

People Directorate**Head Teacher: Mrs Fiona Paterson**

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Date 26/03/2019



Dear South Ayrshire Council,

I am writing on behalf of Dundonald Primary School and Early Years Centre to make you aware of the outstanding work done for the community by 'Friends of Dundonald Castle'.

As a school we work extremely closely with the Castle Staff as they go 'above and beyond' to help us bring the children's learning to life. As well as preparing exciting activities for our pupils they encourage the children to think of 'The Castle' as 'Their Castle', thus instilling values of ownership and responsibility for it. Vandalism has been significantly reduced since the School and Castle staff began to work in partnership and a sense of pride and affection for this historic monument permeates the village.

This session all of our children have benefitted from educational outings to The Castle Visitor Centre and Grounds. We held a successful teacher training day in the centre in February when the Manager shared the extensive education programme with us before allowing us time to explore. She explained that this programme was accessed by more than 800 Scottish school children last year.

Dundonald is a tight-knit rural community with very limited transport links and but by organising a wide range of events, hosting regular clubs and drop in session The Castle Visitor's Centre provided a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable members of our community. The visitor's centre is inclusive and always busy; be it, 'Knit-and-natter', 'Chess club' or the 'Historic Society' everyone who drops in receives a warm welcome.

The strong intergenerational links have been further galvanised by the launch of The Castle junior committee/ youth initiative 'The Crazy Castle Kids' in 2017. This club promotes inclusive activities for all of the children in the village and provided them with much need activities of weekends and evenings.

The staff at The Castle are concerned that they have outgrown their current premises. They are determined to reach out to a wider audience and provide more services to the village. They have ambitious ideas that would be a huge asset to the local community and encourage visitors to the area.

We are keen to support 'The Friends of Dundonald Castle' in all that they do as they are a jewel in South Ayrshire's Crown.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the Depute Head Teacher.

Depute Head Teacher
Dundonald Primary School.