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31st March 2023

Introduction

The January to March term is always an exhausting one for our young people- and for their teachers. Prelims, Reports, Choice of Course, SQA deadlines sit alongside dark mornings and evenings, poor weather and this year the disruption of industrial action- which is now thankfully behind us. I hope the holiday is a restful one and I look forward to working with you next term.

I think the school makes good use of Facebook, I believe our website is regularly updated and I know that we have recently added the feature that allows you to sign up for automatic notifications when anything is posted to the website. For that reason, I only write one parental letter per term- the most pertinent information is shared as we get it. What follows is a little bit of a look back and some early warnings about next session. If you have suggestions about other ways in which we could better communicate about the life of the school, please just contact us with your suggestions at culloden.academy@highland.gov.uk

Approaches to celebrating success:

The 4 Year Heads are now competing to show the achievements of their year groups on large boards outside their offices. School staff want to say well done- *we see what you have achieved and we are impressed*. Unfortunately, our young people are often shy or reluctant to be pointed out for what they have done. If you know your child has done something and you think a well done is in order – please let their year head know.

Prize Giving. Prize giving will be on 5th June at 7pm. Letters will be sent to pupils that should attend. This replaces the previous Graduation Ceremony as we are now having a leavers meal with S6 pupils just ahead of the exams.

Awards. We are also introducing new awards- Culloden Academy School values awards. In April staff and pupils will have (separate) votes to recognise pupils who have characterised our school values- pupils whose words or actions demonstrate ambition, community, kindness and respect.

Congratulations

There have been many great achievements by our young people this term and I would like to just pick out a few that reached national level in their performance:

SCOTTISH INDOOR ATHLETICS

A number of our pupils travelled to Glasgow for the Scottish Schools Indoor Championships. Congratulations to all on such fantastic achievements! The results are as follows:

MARVELLOUS IGBINIDU (S5)

U20's 60m – GOLD

U20's 200m – GOLD



LUCAS DAVIDSON (S2)

U15's 60m – SILVER

U15's 200m – GOLD



MURRAY TAYLOR (S1)

U15's High Jump – GOLD

U15's 60m Hurdles –
GOLD – With a new PB of
9.51s!



SCOTTISH SCHOOLS
BASKETBALL

It was a busy last week of term for our basketball teams who travelled to Dundee to compete in the Scottish Schools Cup.

S1 Boys:

Our S1 boys team put on a brilliant performance. Despite being 5 points up at half time, the boys unfortunately narrowly missed out on the finals, placing 4th overall.



U15 Girls:

Our U15 girls team did Culloden particularly proud. The girls made the final and played Wallace High, where they scored an amazing 78-38 making them the competition winners!



Senior Girls:

Our senior girls team managed to make it to the semi-finals. Unfortunately, they scored 57-78, missing out on the chance to play in the final.

However, they secured 3rd place in the play-offs



winning 56-27!! Well done girls!



SCOTLAND V ENGLAND **U18s**

We wish Aaron Nicolson (S6) and the rest of the U18 Scotland football team the best of luck as they travel to the Broadwood Stadium in Cumbernauld where they play England in the Centenary Shield campaign (Friday 31st).

We are even lucky enough to have a supporters' bus going down to watch and cheer Aaron on!



Change to the start of day process

Every session staff analyse and explain their exam results and this year I added a section at the end to ask departments what more could be done at a whole school level to support high attainment and achievement for all. The answer from almost every department was -improve punctuality and attendance and we will increase attainment and achievement. The numbers are simple- 95% attendance which sounds really good still amount to missing 60 Blocks or class time or 50 hours in a school session.

To support this request, this session we have been trying to unpick some of the changes that we had to put in place due to COVID. Unfortunately, as we all know there is a huge distance between changing processes and changing hearts, minds and habits. Attendance and punctuality in general remain a concern for us, but attendance at the start of day is at an unacceptable level.

The most recent Parent Council meeting gave me an insight into the problem when parents shared that their children questioned when school actually started and whether Registration counted. It does count but it is becoming less purposeful because of the number of pupils coming in at the end of it and we no longer run assemblies at that time because too many pupils miss the messages through poor punctuality.

Therefore, we are going to trial a new system starting next term. Planned for change of timetable (15th May), we are not changing the timings of the school day but we are changing the sequence- the school day will **still** start at 8.40 but that will be the first class. When it finishes at 9.30 we will have a ten minute registration block allowing regular assemblies and better information sharing.

We hope that moving to this firmer start to the day makes things easier for parents at home- please encourage your young person to be in the building by 8.35 and at the door of their first lesson by 8.40 next session. If you drop your child off, can I ask that you bring forward your departure time if you are ever getting notifications of lateness in registration. I am aware that delays in bus arrivals will therefore impact Block one classes but we believe that these are rare enough to be offset by the improvements in attendance and time spent in lessons.

CCTV

You will be aware that the school had a series of break-ins back before Christmas. One of the consequences of this was a review of the security of the school building. Out of that review came the decision to improve the CCTV presence inside and around the school building. Over the Easter holidays approximately 40 cameras will be installed in and around the school. Beyond building security, we believe that this will increase the areas of the school that pupils feel safe in and reduce anti-social behaviour. I will provide further information once the system is in place.

Next term

If the term just finished is a long hard grind, the term to come is characterised by change. Senior pupils go on Study Leave on Friday 21st April- some never to return. S1, 2 and 3 pupils start their new classes on 15th May, S4 and 5 on 29th May (except for a small number who have an exam after that time). Some staff will be leaving us in the summer and early next term I will be interviewing for 8 new staff. We will also be interviewing for pupil leadership positions in most year groups in May and June. Finally, in June we welcome our new S1s on a transition visit as preparation for moving up here in August. Hopefully the sun will shine a lot more as well.

Building works

Plans are in place for some further internal improvements to the school over the summer holidays to support science and PE. We eagerly await the outcome of the Council's capital review in May which should clarify the size and speed of further changes and additions to the school. I will update all parents as soon as we have information to share.

Thank you for reading this and my best wishes for a restful and maybe even warm break.

Regards,



Dr J Vance