



Parent Update – June 2023

New Timetable

On Monday 5 June we welcomed back all returning students at the start of our new timetable for Session 2023-24. I would like to note my thanks to Mr Dewar, our timetabler, for his work on the timetable and Mrs Razavi in the office for her administrative support. It is a large undertaking to build a timetable that is flexible and meets the needs of the highest percentage of pupils possible. Over the next few weeks we will deal with omissions and other admin errors on student timetables. No students will be permitted to change courses until August when exam results are confirmed.

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.

New School Start Time

There is no longer a registration period at the start of the day. The school doors are open from 8.35am to allow students to enter and be in class on time.

- Students arriving after 8.40am to their period 1 class will be recorded as being late for school.
- Students arriving after 8.40am who have to enter at the main student entrance will be recorded by the school office.
- Continual and unexplained absence will attract a time back sanction. Continued offending will result in us communicating home to parents to seek improvement.

Exam Diet

We had a very smooth SQA exam diet and we note out thanks to members of the school and wider community who assisted with invigilation and SQA additional arrangements. **Results will be available to young people on 8 August** and they have received reminders about signing up for SQA text alerts today in school.

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.

Recent staff departures:

Amy Ritchie – Pupil Care and Welfare Office has left to taking up a teaching position and we will recruit for that role in August. We are also currently recruiting for an Office Support Assistant to support attendance management.

New Positions:

Mrs Leigh Wood has been appointed the new Principal Teacher Support and Inclusion

Gen Docherty who works in the Social Subjects area has now taken up a Principal Teacher of Guidance role taking over Mrs Wood's caseload.

Mrs Michelle Patterson will take up post as a Teacher of ASN in our new Complex Needs ASN base in August 2023

Mrs Angela Armstrong and Mrs Angela Hamilton will join the ASN Complex Needs base as Learning Assistants

Mrs Kelly Russam has recently started in the office as an Office Support Assistant

Mrs Laura Graham has resumed her role as Acting Principal Teacher of RMPS and Ms Hollie Lyon will continue in her role as Acting Depute Head Teacher – Learner Experience and Head of House for Clerk Maxwell

Ms Kathryn Hamilton will stay on in the Music Department for the new Session.

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

Ms Katy Hill (Mathematics) will be leaving us in August to start a new position in the Borders.

Mr Cook (Science /Chemistry) will leave at the end of Session as will Ms Nicole Robertson (Science/Biology). We wish them well in their new endeavours.

Ms Graziella Gungui PT Home Economics will be absent on a sabbatical next session

We have three longstanding staff with a total service of over 60 years leaving in August/September. All have made significant and sustained contributions to the School over their time here.

Mr Richard Havill has worked at the school since 1992 as a Teacher of English. Over that time he has seen

much change but has always maintained a strong commitment to supporting young people as learners and shows a strong passion for his subject area. Mr Havill has seen many young people pass through the school and has taught generations of some families in our community. Students will miss his humour, affable manner and approach to learning. In recent times Mr Havill has been working on the Eco schools and FOLA gardening assisting as a supporter and consultant and we will also sorely miss that input.

He will finally leave the school at the end of September and we wish him well for a long and healthy retirement.

Mrs Cathy Redford has been working in the school since 2004 as a Teacher of Science and Physics and will retire in August 2023. Cathy is another respected teacher and has encouraged generations of young people to enjoy Science but more importantly to love Physics. Like Richard she has a strong commitment to the young people she teaches and has been in the school community a long time. Young people will miss her and we wish her well in the future.

Mrs Diane Razavi will leave her role as Administration Manger in August after over 22 years of outstanding service. Over her time here she has supported a multitude of staff in their working lives and a huge number of young people on their school journey. She is a very able person who shows great loyalty and commitment to her job and she has a wonderful institutional memory that has helped the smooth operation of the school over many years. Diane will be hard to replace and we will miss her but we respect her decision to make a new start and wish her all the best in her new role.

New Staff

We have three Newly Qualified Teachers starting in August.

Ms Victoria Murray in Home Economics, Ms Zuzanna Dziewulska in PE and Ms Taylor Kinmond in Physics.

We are currently recruiting for some vacancies in August 2023 and I will update you at the start of session.

Uniform into next session

It is pleasing to see so many young people in good uniform at the start of the new timetable. There are some minor issues with non-black hoodies or jerseys. We realise that many young people grow quite a bit over summer. We have therefore asked that if there are issues prior to summer that parent/carers write to confirm that an exception to wearing uniform is required until August. At the start of session we would respectfully request all young people are in correct uniform.

The uniform is as follows:

White shirt or blouse

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

School tie

Black trousers or skirt

Black shoes

School Blazer – if purchased

Ripped/torn jeans and skirts **are not permitted as normal uniform**. Outdoor clothing must be removed in all classes.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past ties have been free but unfortunately rising costs and budget cuts have forced us to recover some of the supply cost. **This year school ties; junior blue and white striped and senior – black with crest, will therefore cost £5 and are available now from the school office**. This charge also applies to incoming S1 students in August. Any student who is entitled to free school meals will receive a tie free of charge.

Non-uniform clothing, worn temporarily must be of an appropriate standard. This is also the case for non-uniform days where there should be no offensive logos on clothing, football strips or beach wear. We are planning a formal uniform consultation with young people and parent/carers on our return in August and that will help inform our uniform policy moving forward.

The Parent Council on behalf of the Parent Forum has formally 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 available for all students. A full range of sizes are available at the following cost of:

Size 28-32 £37.50 per blazer

Size 34 and above £39.50 per blazer

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

Web address for online orders is: <https://www.stevensons.co.uk/school-finder/penicuik-high-school-penicuik>

Simply go to the website and register and then log in to make an order. Sizing guidance is available but the school also has samples you can try on for size. Please call the office before the end of term to arrange a suitable time to try them on.

Stevenson's Telephone number 01727 815700

If you require financial support please contact the school office who will be able to advise you about the Council's school clothing grant or other assistance. The school will be able to help. No student should miss out on wearing a blazer or any other uniform item because of cost and we are committed to poverty proofing uniform.

New Student Leadership Team

After a robust process involving making a formal application, school voting and interviews, I am pleased to announce the following are the Student Leadership team for 2023-24

School Captains

Ava Fox

Calum Hind

House Captains

Orlaith Petit

Anna McDonald

Beth Hudson

Chloe Aitken

School Champions

Jay Stuart – Student Leader – Equalities and Diversity

Aimee Aitken- Student Leader – Wider Achievement

Literacy Leads

Emily Walker

Paige Lorimer

I would like to congratulate them on behalf of the school community and we look forward to working with them this session.

School Ethos Review – Vision and Values

BGE 'Off Timetable' Event.

On Wednesday 31st May, all pupils in S1 - S3 participated in an off timetable event designed to start the process of creating a new vision statement for Penicuik High School. Pupils took part in three different sessions exploring aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals, community through sports and the importance of vision and values to an organisation.

All staff were involved in running and supporting sessions on topics as diverse as equalities, our partnership with Namadzi CDSS in Malawi, peace and justice, kindness and wellbeing, fair trade and sustainability. Pupils contributed well to the sessions with many insightful conversations. The session on vision was thought provoking. Pupils looked at vision statements from well known businesses and related this to their own experiences of the company. Pupils were then able to discuss the importance of a vision for Penicuik High School and worked in groups to identify key words they felt should form part of our new school vision.

Our next step is to involve parents and staff in this process. We value your input and would love for you to join us in shaping our school's vision. If you're interested in attending a session where we can work

together, please email k.murphy@midlothian.education to express your interest. We will organise a session early in the new term, allowing us to collaborate and create something truly meaningful for our school.

Term 3 Activities

The S6 last official Day and leavers function was held on Friday 2 June 20223 in the Bite Site. It was a lovely occasion for staff and students and there were a few tears shed by staff and students as they were piped out of the building.

School Summer Concert 2023 – Wednesday 21 June. This is always a fantastic evening particularly as we say goodbye to senior Music students. Tickets are available from the Music Department at school

The School Prom will be held the Caves event Centre in Edinburgh on Tuesday 20 June. Staff are looking forward to another wonderful evening spent celebrating the end of school with the S6 leavers.

A reminder about the close of School at the end of session - we will close for the session at 3:30 pm on Wednesday 28 June.

Finally, a very big thank you to all parent and carers for your support during another busy session as we continue to drive our improvement agenda for the school. 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