



### Preparing to Leave School

Pastoral Care staff encourage our young people to consider the full range and levels of courses available within and outwith the school. Based on their preferred options, students are encouraged to make appropriate progression from S4 through to S5 and S6.

Course choices of pupils in S5/6 are reviewed after SQA examination results. There is an interview day before the start of the session when SMT and Pastoral Care staff meet students and parents to discuss their choices. In order to maximise the chances of success, prior attainment is reviewed very closely (see 'The S5 Course Choice Process' In Focus Leaflet).

Pastoral Care staff and SMT work closely with pupils on UCAS, college and job applications and references, taking into account subject based information provided by teaching staff. Details of each student's skills and qualities are sought from the staff they work with.

All pupils have access to the school's Careers Coach from Skills Development Scotland who offers independent specialist advice that is tailored to individual needs. She is available at a drop-in clinic at lunchtime or by appointment at S4/5/6 Parents' Evenings and will work with pupils and parents to offer advice on job applications, Modern Apprenticeships and college and university applications. Specific pupils who require targeted support will work with the school careers coach over a number of sessions to ensure they reach a positive and sustained destination on leaving school.

Our S5 and S6 PSHE programme looks at applying for Further and Higher Education as well as preparation for independent living. Pupils are also given the opportunity to attend the Higher Education Fair where representatives from a range of colleges and universities are on hand to give advice. We use outside speakers to advise pupils on the plethora of possibilities, and some of the pitfalls, of taking a year out after school and employment opportunities through the 'Year in Industry' programme. Our programmes aim to ensure that students leave school aware of, and prepared for, the opportunities and challenges ahead of them.

### UCAS - The Process

#### It is the applicant's responsibility to:

- Research appropriate courses
- understand the entry requirements for courses of interest including any additional tests or evidence to be completed or submitted
- Register, pay for and complete any tests by the due dates
- Complete all elements of their UCAS form, including payment, by the dates set by the school and UCAS<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> **Please note** that school staff do not have access to and cannot edit a pupil's application.

- Advise the school if he/she is applying through a different channel (e.g. CUKAS or overseas) and provide all information necessary for the school to support that application including sufficient notice.

#### **The school will provide:**

- Advice and guidance on the process of registering with UCAS apply and completing the application
- Advice on completing the personal statement
- A referee to support each pupil through this process and write the reference (Each pupil will have the opportunity to read their reference and will be asked to sign it to confirm they have read it, not that they agree with it. Copies of references will not be issued to pupils).

#### **Key Factors**

- The competition for university and college places is increasing each year. Many highly able applicants with good exam results will not achieve a place on their chosen course. It is therefore important that students make realistic choices when completing their UCAS or college application form and that they have at least one reserve choice in place with lower entry requirements than their first choice.
- There are thousands of courses available to pupils and school staff cannot offer advice on specific courses or fields of study. It is the student's responsibility to research this thoroughly, using the tools and resources available at the school including the careers library, online help and advice and the school careers coach.

### **College Applications**

- Pupils should consider making an application to a college course as a contingency plan. This may be necessary if their final exam results mean that they are unable to gain entry to a university course of their choice.
- Further Education Colleges offer a wide range of courses which can lead to employment or Higher Education.
- The school will assist pupils with their application in the same way that help is available to UCAS applicants (see above)
- Many colleges have a deadline for applications but often offer places on a 'first come, first served' basis so pupils are advised to research courses and submit an application as soon as possible.

#### **Training and Employment**

- The school regularly receives information about employment and training opportunities for school leavers from a wide range of companies. These opportunities are advertised to pupils using the Portal and the Careers notice boards in the north and south campus.
- The Skills Development Scotland Careers Coach can offer advice on such opportunities and can also help pupils with Modern Apprenticeship applications and preparation for interview.

**Please visit the Careers section of the school website for more information.**