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27th August 2021

Hello,

Please find below the first parental update letter of session 2021-22 that contains a lot of information about your child's learning in the coming months. After the main section, which has information for all year groups, there is some information relevant to specific year groups and clearly labelled as such. I hope you find this helpful.

Re: The School Calendar

With thanks for your patience, I can now confirm that the school calendar has been finalised. For those receiving this letter by email, a copy of the calendar is attached. Otherwise, a copy can be downloaded from the website or you can regularly check the Calendar section of www.cullodenacademy.com which lists all upcoming events.

In planning our calendar of events, we have decided to be optimistic that conditions will improve. Therefore, whilst no national or Highland Council approval has been given yet for restarting face-to-face Parents' Evenings, we have allowed for these starting next term if conditions permit. If that proves not to be possible, we will look at increasing our online communication with parents and the possibility of virtual Parents' Evenings. You may notice that the calendar has a Parents' Evening and a Parents' Information Evening for most year groups. The difference is that whilst the Parents' Evening is an opportunity to meet your child's teachers, the Information Evening is a general overview of all the courses, experiences and opportunities that will be on offer at the next stage in your child's learning so that you have all the information you need to support them with their decisions at Choice of Course time.

Re: Coronavirus

Schools returned in August with almost identical measures in place to what we had in June. Very quickly it has become apparent- across Scotland and definitely here- that the increased risk of transmission of the Delta variant means that in the coming weeks we are likely to see more cases than we did in June until the situation stabilises.

We have a well-established system in place and respond as quickly as possible to every positive case and to every pupil who indicates possible symptoms of Coronavirus. We work very closely- day and night- with the Health Protection Team to keep the school as safe as possible and at all times follow their advice about who needs to isolate and for how long. The recent outbreak in S1 resulted in us having to ring over 100 households and ask them to come and collect their child who had to go home and self-isolate. Thank you very much to every one we spoke to for being so supportive and responding so quickly.

Re: Building works

Your child returned to school last week and will have discovered that there is still a lot of building work going on. The inside works are finished for now and attention is focused on completing the additional temporary classrooms, the new fire evacuation point, external covers over some areas and the installation of another place- outside the main building but in the school grounds- where pupils will be able to get food at break and lunch-time. Next month work will start to renovate the final toilet area which should be completed at some point next term and will be designated a unisex toilet to complement the male and female blocks that are now established in the school.

Head Teacher message for year groups

S1

Unfortunately, we are still not allowed to have large assemblies, which is very frustrating as I know from previous years that these are an important way of communicating with you and integrating you into the life of the school. I hope that this situation will change soon and I will be able to meet you all and talk about my ambitions for the school, what we are doing to help you develop and prepare to make your way into the adult world and what we hope you will achieve during your time at Culloden Academy. In the meantime, when you see me in the corridor or at the break queue, please feel free to ask me any questions. Teachers tell me that you have made a very good first impression- well done and please keep up the good work.

S2

I'm looking forward to when we can meet as a whole year group so that we can look back at what you achieved and survived last year and start to talk about some of the options and opportunities that are coming your way in the coming years. There is a special responsibility on you- you remember better than other year groups how it feels to be the newest member of the Culloden Academy family- please look after the S1s and welcome them in over the coming days and weeks.

S3

This is a big year in your education- a year in which your efforts make a big difference to which courses you study in S4 and beyond and thereafter to what jobs, apprenticeships or courses you go onto after you finish school. Please continue to build on the dedication and hard work you have shown- in *very* difficult circumstances- in S1 and S2.

S4

Hopefully your timetable is full of courses that you selected, you are studying subjects that you are interested in and developing skills that you can see yourself using in the adult world. SQA have confirmed that their plan is to run exams for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses starting on 26th April next year. Please, please do not worry about the fact that this is your first 'exam year'. Your teachers know what you need to do to get ready for assessments, how to help you get there and they have a plan for the year that will put you in a great position to succeed. Please just turn up as often as possible, do the very best you can and let us worry about SQA for you. You will have Prelim exams in January and these give you some experience of what it feels like to sit an exam and how ready you are for the exams- your teacher will support and prepare you for these and we will share more details about this after the October holiday.

S5 and S6

I don't need to tell you how high the stakes are this year but as per my message to younger years the single most important thing you can do to help make this a successful year is turn up:

- Turn up by attending as close to 100% of the time as possible.
- Turn up by participating in the lesson and the experiences offered
- Turn up by meeting deadlines, submitting homework and fulfilling promises to staff
- Turn up by asking questions or asking for help when you want and need it. There is a huge amount of support we can offer you but sometimes you need to turn up at your Guidance teacher or class teacher's door and ask for it.

In future letters I intend to share information about what is happening in the school and how we continue to push forward to provide the best and most relevant experience for young people. Before COVID I offered regular drop-ins for parents who wanted to call down to school without an appointment to chat about an aspect of school life. As soon as permitted, I will resume this and let all parents know.

In the meantime we will continue to use the school website to share information and through that Facebook and Twitter. Also, significant information is emailed out to all parents who have shared their email address with us- if you have not received this letter via email but would like to in future, please just email culloden.academy@highland.gov.uk and we will add you to the mailing list.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Vance". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'V'.

Dr J Vance
Rector