

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we conclude the final week of the SQA Assessments for our senior phase pupils, it has been good to see our young people approach these in a mature, conscientious and sensible manner. Our thanks go to our team of SQA Invigilators who as always have overseen the array of assessments with professionalism and care for our pupils. Between now and the end of the session we will continue to provide multiple supported study opportunities for pupils, and appropriate study facilities to enable our pupils to maximise their potential in their SQA courses. Please see an update on a number of matters below:

Tackling Litter

Also encouraging has been the ongoing work of staff and pupils in encouraging all our young people to dispose of litter responsibly and keep the local area tidy. Pupils from our Eco Group have met representatives of Falkirk Council's Community Litter Team to advise on where new signage encouraging the correct disposal of litter should be placed, while Braes pupils and staff have their next Community Litter Pick next week. We will continue to promote these messages to our pupils and the support of parents/carers in reminding young people of their responsibility in this regard is appreciated, particularly if pupils go off-site and into the community at lunchtime.

Digital Learning

It has been great to see our young people embrace the use of iPads to further enhance their learning in lessons. While the vast majority of young people have their iPads with them each day, we have had a small number of instances where iPads have been misplaced or broken. The support of parents/carers in ensuring these devices are well looked after is appreciated. The school's Pupil Digital Leaders group have been doing impressive work in promoting the use of iPads and helping everyone upskill out technological abilities. This work, and that promoting the effective use of technology across the school was recognised last week with the award of the **Digital Wellbeing Award for Schools**. This was awarded following the school receiving the general Digital School Award last year. I would thank all staff and pupils for their work in this area, and parents/carers for their support.

Free Bus Travel

Parents/Carers may be aware of the new Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme. The link below takes you to information on Falkirk Council's website and the attached timetable indicates on which services the pass can operate. The note below gives further information from Falkirk Council about the operation of the scheme.

[Transport - Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme | Falkirk Council](#)

Under 22s Free Bus Travel Scheme

*The Under 22s Free Bus Travel Scheme, which launches on 31 January 2022, will allow holders of valid Under 22s bus passes to travel free of charge on local bus services in Scotland in the same way that the over 60s and disabled people can at the moment. This includes travel on local bus services operated by First in the Falkirk Council area, but excludes excursions and premium services (like night buses in Glasgow/Edinburgh for example). **It should be noted that the intention of the Under 22s scheme is not to provide all children with free school transport.***

Applications for Under 22s Bus Passes

Information about how to apply for an Under 22s pass is available on the Falkirk Council website: [Transport - Young Persons' Free Bus Travel Scheme | Falkirk Council](#)

Valid Under 22s Bus Pass

In order to qualify for free bus travel, Under 22s must have applied for the Under 22s concession and have a bus pass – simply being in possession of a Young Scot card does not entitle pupils to receive free travel (and they would be required to pay a fare to travel).

Using Under 22s Bus Passes on School Buses

With regard to school buses, these fall into two categories:

- Services which are registered, or operate under a provision of the Education Act which allows non-distance entitled pupils who have not been issued with a school travel pass by Falkirk Council to travel upon payment of the appropriate fare – **holders of valid Under 22s bus passes will be able to travel on these services free of charge from 31 January 2022 (see “Distance Entitled Pupils” below regarding availability of seats).**
- Private hire (or closed contract) services which are only available to distance pupils who have been issued with a school travel pass by Falkirk Council – **holders of valid Under 22s bus passes cannot travel on these services.**

The school transport timetables have been updated to show which school services can be used by holders of valid Under 22s bus passes. These are attached and may be distributed to parents.

Distance Entitled Pupils

Falkirk Council has a statutory obligation to provide free school transport to distance entitled pupils who are issued with a school travel pass by the Transport Planning Unit – **these pupils will be given priority**. Subject to available seating capacity, holders of valid Under 22s passes will be able to travel free of charge using any spare seats on these vehicles. This is no different to the current arrangement where pupils can travel upon payment of the appropriate fare subject to seats being available.

Parent Council

A very productive discussion took place at last week’s Parent Council, with engaging presentations from Pupil Councillors, Pupil Digital Leaders and Pupil Self-Evaluation Leaders. We are grateful for our Parent Council for their ongoing support of the school.

Friends at Braes

Similarly, our parent-led fundraising group, Friends at Braes, met last week, listening to presentations from our Braes Formula 1 Club, Braes Digital Leaders, the Braes Jewellery Club and a pupil representative of our ‘Cost of the School Day’ group. All the pupils were grateful for the financial contributions FAB have made to support their activities.

To conclude, I hope all Braes families are keeping well, and we look forward to seeing our young people continue to flourish in the weeks and months to come.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone