



Maryhill High School

A Media Arts College



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Start of Year newsletter September 2009

Dear Parents,

The start of a new school year should always be a time for new resolutions. As far as the teachers and support staff are concerned, these are to challenge and support all of our students to achieve their very best by:

- Insisting on the highest standards of behaviour in and out of class
- Expecting all students to put in excellent effort, no matter what their ability
- Working hard to improve teaching and learning so that all students can make the best possible progress
- A renewed focus on attendance and punctuality

Please encourage your child to make a good start too, so that together we can really make a difference this year and help your child to be successful.

Student achievements

Once again our students have achieved really well in external exams and some of the figures follow for the 2009 GCSE results.

62% of Year 11 students attained 5 or more A* to C grades. This is a 4% increase on last year and the school's best ever figure. There was also a much higher percentage of entries that were graded at A* or A this year.

The figure for 5 or more A* to C including GCSE English and Maths is 49%, an outstanding result that is above the national average.

Not only that, no fewer than 58% of students achieved Level 2 (GCSE grade C equivalent) in Functional English and Maths, an important qualification for future employment.

95% of students attained 5 or more GCSE passes, showing that success is achievable by all at Maryhill.

98% of students attained at least 1 GCSE pass.

Congratulations to our Year 11 students for achieving such excellent results.

Look out for the student achievement pages in all future newsletters. I hope your child will be featured for good work or attendance this year.

Support for parents

Your support for your child is crucial to their success, so we want you to feel confident that you are able to help. Therefore we aim to keep you well informed at all times. You will find with this letter once again a full parent and student support pack (PSSP). It gives you the contact details you will need, lists all our procedures and also gives advice and guidance that I hope you will find useful. Please go over the PSSP with your child and **return the reply slip with your school fund contribution as soon as you can.** There will be more information and guidance for your folder during the year and you can also use it to store your child's reports. If you have any suggestions about what you would like to see in future editions of the PSSP or you have ideas about how we can improve it please let us know. Your ideas and suggestions will be most welcome. In fact if you have any queries at any stage during the year or any concerns please call the school and choose the **year leader option.** Please remember that in this school the year leaders are also teachers and so may not be available to talk to you straightaway, so your call will be taken by our **student**

support officer, who will either be able to answer your query herself or who will pass it on to the Year Leader for personal attention.

Thank you for your support for what we are doing, as evidenced in the positive comments we have received over the past year. You will find at the end of this letter a leaflet on “compliments, comments and concerns” that details what you can do if you wish to contact the school for these reasons.

Attendance and punctuality

Please tell us about absences straightway, either by phoning (there is now a dedicated line) or in the MAP. Your PSSP gives you the important dates for your child’s school year, including those for school or external exams. Remember, external exams are usually on a set date and if missed cannot be repeated in the same year. There is more about attendance in the PSSP.

Uniform

Please make sure that your child is correctly dressed for school so that all of our attention can be focussed on their learning. We believe that there is no point in having a uniform if it is not worn correctly. We will enforce this in school. The full uniform list is in the PSSP.

Contacting you

You will see space for you to put your email address and mobile phone number on the data sheet. With your permission, we will use these to contact you by email or text. We will not give these details to any third party.

Free school meals and EMA for sixth form students

If you are not sure about your entitlement please contact the school office. All such enquiries are handled sensitively and in strict confidence.

Parent governors

We have one vacancy and I would really encourage you to put yourself forward for nomination. As a parent governor you will have the opportunity to share in the running of the school and to make a valuable contribution to the school community. There are five governors’ meetings each year, held on Tuesdays at 7pm for at most 2 hours, so the commitment does not have to be a large one. Full details are enclosed with this letter.

School facilities

Maryhill is a community school and we welcome enquiries from local groups who would like to use the school as a base for their activities. Mrs Knight in the school office will be pleased to receive your enquiries.

Finally, this school’s success is the sum of all its individual students’ achievements and it has been built by a partnership between the staff and governors, students and parents. In 2009-10 we aim to make this even better, with your help.

With best wishes for a successful year,

Dr A Jones
Headteacher



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Information for Parents - Compliments, Comments and Concerns

We would like to hear from you if you:

- Are happy with the service we provide and would like to compliment the staff or the students
- Have any suggestions about how the school can improve the quality of its provision
- Have a complaint or concern. All complaints will be taken seriously and given full and proper consideration.

Expressing Approval

When things go well, it is very helpful if parents express their approval. Maintenance of high levels of staff commitment, morale and motivation are essential to the provision of the best education for your child. Positive feedback really helps.

To express your approval you can write, telephone, e-mail or speak personally to staff concerned or the headteacher. Your words will be appreciated.

Expressing Concerns

We are committed to providing a high quality service for your child. Sometimes things may seem to go wrong which may lead you to express concerns.

Concerns relating to your child should be raised with the Year Leader in the first instance. Any general concerns can be raised with the headteacher. If the headteacher considers it appropriate another member of staff may be asked to respond because they have a particular responsibility or are familiar with the circumstances that have caused you concern. We hope that this would be sufficient to resolve the difficulty.

Making a Formal Complaint

If it has not been possible to resolve a difficulty **informally** then you can ask to use the formal complaints procedure.

- **Step 1 - the headteacher**

Having discussed your concerns you may feel it necessary to inform the headteacher that you wish to make a formal complaint. You can do this by telephoning, writing a letter or arranging an appointment to meet him. You will receive a written response.

- **Step 2 - the governing body**

If you are dissatisfied with the response you can make a formal complaint to the governing body. The school will provide you with a form that you can choose to fill in for this purpose.

The form will need to be sent to the Chair of Governors. Details of how the complaint will be investigated will be included with the form.

You will receive a written response from the governing body.

When considering your complaint the Chair of Governors may seek advice from officers of the Local Authority. However, you should not contact the LA or the Secretary of State direct until Step 2 is complete.

- **Step 3 - the Local Authority**

If you think that the governors have failed to consider your complaint properly and reasonably, you can raise the matter with the Local Authority or the Secretary of State. **However, it is important to understand that this is not a general right of appeal for any parent who disagrees with the governors' decision.** If the governors have followed a proper procedure and considered the complaint reasonably, neither the Local Authority nor the Secretary of State can reverse their decision.

If you wish to raise the matter with the Local Authority please write to:

Corporate Director
Children and Lifelong Learning
County Education Offices
Tipping Street
Stafford ST16 2DH

In your letter please explain:

- What your complaint to the governors was
- What response they have made to it
- Why you think that the governors have not followed a proper procedure in considering your complaint, and or
- Why you think that their consideration of it was unreasonable.

The District Education Officer may wish to meet with you but will, in any case, write to you to inform you of the further enquiries into your complaint.

If you remain dissatisfied with how the complaint has been dealt with you may wish to refer your complaint to the Secretary of State for Education. Please write to:

The Secretary of State
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Note: These procedures have been adopted by the school from those suggested by Staffordshire County Council.

This procedure does not apply where the complaint may lead to disciplinary proceedings against a teacher or child protection procedures. These matters have separate procedures.