



Parent Update – Easter 2024

Dear Parent/ carers

It has been a while since I last sent out a Parent / Carer update and this is largely due to my absence in February when I underwent minor surgery. As a result this is a slightly bigger update.

As the Term draws to a close, I wanted to update you on a few matters and also highlight some recent activities at the school.

SQA Exams

You should now have receive notification of when Exam leave starts. Key points to note are:

- ▶ Exam leave starts on Monday 29 April 2024. The final day for exam leave is Wednesday 29 May 2024
- ▶ This leave is for students sitting 3 or more SQA exams – all other students are expected to be in school. You may request that your child studies at school. Please contact the school office to confirm this request.
- ▶ An extensive range of study support and master classes are being offered to students. These were highlighted in the original letter home. Please encourage your child to take advantage of these opportunities
- ▶ The best type of revision is not just reading or highlighting notes. Students should actively retrieve knowledge by answering structured questions from past papers and using memory aids such as flash cards. We recommend websites such as ACHIEVE and BBC Bite Size or teacher's Google classroom review exercises to support review
- ▶ Students should plan a balanced Revision programme based on their Exam timetable to ensure a balanced approach to each subject
- ▶ In the vast majority of cases where young people do well it is because they are: well prepared, understand the sections in the course, are aware of what they need to specifically know and revise and memorise it. Anxiety can affect preparation and being unstructured about review can make this works. We are planning to run some sessions on controlling nerves and anxiety after the Easter break. **Students should start revision over Easter**

Key Dates for the Final Term

A Parent/ Carer Calendar update was be sent out this week but some key dates to highlight are:

Exam Leave starts – Monday 29 April

Inset Day – Monday 20 May (no students in school)

S6 Final Day – Leavers Breakfast – Friday 7 June

S6 Prom – Thursday 13 June

New S6 induction Programme - Thursday 30 and Friday 31 May

New Timetable starts – Monday 3 June - 8:40 am

Junior Prize giving Event (new BGE Event) – Thurs 6 June- 7 pm

The Business Fayre for the S1 Dragons Den Project

Employability classes were initially involved in this on Monday 5th February where our S1 pupils were lucky enough to be joined by some local Business owners from the Penicuik area to kick off their Enterprise Projects as part of their Employability Class.

A massive thank you to:

Alan Russell - AGR Fitness

Dave McMillan - Flat 5 Group

Karen Bennett - Karen Bennett Graphic Design

Pablo Sensat - Manda Huevos

Mark Blair - Effective Now

James Blair - James Blair Joinery

These 6 fabulous entrepreneurs gave up their time to speak to our students about their own business journeys.

The pupils then went on to plan and create their own business pitches to complete in the final of the Dragon's Den on the 18th March. This was judged by our local entrepreneurs who formed the panel of Dragons.

The final results were:

1st place:

The Drip It

Struan Fraser
Charlie McIntosh
Billy Connors
Lyll Berry
Steven Allan
Harry Anderson

2nd Place:

Rookie Cookie Candles

Neve McEwan,
James Sheridan,
Mirryn Webster
Katelyn Simpson- White

3rd place:

HIA

Hannah Brown
Isla Reid
Amelia Fraser

Tesco Award

We recently received £1000 from Tesco to develop the school grounds and plant food for the kids to make meals from. We are currently looking at what this work will look like given at some point there will be building works within the school estate.

Prom Wear Support

This year we have a Pre-Worn Prom wear appeal to help make prom more affordable for students. We've had an outstanding response from the community and had many donations from people within and out with Penicuik.

Youth and Philanthropy Initiative Final 2024

On Thursday 21 March, the RMPS department held a successful final event for the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). 53 pupils from four teams made it through to

the final to try to win £3000 for their chosen charity. They worked hard preparing a presentation on their chosen social issue and a local charity that they are passionate about. The judging team was made up of Jude King from last year's winning charity When You Wish Upon a Star, Andrew Jackson from Midlothian's YPI community partner The Orcome Trust, and finally our DHT Miss Lyon. The judging team were supported by Laura Gordon who is the YPI facilitator. S2 formed the audience so the standards are high for next year.

Judges commented that every presentation showed clear passion and determination from all S3 involved, however only one team were able to win the £3000 grant.

Judges felt that Amy Ward, Mylah Pender and Isla Kerr's presentation for Cancer Card deserved the grant most. Gordon Soutar from Cancer Card was present and commented that the money received today will directly help patients, family and friends affected by cancer in the Penicuik area.

Special mention goes to the other finalists who made the judging very difficult! They were:

Epilepsy Scotland - Amalia Spence and Isobel Crease

Women's Aid - Eleanor Neill, Freya Collett, Gemma Blyth and Amy Yule

Fight Against Cancer Edinburgh - Liv Davenport, Hannah Taylor and Ana Yordanova

Maths Curriculum Area Review

The school recently hosted an external review of the Mathematics Faculty. They discussed our self-evaluation, carried out a parent survey, in school focus groups and observed a wide range of classes. The visit clearly highlighted strengths in this area including the leadership as well as areas for development. The school has now developed an Action Plan to continue its improvement agenda.

In May, we will host another external visit as part of Midlothian Council's School Quality Improvement programme. This visit is part of an annual cycle of visits in Midlothian's schools where they look at key quality indicators. This visit will look at Learning, Teaching and Assessment.

School Toilets

The school continues to have concerns about behaviour in toilets. We are working with Facilities Services on-site to keep on top of cleaning and hygiene and senior staff continue a high level of supervision of these areas. We monitor all external corridor areas by CCTV and so can use time stamps to narrow down events and where we identify individuals causing issues we will pursue disciplinary action and work with our Community Police Officer.

After the break, I will be holding year level Assemblies to reinforce expectations and consequences of loitering/ truanting in toilets, committing acts of vandalism or vaping. We are actively exploring the use of vape alarms in toilets in partnership with the Parent/ School Partnership. We are also actively encouraging young people to stand up to the small minority causing damage or loitering in these spaces by anonymously reporting issues. Signage will be placed in toilets asking students to immediately report any concerns about health and hygiene or safety in the toilets to a teacher.

School Entry

Due to Fire regulations and Insurance students should not be in the building before 8:35 am. There has been an issue recently with young people getting into the building and wandering the school unsupervised which is a risk we must manage. We have had to respond to that very quickly and are now moving to put wet weather contingency in for Bus pupils and a few vulnerable students. I acknowledge this has upset some young people but we will issue passes promptly at the start of term to Bus pupils who arrive very early and a few vulnerable young people so they can go to a safe space to wait inside during spells of bad weather. External doors will be locked at the front of the building. In general student should plan to arrive by around 8:30 am to avoid long waiting periods outside.

Consultations

There will be several brief consultations next term. One will ask about school communication preferences while a second will ask about uniform changes. I would encourage you to give your views so we can improve these facets of school life.

This term is one of the hardest for the school community with short winter days, poor weather and prelims. The school has navigated some pressures due to staff shortages and I am sure everyone is looking forward to a two week break.

I would like to wish everyone in the school community a safe and happy Easter break. Thank you for your continued support of the school.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Craig Biddick', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Craig Biddick
Head Teacher