



November 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Polar Academy

I am delighted to announce that Dalkeith High School has been selected, to be one of two schools across Scotland, in 2024/25 to take part in the Polar Academy. This was a rigorous process, which involved an application form and an interview. Our staff and pupils were involved in this interview process in November, and I am delighted that we have been successful in our efforts.

Polar Academy is a mental health charity. They work with 13-18 year olds with mental health challenges or lacking self-esteem and confidence. They give them an intensive 1 year physical and mental training programme culminating in a winter sledge hauling expedition in East Greenland, with Craig Mathieson, Polar Explorer, and his team. Polar Academy state that this programme changes the mindset of the young people as well as their families, schools, communities, and positively impacts the local economy.

Their model is built around an 18-month planning schedule for each annual intake of young people where they liaise closely and responsibly with schools, teachers, parents/carers, and the community. They provide pastoral care and personal support to every young person, and family they work with, from when they start the programme, to its completion, and often beyond their adolescence.

Polar Academy will be presenting to S2 - S5 pupils week beginning the 27th of November 2023. At these assemblies, pupils will find out more about the charity, the application process, the expedition and most importantly, the impact this can have on a young person's life. Please note that interested pupils need to be 13 - 18 to take part in this programme.

We expect this to be a very popular opportunity for pupils. It is important to note the criteria that Polar Academy work towards when they select young people to take part in the process. Please visit their website for more information:

https://www.thepolaracademy.org/polar_academy_about/

There will only be fifteen pupil places and two staff places. The staff who will be part of this programme are Mr Duncan and Mr McGlade. They will take part in the whole programme along with the pupils.

As you can imagine we are very excited about this opportunity for our pupils and the school community. Please encourage your young person to look at the Polar Academy website and consider taking part in this incredible programme.

I will write again with further information on the application process in due course.

Kind Regards

Emma Ormerod

Headteacher