

Dear S1 parent/carer,

It has been with great anticipation and positivity that we have seen our new S1 pupils begin their educational journey at Braes High School. Although we are conscious they have missed out on elements of their transition programme, particularly the induction visits to the school building, there is no doubt that they have taken well to their new surroundings and shown a mature and sensible approach in coping with the new expectations of the current circumstances.

As parents/carers, you may have had previous experience of having a young person at Braes High School. For some S1 parents/carers this will be the first experience of having a young person attend secondary school. The new S1 cohort arrive in Braes High School with the school approaching its 21st birthday. Formed in 2000, the school's size and catchment area has changed over the years, with the school's identity being forged through the school motto "Build Respect and Earn Success – Be part of it!". This motto emerged from the work of pupils, and has gone on to become a mainstay of the school's positive messaging, with the inherent values of respect, ambition and community core to all activity in the school.

That example of pupil leadership is emblematic of the school's key aim. Quite simply, we want to ensure every young person is supported and challenged to maximise their potential, and we will back them to the hilt in doing so. Achievement in national examinations and qualifications is of course very important, and it has been pleasing to see the hard work of pupils, staff and parents/carers alike paying off in our pupils' now consistently high quality academic performance. However, pupil achievement in all its forms is of equal importance in our school, and it has been wonderful to see our young people excel and grow in the sporting and cultural arenas, and in their efforts as responsible citizens to support those less fortunate than themselves in the local community and beyond. This emphasis on holistic development of young people has been recognised in the form of the prestigious United Nations UNICEF Rights Respecting School Gold Level Award. This award, along with others such as the SportScotland Gold Level award, and multiple pupil winners of the Canavan Scholarship, indicate that our young people take their responsibilities to their studies, and their achievement across the board, seriously.

The key message we will be emphasising to our new S1 pupils in this first term is that they are joining a school where high expectations are the norm, where young people are expected to contribute in their own way to the wider community, and where nothing less than respect for yourself and others is acceptable. While the school they are joining is certainly different in set-up to 'normal', those high expectations which saw Braes High School receive strong affirmation of its practice in Falkirk Council's School Engagement Visit less than a year ago remain the same.

As ever, our curriculum in Braes is constantly evolving, and the most recent change is the number of qualifications a young person would normally take when in S4. A question commonly asked of the school by parents/carers new to the school is about the curriculum structure, and to assist with this please find attached documentation outlining how a young person's journey through Braes High School can look.

To find out more about the school, or to keep up with latest developments, please visit our school website www.braeshigh.com, or download our School App, by going to your App store, typing in School App and then select Braes High School. In addition there are multiple active Twitter feeds from departments and the main school feed @braeshigh. Please remember this can be accessed simply by internet searching Braes High School Twitter, rather being logged into Twitter.

Finally, as well as our Pupil Council playing a significant part in our school's ongoing development, so too does our Parent Council. The Annual General Meeting of the Parent Council takes place on the evening of Tuesday 8th September at 7pm, and will be held via Zoom. If you would like to be part of this discussion please email braeshigh.parentcouncil@gmail.com. We are fortunate to also have a second parent group, Friends at Braes, our parent-led fundraising group. The next meeting of Friends at Braes takes place on Thursday 3rd September. For further details of the meeting please email friendsatbraeshigh@gmail.com.

I would encourage parents/carers to become involved in the activities of both groups, as they both provide valuable support to the school and to families across our school community.

Finally, I would thank you for your ongoing support of your young people at this time. It has obviously been strange, challenging and different for our new S1 pupils and I repeat my observation that in spite of this, they are doing us all proud in the way they have tackled the transition to secondary. I look forward to seeing your young person progress, thrive and succeed in Braes High School and to working with you in the years to come.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone