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Dear Parents/Carers

At the end of my first term at Culloden Academy, I would like to extend my thanks for the very warm welcome I have received from pupils, staff and parents. As you can imagine, it's been a steep learning curve, but I have very much enjoyed getting to know the Culloden Academy community and am looking forward to the events and activities planned throughout the year. In this newsletter, I would like to highlight some of the successes of the term and share plans and ideas for the future.

Uniform

Uniform is always a tricky topic and as the term has progressed, uniform standards have slipped. I've had feedback from pupils and school uniform hoodies priced at approximately £20 will now be available from local suppliers. I'm sure that our pupils will appreciate this if we get any more storms to protect them from the wind! MacGregors in addition to Schoolwear Made Easy will now be suppliers of Culloden Academy school uniform which will, hopefully, make the uniform more easily accessible.

However, please note that all other hoodies are not school uniform and should not be worn. The uniform is black and white, and all pupils should wear an item of clothing with the school logo. Tops should cover the pupil's navel and there should also be no visible underwear. Studies have shown that pupils who follow the school uniform code have a more positive mindset towards learning and higher achievement so thank you for helping us support your young people by encouraging them to wear school uniform.

Mobile Phones

When I became headteacher, I was assured that the mobile phone policy in place was working and followed by pupils, and I was pleased to see that it was. However, over the term, this too has slipped, and I would encourage all pupils to keep phones switched off and out of sight during class time and when moving around the school. I know that pupils sometimes check their timetables on their phones between lessons but it's very tempting to also check messages and notifications. Please can all pupils make a paper copy of their timetable over the October holiday and when they return to school make sure that phones are consistently switched off except at break and lunchtime.

Sponsored Walk

Thank you to everyone who supported the sponsored walk. We were extremely lucky with the weather, just managing to stay ahead of Storm Amy. All pupils should be congratulated on their positive attitudes and fun approach to the walk. The tourists at Culloden Battlefield were particularly complimentary about the way they conducted themselves and I was a very proud headteacher. Sponsor money goes towards the 'extras' in the school which recently has included transport subsidies for sports matches and STEM trips, World Book

Day books, paint for a Garden Club mural, a subscription to The Times newspaper and soldering irons for Physics. We are very appreciative of all sponsor money which should be returned to school by Friday 31 October at the latest and preferably by Friday 10 October.

School Trips and Activities

We have had several school trips this term including a senior trip to Art Galleries in Edinburgh and a drama trip to see Percy Jackson also in Edinburgh which have been much enjoyed by both pupils and staff.

The Gold Duke of Edinburgh pupils successfully completed both the practice and the qualifying expeditions and both the Silver and Bronze groups are also working hard towards their awards.

Blythswood Shoe Boxes

The S3 Administration classes are doing the Blythswood Shoe Box appeal again this year as part of their Event Planning course. They ask for any donations of basic toiletries, small toys, gloves or other suitable items to be handed into reception by 10 October.

Sports Activity

We have had a busy term of sports matches with pupils successfully competing in football, rugby, shinty, netball, basketball and swimming. Although some results were positive and others a bit disappointing, what has been absolutely consistent is the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of both pupils and staff. All the athletes who have represented the school this term have done us proud. Special congratulations should go to Rhys Hind, Jack Aitchison and James Maclaren who were selected for the U15s North of Scotland Squad and to Will McGregor who has made it into the Senior Boys Squad. All boys had to go through two trials to become part of the squad. We also congratulate Dylan MacArthur who achieved second place in the Scottish Ten Pin Bowling National competition for his division where he was awarded quite the trophy!

Finally, we are also incredibly proud of Rosa Clark in S5 who was named as Scottish Artistic Swimmer of the Year at the Scottish Swimming Awards in Glasgow which is an amazing achievement.

As the year progresses, we are all looking forward to celebrating more sporting success. If your child is taking part in activities outside of school, either sporting or non-sporting, please let us know as we all enjoy hearing about the amazing achievements of our pupils.

Buses and Car Parking

Can I gently remind parents not to use the bus lane or car park in school to collect or drop off pupils. The buses run to a tight schedule and have limited space to manoeuvre so it's important that the bus lane is free in the morning and at the end of school for buses to use only. The car park should not be used for drop offs or pick-ups to allow the safe passage of pupils on foot and on buses. Thank you for your help with this.

Curriculum Review

As part of our School Improvement Plan, we are looking at how we can ensure that the curriculum pupils follow gives them the best opportunity to achieve their potential. To that end, we are investigating changing the curriculum structure to enable certificate courses to start in S3. This will potentially mean a change in our curricular structure from three years of Broad General Education (BGE S1 and S2) and then three years of Senior Phase (S3 - S5) to two years of BGE (S1-S2), two years of Middle School (S3 and S4) where National 4 and 5 qualifications are studied for and then two years of Senior Phase (S5 and S6) where further qualifications are studied, Nationals, Highers and Advanced Highers. The main benefit of this is to widen the number of qualifications pupils can take in S3 and S4 leading to more options in S5 and S6. However, we are at the start of the investigation and then consultation period so there are a lot of discussions to be had before any changes are made. To trial potential option columns, S2s will be asked to complete a mock options process early next term to test the viability of changing the structure before we go any further.

Headteacher Surgery

There will be a monthly 'Headteacher Surgery' to allow parents and members of the school community to drop in to school, no appointment needed, to see me if you have questions, concerns or just want a chat. This will usually be on a Thursday at the start of the month from 4pm - 5.30 pm with some changes due to school events and holidays. The dates for this term are as follows:

- Thursday 6 November
- Thursday 27 November
- Thursday 15 January
- Thursday 5 February
- Thursday 5 March
- Thursday 30 April
- Thursday 4 June

Dates for Your Diary

The Christmas Term is a busy one with plenty of opportunities to celebrate the season. The main dates to note are as follows:

Wednesday 8 October	-	S1 Parents' Evening
Friday 10 October	-	End of Autumn Term
Monday 27 October	-	Start of Christmas Term
Wednesday 5 November	-	S5/6 Parents' Evening
Monday 17 November	-	N5 Prelims begin
Thursday 20 November	-	Christmas Fayre
Wednesday 26 November	-	S2 Parents' Evening
Friday 28 November	-	End of N5 Prelims
Thursday 4 December	-	Christmas Concert
Tuesday 16 December	-	S3/4 Christmas Dance
Wednesday 17 December	-	S1/2 Christmas Dance
Monday 22 December	-	S5/6 Christmas Dance
Tuesday 23 December	-	End of Christmas Term
Wednesday 7 January	-	Start of Spring Term

Please note: to attend the Christmas Dance, we expect pupils to have 85%+ attendance, wear school uniform and have a positive attitude to school in terms of studying and behaviour.

I hope that everyone has a lovely October break, and I look forward to seeing you in school for our activities and events next term.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Claire McGonigal
Rector