

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. There is no doubt that this morning they have taken well to their new surroundings, and shown a mature and sensible approach in coping with the 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. 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 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 the Scottish Education Award in 2023 for "Making a Difference" to the experiences and outcomes for young people, 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.

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 see the link below

[Braes HS Curriculum Structure](#)

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.

In the meantime, please see some additional information about current developments within our school :

Photographs

A school photograph company will be in school to take photographs of pupils in S1, S3, S5 and S6 on Friday 18th August. Once each pupil has had their photograph taken, they will be issued with a note to take home with details about how to order the picture, should parents/carers wish to do so. There is no obligation to purchase the photograph.

Ramp access at zebra crossing

Over the summer a ramp has been installed at the zebra crossing at the front of the school to improve accessibility. Although it has raised kerbs on either side, we would ask that drivers do not stop over this ramp when dropping off and picking up from this part of the school.

Uniform

Braes High School pupils are well known for their high standards of school uniform. As a reminder, school uniform consists of a school blazer, school shirt, school tie, school skirt, trousers, or leggings (black and unbranded). Pupils can also choose to wear a school jumper or cardigan if they wish to do so. Jogging trousers, tracksuit tops, hoodies and jeans are not part of the school uniform and should not be worn to school.

Friends at Braes run a well supported and used uniform recycling facility. There is a uniform rack at the school reception where parents/carers and pupils are welcome to access the available uniform. Donations of pre-loved uniform can also be handed into reception. For further information please contact either your young person's Pastoral Head, or email Friends at Braes at friendsatbraeshigh@gmail.com.

Staying hydrated during lessons

There are a number of water fountains in the school for use by pupils. We would ask young people to bring a reusable water bottle to school as we move to phase out the issue of single use cups. Pupils can drink water in class and should fill bottles during interval and lunch breaks.

Finally, I would thank you for your ongoing support of your young people at this time. 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