



**Penicuik High School**  
**Parental Newsletter Summer 2013**  
**[www.penicuik.mgfl](http://www.penicuik.mgfl)**

Dear Parents and Carers

This is the last parents' newsletter of this year and I would like to start by thanking each parent and carer for the excellent support you have given to the school throughout this, our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, session. I know that many of the events and activities that we have been able to offer to your children this year have only got off the ground because of your support.

**Procedures for reporting absences**

We request that all parents follow the established procedures for reporting pupil absences i.e. phoning the school office on each day of absence, preferably prior to the start of the school day. Medical and dental appointments should be notified to the school office for entry in the diary. Asking permission for time off in term time should be done through a letter to the **Head Teacher** with a request for the time off, giving reasons for the absence.

**School Dress Code**

Our school dress code is:

- White shirt or blouse
- School tie
- Black trousers or skirt (please ensure that this is of a modest and respectable length)
- Black shoes
- Black V neck jumper or cardigan
- All pupils should bring a bag with all necessary equipment for school.

For PE we would like to suggest that students wear the following: Plain white T-shirt (no logos), jogging trousers (no combat style trousers) or shorts and training shoes.

As you are buying your children their clothes for returning to school in August **can I please ask that you follow the school dress code and NOT** the advice of your son or daughter. We have made our dress code simple, affordable and practical to make sure that all pupils can adhere to it. This year we have had a number of girls turning up to school in short skirts and leggings that are inappropriate for school. Can I ask for your support in ensuring that skirts are of a respectable length.

## **Examination results**

SQA examination results will be posted out to all pupils to arrive on Tuesday 6 August 2013.

## **Activities week**

Each year as a school we offer all our pupils from S1- S6 the opportunity to take part in our activities week. This week is fundamentally important to developing aspects of health and well being a key feature of the Curriculum for Excellence and as such it forms an integral part of the work that we do as a school. Each year however I do receive a small number of letters from parents requesting permission to take their children on holiday during activities week. This is disappointing because as a school we very much value the effort that staff give in organising and running the week. The residential/overnight activities that were offered this year included, trips to Norway, Normandy, Rome, a visit to Alton Towers as well as a trip to London. We also had daily activities including Sports Spectacular, Murder Mystery, Dungeons and Dragons, Sun, Sea and Detectives, Beach, Zoo, Make a Movie, Sailing, Swim, Gym and Yoga, Build a Band and Traditional Crafts. The school has made sure that there are activities that suit all pockets so that everyone can take part.

## **Staffing**

We bid farewell at the end of session to a number of staff who are leaving us. Mr Fair who is moving to Newbattle Community High School to take up a post of Depute Head Teacher, Mr Hughes, who is moving to Lasswade High School and to our NQTs who have completed their year at Penicuik High School - Ms Thomson, Ms Jones, Ms Gordon and Ms Caddow.

## **Senior prefect appointments for session 2013-14**

**Head Boy** Scott Glen

**Head Girl** Annie Tucker

**Depute Head Boys** Calum Doig and Michael Cook

**Depute Head Girls** Rose Andrew and Abigail Horne

### **House Captains:**

#### **Clerk Maxwell**

Daniel Richards    Kaitlin Jack    Julie Hand    Nicole McMahon

#### **Liddell**

Heather Holness    Rosie McNiff    Liam Logan    Craig Young

#### **Senior Prefects**

Aaron Galbraith    Josie Kittel    Megan Reid    Scott McMahon  
Rachel Watson

### **75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Thank you to everyone who attended or contributed to the successful 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open Day in March. Due to the overwhelming generosity of former pupils and staff we had a fabulous display of artefacts in the school Assembly Hall. Over 500 people examined the exhibition and enjoyed a guided tour of the school led by our S6 guides. The student council set up a souvenir shop and sold an array of branded items, including pens, bookmarks and tea towels. All these items are still available for purchase from the school office.

### **Sir James Arnot Hamilton**

We welcomed the family of the late Sir James Arnot Hamilton to Penicuik High School on the day after the Open Day to celebrate the naming of our Science and Technology wing in his memory. Sir James was, in 1938, the first dux of Penicuik High School after the school in Carlops Road was opened. He went on to have an outstanding career in engineering and was the Director General of the Concord Project. He was the top civil servant in the Department for Education in England and Wales from the time of the Callaghan government and the succeeding Conservative government until his retirement.

Mr Paul Beards designed a magnificent oak panel with an inset of concord in memory of Sir James.

### **Awards Ceremony**

We celebrated a very successful awards ceremony on Tuesday 11 June with a packed Assembly Hall and a table laden with prizes for every subject area. Our guest of honour for the evening was Peter McNaughton, Head of Education for Midlothian Council.

## **Concert**

Our end of term concert took place on Thursday 20 June when once again we had a hall full of proud parents and family members, as well as guests. We were treated to a wonderful evening of musical talent. Our thanks and admiration goes to all who took part in this superb event and to all who had a hand in the organisation of the concert.

## **Comenius Visit**

A group of pupils and staff visited the Czech Republic as part of our Comenius partnership project.

Lara Mega from S4 reflects on her experiences;

*At five o'clock in the morning on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May seven yawning students, two sleep deprived teachers and the headteacher himself from Penicuik High School embarked on an adventure. The Czech Republic trip had been long anticipated by the staff and group of seven students that I was a part of. In the weeks leading up to the trip presentations of the theme A Healthy Mind, A Healthy Body were produced, rehearsed and perfected. This involved taking photos of the contents of our fridges after a big shop and comparing them to "The Eatwell Plate". On the whole, our fridges provided healthy balanced diets, the most offensive item being a can of Irn Bru.*

*The most enjoyable project we worked on as a group was creating sporting equipment from recycled materials. We created ten pin bowling; the ball was made by scrunching up plastic bags and tying them with elastic bands and the pins from ten two litre plastic bottles a third full of water.*

*The preparation took many weeks, and a few days before departure we were presented with massive, matching Penicuik High School T-shirts to sport in the Czech school, identifying ourselves proudly as the Scottish group. On arriving in the Czech Republic - a team united by the previous weeks of preparation and the giant blue T-shirts tucked in our bags - we were each escorted off by a different Czech family. All to stay for the week with Czech pupils somewhere around the town of Břeclav, we were plunged into their lifestyles, their culture and their diets.*

*The diet came as the biggest shock for most; provided with at least four meals a day, plus constant snacks, tea and cake breaks and late night munches, we were turning into a team of walking carbohydrates. A typical meal there was a slab of meat and bread or dumplings, which suited me perfectly. Their generosity knew no bounds and we never went hungry. Everyone had a great time in their host houses and - though there were language barriers - got along very well with everyone else.*

*The village I stayed in, just outside of Břeclav was a wine village, and I got a fantastic tour of the vineyards from my host family. A fellow student of mine was staying in a house decorated extravagantly with stag heads, antlers, framed butterflies, cacti and a boar's head. We all had very different*

*experiences, but they all had the common trait of being very different from our home lives.*

*When we went to their school, along with students and staff from Holland, Iceland, Italy, Slovenia and Spain, we first attended a performance by the nursery children. They sang us many Czech songs and performed a short Czech play, then presented us with gifts they had made; little clay houses. Next, we got a tour around and it was similar to our school in Scotland, however they had separate buildings for seniors and juniors.*

*We also learned how to Segway, and aside from my embarrassingly public crash landing, it was a hilarious and highly enjoyable experience. As the theme of the trip was health, we had a big sports day, where everyone mingled together, and made friends. We taught each other basic vocabulary from our own countries and by the end of the day everyone had at least ten new Facebook friends.*

*The trip seemed to pass in a blur and before we knew it we were embracing our host families at the Břeclav train station, clutching gifts we had received or were giving as a thank you. We made friends and shared experiences that week that will stay with us for a long time. It was a fantastic opportunity.*

### **Congratulations to our Leavers**

As a school we bade farewell to our leavers at a very enjoyable leavers' evening. This event, which can only take place through the very generous support of the Parents' Association, is the school's formal goodbye to those pupils who leave at the end of each session. We were able to present each pupil with a commemorative gift as they move on from school. We are grateful to Mr Jim Fair who presented the gifts as the final act of the pupils' time here at Penicuik High School.

### **School Meals**

The price of a 2 course school meal with a drink is increasing to £2 for pupils.

### **Happy Holidays**

Can I finish by wishing you all a very warm and sunny summer holiday. We look forward to seeing our pupils again on Wednesday 21 August for the start of the new session.

Mark Edie  
Head Teacher