6 learners who are following National Qualifications to ensure that their engagement with teachers and coursework remains high and that they consider making full use of resources like study support, which runs at lunchtimes and after school in all subject areas and the range of online resources that are highlighted to them. Taking the time to reflect on progress and address key areas for improvement early, based on feedback from teachers, will make all the difference come April/May 2022.

Throughout the demands of classwork and assessments, all staff are keenly aware that supporting the health & wellbeing of learners throughout the assessment diet is of paramount importance so please do let your child's guidance teacher know if you feel further support is required in this area.

Maintaining high levels of school attendance is as important as ever, especially given current events. Over the last couple of years, the average attendance for Madras College has slipped and for the last couple of school sessions, has been on or below 90% (this equates to more than one day off school every two weeks). It's critical that we work together to address this and ensure that young people are supported to sustain high levels of attendance and good timekeeping for all classes. As one strand of our efforts to improve attendance and reduce absence, I will be writing out to you early next year with a revised draft attendance policy and a summary of attendance/absence for your child as part of our new 'know your number' campaign for improving learner attendance.

Covid-19 mitigations for schools will remain in place following the most recent Scottish Government advice are set to continue in the short term. The school risk-assessment will be updated in line with the most recent guidance from Fife Council's Education and Children's Services directorate. This will remain an active, collaborative document for the foreseeable future and part of our school improvement planning focus. On this, I would like to thank everyone for their support with the mitigations that we have put in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all. We'll keep these under review as national and local authority level guidance is updated.

A summary of the current mitigations along with recent updates can be in the letter issued by the school at the end of last week from Carrie Lindsay.

Continued on page 3

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Key advice in school remains as follows:

- All young people and staff, except those with exemptions, are required to wear a face covering while in the building. This includes in classrooms and corridor spaces.
- Enhanced handwashing/hygiene measures continue to apply.
- Young people should take the chance to distance/ be outside in the fresh air at intervals and lunchtimes, where possible. In winter months this means that warm clothing and suitable jacket/ footwear will be needed. Inclement weather plans are in place to provide shelter.
- Guidance on school visitors that was issued previously will continue to apply and as a result, events like physical parents' evenings and open evenings will take place virtually.

We encourage young people and staff to continue to use Lateral Flow Testing and to follow current NHS guidance in the event of returning a positive result. Further test kits will be issued to all pupils on Monday 20 December, in preparation for the holiday period and a return to school in January. I'd be grateful if all learners were able to complete a Lateral Flow Test on the evening prior /morning of our return to school. This will help to ensure that we get a strong start to the term.

You will have received a link to a consent form around the use of GLOW/ Teams for two-way 'live' online video lessons between your child and their teacher. I'm issuing this to you as a proactive measure, given the information issued around the need for extended isolation periods for all positive cases of Covid-19 and their household

contacts, as highlighted by Scottish Government and in the letter issued by the school from Carrie Lindsay. Consenting to this will mean that your child will be able to take part in a two-way 'live' video Teams lesson, should this be offered as part of a remote learning package. If you'd prefer not to consent to this, be assured that 'live' audio lessons can still take place.

However, I'd like to reassure you that we are very much expecting to be open and conducting business as usual but have been putting plans in place at the same time to ensure that there is a variety of appropriate and relevant tasks and activities available online for learners who may require to isolate. Importantly, learners have been reminded about the process for accessing these resources by class teachers.

Finally, over the holiday periods, our young people will be online for periods of time. Please do ensure that you are aware of what they are doing and who they are in contact with. For further information on online safety, please see the following link.  
<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/online-safety>

The last day of term will be Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December where we will finish at 2.50 pm. We will return on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and I look forward to seeing our young people and staff return after a well-earned break.

I'd like to take this chance to wish you the very best for Christmas break. I hope that you have relaxing and enjoyable break.

Yours sincerely,



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# Home Economics News

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## Barista Skills

In Home Economics, we have launched a new course "Barista Skills" where the senior pupils are developing their skills, to make and serve hot and cold drinks from a range of different styles of coffee, teas and milky drinks to frappes and smoothies. We serve

our drinks to staff and pupils in the school and have been working on our customer service skills. It has been an exciting course to add to our subject, which the pupils are thoroughly enjoying as well as giving them hands on experience that they could take into future jobs.

## Cooks Club

The Cooks Club have been making Christmas Brownies so I have included some pictures of the pupils' creations.



#LambforStAndrewsDay

## Lamb for St Andrews Day

The Home Economics department supported the Lamb for St Andrews Day.



The S2 pupils made "Oaty Scotch Lamb Burgers with a Minty Cucumber Relish". The Lamb mince had been kindly

donated by Scotch Lamb and we all had great time making (and eating) the burgers .



## Christmas Cooking

Over the past week in Home Economics we have been doing Christmas cooking with the S1-S3 classes, which has been very creative and lots of fun! The S1 pupils made Christmas truffles, the S2 pupils made Chocolate Penguin Biscuits and the S3 pupils Designed their own Christmas Cupcakes. We hope you enjoy some examples of the amazing work they created.

### S1—Truffles



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# Home Economics News

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## Christmas Cooking

### S2 Penguin Biscuits



### S3's - Design Your Own Christmas Cupcakes



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# Mathematics News

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## Maths Challenge Update

A number of pupils from the Madras College have achieved success in this year's UKMT Senior Mathematical Challenge. Out of the 37 pupils who participated, 2 of the pupils achieved gold awards, 6 silver and 14 bronze.

Both pupils who gained Gold Awards, Reuben Holme (S5) and Andrew Armstrong (S5) qualified for the Senior Kangaroo paper, a very impressive performance.

The Senior Kangaroo challenge took place on Thursday 2 December. We await the results to see how Reuben and Andrew performed.

Mathematics continues to be a popular course choice at Madras College with four Higher and two Advanced Higher classes this year.

Participation in national competitions are always encouraged and we will soon receive the first round marks for pupils who are participating in the Scottish Maths Challenge.

The questions for the second round are now available at <http://www.wpr3.co.uk/MC/probs.html> with a closing date of February 7<sup>th</sup>. Good luck to all who are taking part.

The UKMT Intermediate Mathematical Challenge will take place in early February and the UKMT Junior Mathematical Challenge will take place towards the end of April. Further information about these

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# Modern Language News

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## National Poetry Competition

In October on National Poetry Day, S2-S4 Modern Languages pupils were set the homework task of writing a poem to be entered in the national competition, "Mother Tongue Other Tongue".

This multilingual poetry competition celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity through creative writing, and showcases the many languages spoken and learned by our young people in school and at home. The theme of this year's competition is Choice.

The deadline for entries was Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December and Miss MacEachen was delighted with the quality of the poetry and the fantastic effort the pupils made to write their poems. As well as poems written in French, German and Spanish, some of our pupils chose to write in their mother tongue.

These languages included Romanian, Polish, Danish, Farsi, Mandarin, Sinhalese and Fijian. Over a hundred wonderful poems were received, but as a school we are able to submit only ten poems for the competition.

We wish our pupils the very best of luck!

# Music Department News



## New Staff

The music department welcomed Mr Irwin, guitar teacher to the Music department in August. In January we look forward to Mrs de Villiers joining us as the new Brass teacher.

## Extra-Curricular Activities

We are delighted that extra-curricular rehearsals have resumed this session. The musicians have shown a real commitment returning to the groups. Mr Irwin has started a Jazz group and the new Music Tech club is being run by Jack Shively in S6. Although the Christmas concert has not gone ahead the pupils and staff have worked very hard continuing with the wonderful music making. The department is grateful for the support of the parents.

## Burns Competition Postponed

The annual school Burns competition was cancelled in November. Members of the St Andrews Burns Club are hoping to re-arrange the event in the new year.

## Blind Club Christmas Tea Party

Thank you to Mrs Nisbet and well done to the Higher Music singers, Cole Tooman, James Mitchell, Heidi Dunbar, Freya Hoy, Zaara Nabi and Clara Downes who prepared a wonderful programme of songs for the St Andrews Blind Club. Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled.

## Pipe Band Performance at The Dunhill

Madras College Pipe Band was delighted to be performing again at the Alfred Dunhill Links championship in October. The band gave a fantastic outdoor performance during the prizegiving ceremony.



## Music Exam Success

Well done to all pupils who sat instrumental exams this term.

- *Congratulations to Eric Hao S6 for passing with Merit his Grade 8 Piano exam*
- *Congratulations to Lexi Paterson S4 for passing with Merit her Grade 4 Drum Kit exam*
- *Congratulations to Howard More S3 for passing with Merit his Grade 6 Piano exam*
- *Congratulations to Sofia Benssassi S2 for passing with distinction her Grade 3 Guitar exam*
- *Congratulations to Jonah Thomson S1 for passing with Merit his Grade 3 Piano exam*

# ECO Update

Our young people are deeply concerned about the climate crisis. Many are struggling to understand why action is still not being taken when it is their future at stake. Hence why we tackled this important issue first in working towards our Green Flag.

We have raised the profile of COP 26 through assemblies and Soc Ed lessons, the young people in S1 and S2 we asked to complete



their climate pledge after a Sway delivered in Soc Ed. The S2 tree of hope and pledges are shown below

We were also joined by Illac Diaz in October from Litter of Light charitable organisation to raise awareness of the climate emergency and saw our group create the electrical circuits for the renewable energy lanterns and wrote of message of hope 'No planet B'. This was followed up by the senior member of the Committee who took part and spoke at the climate strike - 'Draw a Line in the Sand' on the West Sands.

Today we are raising awareness of our group's new focus Litter and Waste, and saying goodbye to 'take, make, dispose', which we aim to tackle in the New Year. We are using the Litre of Light lanterns to highlight this focus. Our aim is to educate the school community about the importance and impact of litter and to change their behaviour outside the classroom. A huge thank you to Tom Mikulin who captured it with drone footage.



We have also enhanced the biodiversity of the grounds by planting a wildlife meadow and will reseed in March to ensure continuous flowering late into autumn. Mr Kerrigan has kindly supported our cause and his little DT group have made some bird boxes for the school grounds.

Eco Thought of the Month



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# Other News

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## Partnerships with The University of St Andrews

This Term we have been able to continue our partnerships with St Andrews University. The Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development (CEED) ran a Professional Skills for S5 and S6 whereby pupils created an APP, garnering employability skill in the process. The final Presentations, judged by the



University and were of a very high standard building confidence and developing presentations skills. Many thanks to Francesca Cassise and the CEED Team

We also had a number of pupils involved in an Introduction to Teaching English as a First

Language. Our S5 and S6 Students were able to visit the university to gain insights and skills in pedagogy. Again, very useful employability skills for careers that involve teaching. Thanks to Kirsty and her Team.

Our Young Curators also have been busy with The University of St Andrews and The Wardlaw Museum. Currently they are researching topics associated with colonialism and its links to St Andrews. For those with a passion for social sciences and the Arts, this is an invaluable experience. Once again, we are grateful to Eilidh and her Team at the Wardlaw Museum.



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## Early UCAS Applicants

Pictured here are some of our Early UCAS



Applicants. For Early Applicants the UCAS Deadline for submitting a UCAS Application is

October for all other Applicants, it is January. This year our Early Applicants are for Medicine, Oxford, and Cambridge Universities. The main reason for this timing is that there are banks of tests and interviews that must be undertaken to be offered a place. This makes the process quite pressurised for the candidates. Following afterschool classes and chats, mock interviews and meetings with former pupils who have embarked on these careers/institutions, our students are nearing the end of the process and we would like to wish them all the best of luck with their endeavours.

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# Other News

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## Rights Respecting Schools Award

I am delighted to say the school has been awarded the Rights Respecting Schools bronze award.

Since we have moved to the school, we have established a steering group and completed the plan for Silver,

The work is to embed a child's rights approach into all aspects of school life with particular focus on celebrating the diverse nature of our

school community and initially will include:

- reviewing our new promoting positive behaviour and relationship policy
- developing a greater understanding of equality and protected characteristics
- Pupil Voice

The school intends to establish a pupil council early into the New Year.



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## Wendy Chamberlain MP

Wendy Chamberlain MP met with our Head persons and discussed with them how they enjoyed life at the new school



## Leadership Award in S6

Over the past two terms, our S6 have been enhancing their leadership skills. The year group was invited to attend two specialist seminars led by St. Andrews University. Pupils who are engaging in leadership roles will be put forward for the SQA Leadership Award at SCQF Level 6.

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## Another Successful Year for Madras at Cambo

The last Tuesday of November marked the end of yet another one-day-for-6-weeks successful work experience placement at Cambo Heritage Trust.

S3 pupils **Iwan Forat** and **Joe Hunter**, initially mentored and buddied by S6 pupil **Kai Tasker**, enjoyed vast and varied work assignments around Cambo House estate, the shop and the cafe thanks to the expert tutoring and supervision of Cambo instructors Judy, Dave and Peter.

The pupils pressed apples to produce a cider of sorts, did light gardening work, gathered logs, and attended to storm damaged trees.

Iwan, Joe and Kai were nothing less than polite and respectful to staff and paying visitors, and as such were a credit to the school.

Thanks to Mrs Bissett for driving the boys there and back in the school minibus.

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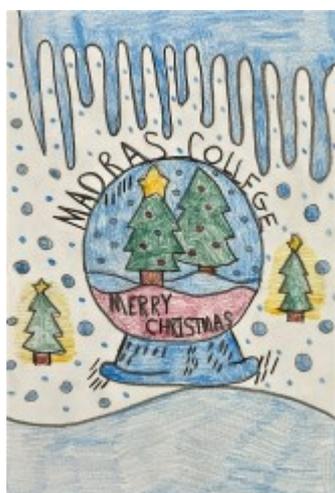
# Other News

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## Open University Courses

This year we have a number of students studying at the Open University whilst in S6. The Young Applicants in Schools Scheme (YASS) is an amazing opportunity for students in S6 to take university level courses free of charge, online. It's a great way of exploring courses before committing to them at Higher Education. Our S6 are studying courses such as: economics, modern slavery and Spanish and have written about their experiences in their personal statements. YASS is also recognised by UCAS and is a good addition to a university application.

## Christmas Card



Some of the pupils in our DAS department have been designing and painting Christmas Cards for 'Your Christmas Vision'.

Out of the high standard of designs the winning design chosen to be the Madras Christmas card was by Kieran Lewis

Congratulations to Kieran and thank you to all pupils who took part.

## 150th open competition

The top three Madras College pupils who entered the Callaway Golf Bag competition visited the St Andrews Links Trust on Thursday. They were presented with thank you letters and gift vouchers for submitting designs. They were also provided with further information about how their designs will be used in the next steps of the process, in preparation for the 150th Open.

Congratulations to our finalists:

Rubie McNeill

Stuart Monks

Lily Drage

It is looking likely that all the finalist's designs will be recreated in larger than life golf bag models which we hope will form a "Golf Bag Trail" around the St Andrews area in the run-up to the 150th open next year.

Overall, the interest and standard of entries was particularly high, with over 50 pupils entering designs for the competition. Internal judging took the number to 10, with Callaway/St Andrews link Trust selecting the final 3 designs for the next stage. Very well done to all involved.

## Charity News

**Movember**—Thank you to all the pupils who donated to Mr. Lawrie and Mr. Trewartha's Movember fundraisers. The total raised was just over £365. The money raised will be used to support men's health charities.

**Wear it Pink—Breast Cancer** £482.25 was raised

**Christmas Jumper—Save the Children** £573.32 was raised

# Information

## *Fife Council*

### *Information for Parents/Carers*

As early as possible on the morning of severe weather or other situations such as water, heating and building problems, the main ways for you to stay informed are:

- **by Groupcall text or e-mail alerts through your school** - make sure that you have given up-to-date contact details to the school so that they can contact you by Groupcall
- **on your mobile phone** - search for m.fife.gov.uk (from your mobile phone browser)
- **on Facebook** - follow-us on facebook.com/fifecouncil
- **on Twitter** - follow-us on twitter.com/fifecouncil
- **by radio bulletins** - listen to Kingdom FM (95.2 and 96.1), Forth One (97.3) and Tay FM (102.8 and 96.4)
- **by digital television** - red Button on Sky, channel 539 and Virgin Media, channel 233 , press red
- The Scottish Government has lots of information on its **Ready Scotland Website** - [readyscotland.org](http://readyscotland.org) about getting ready for winter in your home, roads and community.



## Dates for Your Diary

### **SCHOOL HOLIDAYS**

*(all dates inclusive)*

Thursday 23rd December 2021 -  
Wednesday 6th January 2022

Wednesday 16th — Friday 18th February 2022

Monday 4th — Friday 15th April 2022

### **INSERVICE**

Wednesday 16th February 2022

## Contact Us

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