**Parent Association - Head Teacher Briefing – June 2022** 

**Staffing News:**

There have been a number of staff movements in the last few months and some new staff will be joining us at the start of next session.

**The following staff are leaving us at the start of session:**

We have three longstanding staff with a total service of some 63 years retiring in August. Their departure has been noted at the Prize Giving on 9 June and they will get a formal farewell from staff at the end of June. All have made significant and sustained contributions to the School over their time here.

**Mr Ross Jamieson** – has now retired after 14 years dedicated service. Ross who was originally an English teacher in Edinburgh has been a Depute Head in the school since 2007. During that time he has contributed to a wide range of school activities including timetabling, professional development, and pastoral care and quality improvement. I would like to thank him on behalf of the school community for his commitment to the well-being and success of so many generations of Penicuik High School pupils. Ross was very loyal to the school and community he served and strived to ensure they could confidently take the next steps into life after school. He was also a man of impeccable tastes and sartorial elegance that will never be matched.

**Ms Amanda Adams** who has been in the school since 1996 – some 28 years of loyal and dedicated service. I know how much Amanda loves this school and her time teaching the young people who have gone through her care over the many years. Over recent times Amanda has been a significant and respected middle leader in the school who has led improvements in English attainment and literacy. Her strong sense of humanity, intelligence and warmth will be sadly missed and we wish her well. I thank her for all her work on behalf of the school community.

**Mrs Alison McFadyen** – eco warrior extraordinaire, bug and plant lover, STEM ambassador and a great keeper of institutional memory. She has worked at the school since 2001 - 21 years.

Like Ross and Amanda – Alison cares unceasingly about the progress and wellbeing of our young people and loves the school deeply. She will be missed for her intellectual rigour, her quirky inputs, her great sense of humour and compassion and kindness to all. I would also like to thank Alison on behalf of the school community for her tireless work in school.

 **Other staff leaving:**

 **Teaching staff**: Ms Hana Petrie – Acting DHT has now returned to Lasswade HS after her secondment

 Mr David Connolly – Business Education

 Mrs Catriona Simpson – Art – who left earlier in Term 3

Ms Elena Cheltsova (Art), Ms Kara Mcfadyen (Biology), Ms Claire Galloway (PE) and Ms Hannah Wilson (English) who have all held NQT posts will leave at the end of session.

**Support staff:** we say farewell to Ms Helen Slaney (Youth worker), Mr Ross Jack (Learning Assistant), Mrs Therese Buxton (Learning Assistant) and Mrs Nicola Scott (Learning Assistant).

I would like to thank them all for their very positive contribution to the school.

**Several staff are returning from maternity leave:**

Ms Gen Docherty (History) in August and Ms Jessica Burrows (Biology) who is now in school.

**Current staff away on maternity leave:**

Ms Hollie Lyon (DHT), Mrs Sarah McIntosh (Music), Ms Lyndsey Bainbridge (Maths) and Ms Nicola Keir (Art). Ms Laura Graham will start maternity leave in August.

 **Acting Up/New posts:**

Mrs Leigh Wood is not a new staff member but is acting up as DHT – Learner Experience - after Ms Petrie completed her secondment.

Ms Shannon MacDonald will be Acting PT RMPS next session.

Mr Alastair Proctor has been appointed the new PT Science from August 2022.

Ms Ellie Campbell will be covering 3 days a week as PT Guidance.

Mr Luke Witton will return to the PE department in August 2022.

Ms Katy Hill and Mr John Berry have been appointed to permanent teaching posts in Maths.

Ms Kirsty Maden has been appointed permanently to a Biology teaching post.

Ms Beth Ewing has been appointed to a permanent post in English.

Mr John Troup has been appointed to a permanent position as a Teacher of CDT and will start in August 2022.

Ms Rachel Vale has been appointed PT English from August 2022.

Ms Claire Hadden has been appointed to a secondment contract (1.5 days per week) as a numeracy development lead working with the ASG schools and our new S1.

Our new NQTs for next session are Ms Nicola Robertson – Biology and Mr Mathew Cook – Chemistry.

We are currently recruiting for some vacancies in August 2022 and I will update you at the start of session.

**Reminders - Attendance and Late Coming Procedures**

In order to support our students and families we wrote to parent/carers late last session with regard to our revised attendance procedures to highlight the following amendments. **Here is a reminder again into next session:**

* Registration teachers will check back on student attendance for the previous day(s) and follow up any classes that a student may have missed.
* Guidance staff are closely tracking non-attendance with House Heads and actively looking at what supports can be put in place to support students to improve attendance.
* If students are missing from class, parent/carers will be contacted to alert them to this fact. This may be either a phone call or a Group Call message depending on the individual student and their circumstances. Whilst this may cause alarm and there might be a legitimate reason why they are not where they are supposed to be we do have a duty of care and need to ensure we notify about any possible non-attendance. We will do our best to locate them through our Duty Head rota that operates every period.
* Truancy and wandering have been a consistent issue since lockdown and a few students are continually the subject of call outs for Duty Heads.

In cases where a clear pattern of non-attendance is developing Guidance staff and House Heads will begin communication with home, initially by phone, but depending on subsequent attendance, then by letter and parents/carers will be invited to meet staff to agree support strategies.

**Truancy**

Truancy is a serious safeguarding issue and can be extremely disruptive to learning. In the case of persistent truancy:

* Guidance (or Senior Management) will contact home.
* 1/2 hour Time Back will be issued. If parental permission is received this may be on the same day as the truancy occurred, otherwise it will be in the next Time Back slot. Time Back sanctions are at lunchtimes as we know this inconveniences students the most. They will have time to eat and go to the toilet.
* Students who repeatedly truant will be put on Daily Monitors.
* Support will be offered to students and their parent/carer and for students experiencing particular issues a Child’s Planning Meeting (CPM) will be convened to agree supports required for the student to attend as required.
* In some cases disciplinary action may be used where there is persistent and deliberate truancy when agreed supports are in place. This could be internal withdrawal, loss of break times, Formal Disciplinary Warnings (FDW) or a temporary exclusion where there is an accumulation of behavioural issues.
* Our first concern is to make sure our students are where they are supposed to be and are safe. We remain committed to inclusion and well-being focused on positive relationships but will use sanctions as part of modifying poor behaviour and seeking respect and a good learning climate.

***Please Note:***

The school doors are open from 8.25am to allow students to enter and be in class on time.

* Students arriving after 8.30am will be recorded as being late for school by their Registration teacher.
* Students arriving after 8.40am will be recorded by the school office.
* We very much appreciate the continued support of parents and carers in our school community which is essential if we are to modify poor behaviours.

**Uniform into next session**

After Easter we began the use of the changing rooms in PE for S1-S3 and for seniors after Exam leave. Students may choose to wear masks in these rooms and we will be expecting them to be in the changing room for a short period only. Additional cleaning and pre and post ventilation will be put in place. We are also recommissioning the changing areas in the old Gym area to improve capacity. This means that students will no longer be permitted to wear PE uniform to school and normal school uniform rules will start to apply. However, we do recognise that some students may not have full uniform or that because young people are growing it will be better to wait until summer to purchase new uniform.

***The uniform is as follows:***

White shirt or blouse

Black V neck jumper or cardigan (top must be black)

School tie – *All new S1 students and students moving into S4 will receive a free tie on Wednesday 17 August 2022*

Black trousers or skirt

Black shoes

School Blazer – if purchased

We will be checking uniform to ensure reasonable compliance and also look at appropriateness. If

students do not have uniform they will not be permitted to wear crop tops as some have been doing

for PE. Non-uniform clothing must be of an appropriate standard.

Outdoor clothing must be removed in all classes. Football scarves and colours are not allowed in school. Clothing should not have any offensive logos or wording. Leggings (except for PE) and ripped/torn jeans **are not permitted as normal uniform**.

The Parent Council on behalf of the Parent Forum has agreed our uniform policy. If we feel the uniform is not appropriate to the school setting we will write or phone to ask for your support to address the situation.

**School Blazers**

Our smart Uniform blazers are now available for all students and **we are asking all new S1 students in 2022-23 to purchase these.**

A full range of sizes are available at the following cost of-

Size 32-36 £35.50 per blazer

Size 38 and above £37.50 per blazer

The blazers are hard wearing, machine washable and made from recycled plastic bottles so are environmentally friendly as well.

*If you require financial support please check Midlothian Council’s website for school clothing grant or other assistance. The school will be able to help. No student should miss out on wearing a blazer because of cost and we are committed to poverty proofing uniform.*

**N.B. Orders will be through an online system. To assist with sizing students are able to go to the office after school each day to try on different sizes. New S1 students who are arriving next session and not currently in school can try on sizes by arrangement with the school office please email:** **penicuik\_hs@midlothian.gov.uk** **to make a time after 3:30 pm from Monday 30 May 2022**

All orders should be **placed by 3 July 2022** to take advantage of free delivery into the school.

**To make an order:**

1.       Visit [www.academyuniformsltd.com](https://mail.mgfl.net/owa/redir.aspx?C=Hgwze2UpRez3NonDGECqC7mxSNeJT50ounfc53-SsqJad3DNuSLZCA..&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww.academyuniformsltd.com)

2.       Visit Categories - second from the top Sizing Guide and follow the instructions for sizing.

3.       Back to categories - Secondary schools – Penicuik High.

4. The prices shown are as indicated above.

5.       Place your order.

6.       For free delivery into the school, please tick the free delivery box.

7.       Your order will be delivered to the school for early August.

8.       Alternatively you can pay for home delivery.

**Silver Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA)**

**We are very proud as a school to be awarded the Silver Right Respecting Schools Award by UNICEF UK.**

UNICEF is the world’s leading organisation working for children and their rights. The Rights Respecting Schools Award is granted to schools that show commitment to promoting and realising childrens’ rights and encouraging adults, children and young people to respect the rights of others in school. Silver is given to schools that make excellent progress towards embedding the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into its ethos and curriculum. There are over 1300 schools across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales that have achieved Silver and over 600 schools that have been awarded Gold, the next step up and highest accolade granted by UNICEF.

**Curriculum Improvements**

Over the last two years we have developed an employability period in S1 and 2 to help students understand the world of work and options for future pathways.

At S3 we have added two new courses – Environmental Science and the Forest and Outdoor Learning Award which is part of the SCQF level 4 People and Society course. Next session we are planning to introduce a National 3 Enterprise and Employability award for all at S3 that creates a curriculum pathways from S1 and S2 employability.

At S4-S6 we have now added 8 new courses across S4-S6 including the Mental Health and Wellbeing Award at level 5. Our Broad General Education phase from S1-S3 has also been reshaped to give all learning areas more equitable time across the timetable- improving breadth and depth.

**Supported Study programmes in March/April**

Once again we had a comprehensive SQA Study Support programme that ran from March 22 and encompassed the Easter holiday period and the extended exam period as well. The full programme was sent out via group call to all parents and put on year level Google classrooms this week. There were also immersion sessions during the school day over exam leave prior to exams. Staff also sent texts to parent/carers of students they felt need targeted support and we worked in a focused way to ensure in-school support during the exam period to target completion. I would like to note the effort of staff to run these sessions and thank them for their work

**Student Voice**

Last session saw the launch and introduction of the Penicuik High School Student Council. There were over 70 students who signed up to represent their classes and year group and be part of the student council. These students have now received their training which included learning about the meeting format, producing an agenda and taking minutes. The first official student council meetings took place in April 2022.

- S1/2 Student Council meeting - Tuesday 5 April period 3

- S3/4 Student Council meeting - Thursday 7 April period 4

- S5/6 Student Council meeting - Monday 4 April period 3

Council meetings will then be followed up with Student Parliament meetings, held shortly afterwards to take forward any potential actions. The first of these will be held on Tuesday 22 June. As well as Student Council members, the parliament will be attended by representatives from the various student groups across the school e.g. Eco Group, Equalities Group, etc. The parliament will also be attended by Mr Dewar (DHT Student Engagement) and Mr Biddick. This is going to be a great opportunity for students to be a key part in driving forward positive change in the school. Thanks is noted to Yasamin Tavakoli, Stephen Milligen and Ellie Campbell for leading their specific year group Student Councils

**Parent Consultations**

S1 and S3 Parent consultations were held in June. These were held by telephone pending a parental and staff survey next session to look at a return to face –to- face interviews.

**Student Support Re-Structure**

The proposed Student Support area re-structure for this session recommended after our external review has been postponed and will be looked at again prior to Education budget setting, starting in November-December 2022. Any restructure requires governance via the Business Education Board and current financial pressures have complicated the process. Two new Pupil Care and Welfare Officer positions for each House have recently been advertised. They will support parental and student engagement, health and wellbeing, attendance, lateness and guidance administration.

**Tracking and Monitoring** **and Reporting (TMR) System**

Quite a lot of hard work has gone into the tracking and monitoring (TMR) systems we operated this session and we now have the appropriate levels of tracking and monitoring required in a school. The TMR does rely heavily on staff input and we will be monitoring how approaches such as the SQA interventions affect exam results. The TMR also allows us to see a number issues that will impact attainment this session. One such issue is the number of pupils we have picked up in the Senior Phase who are not attending regularly and this has been more systematically tackled via guidance and SMT; with some students leaving to alternative positive pathways or improving their performance through supervised interventions. This term the SMT has been reviewing and revising the tracking and reporting phases within the calendar and has had support from TU reps. This TMR version will need to bring an additional focus on BGE as a phase 4 development in terms of interventions. Next session will also see us deliver the original timeline in the protocol.

**Corridor Management**

Senior staff are ensuring teaching staff are out in corridors between all periods to manage corridor behaviour which has been highlighted as an issue by staff, parents and young people. We also have a Duty Head rota which ensures senior staff are available to look for truant students or deal with students sent out of class. Behaviour has improved over the last few months and the school is more settled.

**Property Improvements**

 A Council Survey of the estate will occur in the near future to consider urgent capital needs. Most have a health and safety aspect. The good news is, we have been successful in gaining £15000 to fully upgrade the security camera system to support maintaining a secure and safe environment.

**Some key priorities as we move into session 2022-23 and beyond**

* Develop ethos and community through current and new activities/develop a shared school vision/RRSA – continue to develop to RRSA Gold award.
* Develop towards integration of Student Support Services including additional nurture spaces
* Develop PSE across S1-S6 and tracking of progress in significant aspects of health and well-being.
* Consolidate TMR and coursing/re-coursing operational processes including limiting late changes of level and intervening early when poor progress (phase 4).
* Consolidate Curriculum changes and review in 2023 when new timetabling starts.
* Continue to develop approaches to Teaching, learning and assessment based on the Big 5.
* Embed our new assessment outcome descriptors into our BGE (S1-S3) reporting system.

**Timetable 2022-23**

Our new timetable started two weeks earlier on Monday 30 May 2022. This year for the first time we are operating a single phase Timetable from S4-S6 giving more flexibility of choice. The initial subject offer for senior phase students was a 95% fit and we have managed to largely deal with student issues.

In line with our current SQA Presentation policy which encompasses coursing and re-coursing protocols, we are paying more attention to relevant course changes and are requiring young people to build more class time before making decisions as well as looking at the overall three year picture and likely destinations. Students will not just be able to drop courses to take up study periods without very good cause as there is evidence this does not support better outcomes and actually may limit choices going forward. Generally, we feel that many of our young people can cope with more academically and lack confidence and resilience. We are trying to improve outcomes and destinations across the board hand in hand with an improved range of courses that offer progression.

**Term 3 Activities/Events held this term**

**The S6 last official Day and leavers function** was held on Friday 27 May 2022 in the Bite site in school. It was a nice occasion for staff and students and there were a few tears shed by staff and students as they were piped out of the building.

**Our first Prize Giving** face to face for two years was held in the School Assembly Hall on Thursday 9 June 2022. It was really pleasing to return to an in person Award ceremony in the Hall and it was a great celebration with a large number of students attending. This year for the first time we had a joint Dux awarded – Sarah Black and Alexander Moffat sharing the prestigious academic award. My thanks to all the parent/carers and staff who attended and congratulations to all those who received an award.

**School Summer Concert 2022** – Thursday 23 June, 2022. This was a fantastic evening as we also said goodbye and thank you to three longstanding staff members – two music instructors who actually retired during lockdown – Fiona Mitchell and Andy Pilcher - and Marilyn Garvie, a cleaner who has worked in the school for some considerable time. A highlight was the return of a large number of former pupils who played a surprise number – the iconic 1999 hit by Divine Comedy – National Express. We look forward to future concerts post lockdown.

**A reminder about the close of School at the end of session** - This year we will be closing earlier at 12:15 pm on Thursday 30 June

Finally, a very big thank you to all parent and carers for you support during this busy and difficult session and indeed for the preceding two years where we spent the vast majority of time in lockdown. It was an anxious and disorientating time for communities but I feel we have come through it stronger as a community and we are looking forward to an increasing number of activities and welcoming more parents back into school in session 2022-23. I hope you and your loved ones have a happy, restful and healthy summer and that the sun shines wherever you are.

My very best wishes



Craig Biddick

Head Teacher