



Parental Update September 2021

- **Beginning of Term Feedback and reminders/expectations**
- **Covid Update**
- **SQA Information**
- **Digital Learning update**
- **New Acting Depute Head appointment**

Beginning of Term Feedback and Reminders

We have been impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm of our students since the start of term. We appreciate that Covid mitigations still in place can be demotivating for students but we wish to commend the majority for the way they have conducted themselves since our return.

As you know, we are setting high expectations around uniform. The majority of students are adhering to our dress code. We are delighted to see a number of our junior and senior students opting to wear our new blazer. It is still possible to order blazers as we move to the winter term.

To make a blazer order:

1. Visit www.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 price shown is the subsidised cost of £30.
5. Place your order.

We are regularly monitoring uniform and will contact home if we feel your child is not meeting our expectations. Please note that appropriate clothing should be worn on days when students have PE; strappy/cropped tops are not appropriate items for PE.

Reminder – Out of Class System

We also set high expectations in all learning areas of the school. If a student is not meeting the high expectations expected, the member of staff will refer to our 5 step process:

- Step 1 – First verbal warning
- Step 2 – Second verbal warning
- Step 3 – Isolated in class

- Step 4 – Sent to Principal Teacher (will stay with PT or, if junior, sent to work in senior class). Parent/carer receives 'Out of Class' text alert.
- Step 5 – Class teacher completes a referral to the subject PT.

If your child is removed from a class you will receive a text alert to make you aware. No action is required, this text is for information only but highlights that your child has not met behaviour expectations in a particular class. The senior management team monitor alerts and will issue a time-back sanction (on a Friday afternoon) if necessary. Parents/carers will be notified by email or text.

We continue to have split break and lunch arrangements for our junior and senior students. We would encourage students to bring their own lunch and have this on site. Students in S2-S6 do have permission to leave the premises for lunch but we would remind students they are representing the school when in the community; we keep in regular contact with local businesses who highlight to us any behaviour concerns. A reminder that no student should leave the school grounds at break. S1 parents can request for their child to have lunch at home, please email penicuik_hs@midlothian.gov.uk to make this request.

As a school community we are encouraging a "telling culture"; if your child has witnessed behaviour that makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, they should immediately tell a member of staff. Likewise, if your child feels they have been a victim of unkind behaviour they need to make a member of staff aware. All of our students should feel safe in school; we have zero tolerance of bullying. If you have any concerns you would like to raise, please email penicuik_hs@midlothian.gov.uk.

Covid Update

We have had a very small number of positive cases since re-opening that are contained and students are isolating as per Track and Trace guidelines. Please consult the attached 'Warn and Inform' letter from the NHS for further advice. If there is a rise in case numbers we will work with Track and Trace and take the appropriate action which will be communicated to students and parents.

We continue to encourage students to complete Lateral Flow Testing. LFT kits are available from the school. Permission forms are required which can be collected from the Library.

Please be aware that LFT must not take place in school, this must only happen at home, preferably under parent/carer supervision. If your child has a positive LFT please follow NHS guidelines whilst keeping the school informed.

Mask wearing is compulsory for secondary school students in Scotland, with the exception of those with a medical reason. We will issue letters to parents/carer when a student is repeatedly not wearing a mask. Please inform the school if your child is medically exempt – an email stating the medical reason should be sent to penicuik_hs@midlothian.gov.uk

SQA Information

On 18th August the SQA published the following statement:

"SQA has today set out the key detail on plans for assessment of National Qualifications in 2021-22. This follows confirmation from the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills that exams will be held for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses.

The Cabinet Secretary has informed parliament that, 'The central planning assumption is that an examination diet for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will be held in session 2021-2022. This decision has been informed by the views of stakeholders, including the National Qualifications Group, and by public health advice.'

SQA exams will take place from 26 April to 1 June 2022 with results day on 9 August 2022. While detailed planning for delivering exams is now underway, it is also important that SQA, along with the whole education system, plans for any further disruption that may happen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are continuing to discuss with the National Qualifications Group any additional measures that will help the education system respond to further significant disruption to learning or changes to public health conditions.*

National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher assessments in 2021-22

Modifications to the assessment requirements for each National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher course were announced in June (a brief overview of these can be found by visiting sqa.org.uk/nq subjects, selecting a subject and then selecting the 'Course information 2021-22' tab). The modifications will help reduce the volume of assessment and ease teacher, lecturer and learner workload, while maintaining the credibility of these qualifications. This will also allow for any lost learning caused by Covid-19 and will support learners as they progress to the next stage of their qualifications.

For most National 5 to Advanced Higher courses, these are the same modifications that were put in place for 2020-21.

In response to feedback from teachers and lecturers, and the recent easing of public health restrictions, SQA has adjusted the modifications in around 70 courses for 2021-22 to give learners more opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

From Thursday 19 August, SQA will start to publish 'modification summary documents' that provide more detail on the 2021-22 modifications and explain the assessment requirements for this year. This will help teachers and lecturers to prepare learners for their coursework and/or exams. All summaries will be available by the end of August 2021.

In the event of further significant disruption to learning

If there is further significant disruption to learning and teaching this session, beyond that experienced in 2020-21, appropriate additional support measures for learners will be put in place to ensure that exams can still go ahead. For some courses this could include, for example, advance notice of some topics which will feature in exams.

In the event of significant changes to public health conditions at exam time

If changes to public health advice mean that large gatherings of people are no longer permitted in April to June, and exams are cancelled, SQA will ask teachers and lecturers to use their professional judgement of assessment evidence to determine learners' grades.

Schools, colleges and training providers will not be required to carry out any additional assessments, as they did in 2020-21. Instead, teachers and lecturers will be asked to determine learners' grades, based on the work that learners have already completed throughout the year.

To prepare for this scenario, teachers and lecturers should — as they would in a normal year — gather examples of learners' work and keep a record of any assessments that take place throughout the session, for example prelims, practical performances or class tests that provide an appropriate degree of challenge, integration and application of the key knowledge and skills of each National Course.

Gathering completed assessments as learners progress through the session, will provide a reliable collection of evidence that can be used to determine their grades if exams are cancelled at short notice.

SQA will provide all schools, colleges and training providers, as well as learners, parents and carers, with more information and appropriate guidance on the arrangements for assessing and awarding National Qualifications at the earliest opportunity.

Fiona Robertson, SQA Chief Executive and Scotland's Chief Examining Officer, said, 'SQA understands the need to provide teachers, lecturers, parents, carers and learners with clear and timely information regarding assessments in 2022. Now that the Scottish Government has confirmed exams will be held if safe to do so, I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the whole education system to deliver credible qualifications for Scotland's learners.'

Please be aware that currently we plan to hold S4 Prelims in November/December and S5/6 Prelims in January. More information to follow.

Digital Learning Update

Changes to Google Classroom access

Currently we are migrating to new Google Classrooms, as part of Midlothian's move to Google Workspace. This is an exciting move as it will allow our school community to access more of Google Education's functions and features.

Logging into the new classrooms is very easy – **but you don't need your GLOW password.** Your new username is simply your existing network username@midlothian.education the password is the same as your network password. We have attached a 'How to login' guide to help you with this.

Over the next few weeks, students will be given new classroom codes by their teachers, or they will be added to new classrooms. I would also note that in some subject areas there has

been a temporary reduction in homework as resources are being moved over to the new system.

We hope that this move will allow a more streamlined access to Google Classroom.

Please contact the school if you have any questions.

1:1 Device Roll-Out

Every school age pupil in Midlothian is to receive a learning device such as an iPad or Google Chromebook as part of Midlothian Council's £10.5 million investment in digital learning. Devices will be issued as part of an accelerated roll-out within this academic session.

To that end, Midlothian council are recalling all loaned devices from last session.

If your child was issued with a chromebook last session (as part of the council's device loaning system) they now need to return the device (with charger and cover) to our Support for Learning Department base as soon as possible. Midlothian Council need to collect and update chromebooks in anticipation of the 1:1 device roll out.

Please note: this does not apply to Students with Additional Support Needs (ASN) - by now they should have received a replacement chromebook and returned their old one. If you think your child has not had their replacement ASN chromebook, please ask them to visit our Support for Learning Department Base.

New Acting DHT Role Session 2021-22

I am pleased to announce that Mr Craig Dewar has been appointed to an Acting Depute Head Teacher role at Penicuik High School for this session. Mrs Dewar is currently an Acting Head of House at Lasswade High School and has a wealth of senior management experience. Mr Dewar will start with us officially on Monday 27 September, 2021 and his role will include further developing parental and student engagement.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the support you have given the school as we re-open. The school remains committed to all young people in our care and we are focused on maintaining a positive and productive learning environment as society re- opens. In coming weeks we will be surveying the young people in our school community about health and well-being and feeling safe at school. There are also planned reviews of Pupil Support and a re-look at our Vision and values. I hope you will find time to help contribute feedback through various mechanism.

My very best wishes.

Craig Biddick

Head Teacher