



Balerno High School

A community built on strong relationships
and a commitment to success

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Acting Head Teacher: Ros Ranger

Headteacher update – 30th January 2023

Staffing update

We were delighted to welcome Lindsey Birrell on the 4th of January, she is our new Support for Learning teacher and you may have previously met her as she was our Transition teacher. She will support young people across the school community with their learning.

The Learning Community have appointed Jenny McDonald as our new Transition teacher. She will join us in February and is looking forward to supporting our young people as they move from P7 to S1.

Course Choice for session 2023-24

Pupil Support Leaders have met with S3-5 to discuss course choice for 2023-24. E-mails will be sent on 1st February with the discussed courses for next session. The students' final choices are then input onto the online system, at home. S2 will begin their course choice w/c 6th February, and this will be concluded by the 26th of February. Our Balerno Pathways document [Pathways Document | Balerno High School \(wordpress.com\)](#) has been shared to support with the process. The opportunity to feedback can be accessed on [Microsoft Forms](#) and this has been shared through parental communication and on parents' evenings.

Senior Phase assessments and assignments

Our timetabled formal assessments are now complete, staff will continue to gather evidence to support with the establishment of an estimate grade which parents/carers will receive on 28th March 2023.

In subjects where young people have coursework or assignments, these will run from late February to late March, Mrs Anderson will share the dates with parents/carers shortly.

The SQA examination timetable for 2023 is available on the school website <https://balernochs.wordpress.com/sqa/>

Study Support

After a successful Immersion Day programme in April/May last year, we will be continuing to offer a programme of study support in the run up to each exam. The Immersion programme is inclusive in terms of curriculum offer and transport. It consists of a day (or part day) of support for every subject



studied, a couple of days before the final exam. Feedback from pupils last year was overwhelmingly positive.

Main themes from student feedback:

Students felt more confident, it helped them to identify their strengths and any aspects of the course to consolidate, there was an excellent structure and environment to receive support, feedback and ask questions to staff and peers.

The Immersion Day Programme for 2023 will be issued in February.

During Easter there will not be an in-school offer. During this time, we would recommend that having completed the course, students should be accessing study materials encouraged by their class teacher and the wealth of exam papers available from SQA [SQA - NQ - Past papers and marking instructions](#). E-Sgoil also offer an Easter study offer of live, online, revision sessions delivered by subject specialists. The offer for 2023 has not yet been published (this will be at the end of Feb). Please see last year's offer for a flavour of the provision [Digital learning from Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar | e-Sgoil](#)

Holocaust Memorial Events

Catherine Forbes and Kirsty Templeton delivered a number of events last week, these included a holocaust survivor guest speaker who spoke to S4 and AH History pupils. S1 completed a holocaust project which was then shared with pupils in the concourse on Thursday and the assembly on Friday focused on Article 19 which states that all children should be protected from violence.

Upcoming events

Mental Health Week w/c 06.02.23

A range of activities will be happening across this week to raise mental health awareness with our school community. This was an aspect of the Health & Wellbeing Survey, March 2022, that our young people wanted to develop and a team of pupils have worked with Mrs Symon to create the planned program.

Toilet Twinning

The RRS group have selected Toilet Twinning as one of their projects through to June. They are hoping for community support and launched their fundraising campaign at the S5/6 Consultation evening. The project involves raising funds to provide toilets in refugee camps and schools. Further information from the group will be shared shortly.



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International excursions

I know some parents have been in touch to ask when international excursions will be on offer again to Balerno pupils.

CEC are in the process of finalising the protocols for these types of trips to go ahead and we hope to be in a position to start planning Balerno international excursion before the summer.