**Parent/ Carer Update – August 2022** 

Dear Parent/ Carer

I would like to congratulate our young people in the senior phase on a very good set of exam results. It was a difficult year but our students have shown commitment and resilience in sitting formal exams for the first time post the pandemic constraints and overall the key outcomes are the best in six years.

We arelooking forward to welcoming your child back to school on Wednesday, 17 August.

**School starts at 8:30 am** and students will follow their timetable from the end of last term and attend the same registration class.

**New S1 will be informed by Group call of their registration teacher and classroom on Monday 15 August. On Wednesday 17 August– ALL new S1 students should go to the Assembly hall.** We will have senior students and staff available to support young people to find their registration room and classes on the first day.

**Uniform**

A reminder that we expect full compliance with uniform rules that have existed for a number of years and have been agreed with the Parent Association and Parent Forum. Students at all levels should no longer come to school in PE uniform unless by prior arrangement for special events.

***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 student moving into S4 will now receive a free tie on **Monday 22 August** 2022 as the order has been delayed by manufacturing issues.

Black trousers or skirt

Black shoes

School Blazer – if purchased. A further order period will be set up after the October break for winter.

**We will be checking uniform to ensure 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 including headwear. Football scarves and colours are not allowed in school. Clothing should not have any offensive logos or wording. Leggings (except for PE), ripped/torn jeans and skirts and crop tops **are not permitted as normal uniform**.

Students who do not have the correct uniform with good reason, should have a note from their parent / carer excusing the uniform aberration and indicating the requested length of the exemption. Continual disobedience over uniform will be raised with parent/ carers.

Financial support for uniform is available through the Council clothing grant and or the school. Please contact the school in confidence if you need any financial support.

**Break and Lunchtimes**

A full catering service is now available from the school Bite Site (canteen). All students should bring a water bottle to school. It can be refilled at the water fountain. Sunhats are currently recommended if outside

**Break time:** Students from S2-6 are currently allowed out of school at break under a trial period this term. This has been agreed at the Student Parliament but may be subject to change if there is continual lateness and littering in the community.

S1 must remain in school at break time and can use the Bite Site or recreation area just outside the Bite Site where there is also outdoor seating.

**Lunch break-** Only S2-6 may leave the grounds at lunchtime. S1 must stay in school.

S1 may use the Bite Site for lunch inside or the safe area outside the Bite Site where there is outdoor seating. Seniors – S6 may eat lunch in their common room. S4/5 may use the Green Seat area. If students leave the building at lunchtime they must return on time for Period 6 (1:50 pm)

Parent Pay will not yet be in place for S1 parents so it may be easier to provide a packed lunch for the initial days this week. If not we will make arrangements for lunch to be provided on Wednesday and Thursday for new S1 students. New students should be set up on our system and the PIN numbers shared by Monday 22 August.

**Going home for Lunch- S1 students:** Parent / carers may request permission in writing for their child to go home for lunch. As we have a duty of care we must have this consent or we will not release a student. N.B. This permission IS NOT to just go to the shops – students must go home or to a relative’s home as arranged.

**Reminders- Attendance and Late Coming Procedures**

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

***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.

**Chromebooks**

All S1 students should bring the Chromebook issued to them at Primary school with them to Penicuik High School. Any new pupils to the school who do not have a Chromebook will be able to collect a seed stock device from the office in the first instance. Arrangements will then be made for a new device to be permanently allocated.

All young people are expected to:

* Bring their device everyday
* Keep the device fully charged
* Ensure it is safe and kept secure
* Only use their Chromebook as directed for school/ subject level tasks

Misuse under the standard Student Use agreement may result in loss of access to the network or removal of the device during a lesson. The devices are monitored and access to unlawful or inappropriate sites is controlled via Lightspeed software. Use of the device at home is the responsibility of parents/ carers but we will support you with any issues.

**Reminder: Timetable 2022-23**

Our new timetable started two weeks earlier on Monday 30 May 2022. The same Timetable will run from August but with the necessary staffing changes in place. This year for the first time we are operating a single phase Timetable from S4-6 giving more flexibility of choice.

In line with our current SQA Presentation Policy at Senior Phase, 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. We will also look 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. This year’s SQA results indicate this approach is improving overall attainment.

My very best wishes



Craig Biddick

Head Teacher