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Penicuik High News

Participation – Respect – Inclusion – Determination – Excellence



January 2017

Dates for the diary

9 Jan – All resume

All staff and pupils return @8.30am

12 Jan – S4 Parents' Evening

Parents/Carers will have the opportunity to discuss their learner's progress in S4.

16-27 Jan – Senior Prelims

See inserted article for more information.

31 Jan – Parents' Association Meeting

The meeting will be held at 7pm in Penicuik High School. All parents/carers are invited to attend.

1 Feb – HPV vaccinations

Our S1&2 girls will receive their HPV vaccinations – forms should have already been returned to school. All pupils having the vaccination should ensure they have a good breakfast and wear a short sleeved top under their shirt.

Active Schools Edinburgh and Midlothian Swimming Championships

Congratulations to the pupils who represented Penicuik HS at the Edinburgh & Midlothian Swimming Championships at the weekend. They all swam well and achieved great times:

Fraser S3 – 3rd in 200m fly & 2nd in 100m back crawl

Ellie S3 – 11th in 100m breast stroke

Evie S3 – 5th in 200m fly

Active Schools Coordinator



Senior Prelims

S5&6 Prelim exams will start this coming Friday, 13th January 2017 and will run until Friday 27th.

Pupils have already been issued with timetables; please encourage them to check these carefully.

There is no study leave during the prelims - pupils will follow their normal timetable, leaving and returning to classes to take exams as required.

Study Support & revision classes have been running for quite some time and we would *strongly encourage* senior students to fully avail themselves of the extra help on offer.

Classes will run before, during and after the prelims and pupils should look to capitalise on this additional support during their run-up to the final exams in May.

We wish all our students the best of luck and every success, in all their exams and throughout 2017.

Mr Jamieson

Head Teacher's Message

Happy New Year to all parents, carers, students, staff and partners of Penicuik High School!

Can I firstly thank everyone who took time to complete our [Curriculum Survey](#), we had just under one hundred parental responses and our challenge now is to consider the results and comments received and develop our curriculum and learning and teaching accordingly.

The responses came from parents across all year groups, with the breakdown showing around a fifth of responses from each of S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5/6.

The first four questions were around learning and teaching and there was a strong consensus from all year groups that students find the work to be stimulating and interesting (83% agreed or strongly agreed). Taking learning outside the classroom was also seen to be a strong and worthwhile feature for students (82% agreed or strongly agreed) and further discussion with pupils was suggested to investigate how this experience could be developed.

Around 70% of respondents felt that their child was challenged and that there was a good pace to learning in lessons. However there was a suggestion that some lessons needed more pace and greater differentiation to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all pupils. This is a key area of focus for us and we have already been working closely on this with colleagues in other schools, as part of our work within the National Improvement Framework.

It is clear however that students have to work much harder when they move into Senior Phase with 92% of respondents seeing this as the case. While this may in many ways be understandable, as the external pressures of SQA exams begin to kick in, our aim is to ensure that our Broad General Education is challenging enough to prepare our students for Senior Phase, but still engaging enough to retain their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Encouragingly, the majority of students (79%) have clear targets to aim for in their SQA courses, our aim is to continue to offer mentoring support for all of our Senior Phase students to help them achieve their goals.

Course choice is an important consideration in any review of a curriculum and maintaining the current arrangement of students choosing 7 subjects in S2 was backed by 91%, with a strong feeling from respondents that a reduction would reduce the breadth of learning available. The need to create more vocational opportunities within the curriculum was also recognized in the responses. This very much mirrors the feedback from staff and students in the school and gives us a clear framework to plan for a curriculum which will best meet the needs of our community.

There will be the opportunity for further discussion, before the start of the formal course choice process, on the evening of **Wednesday 8 February 2017** to which all are invited. Details to follow.

Finally, it was most encouraging to see that nearly 90% of respondents felt the school actively promotes PRIDE and this together with the Merits feedback will be used by our Positive Behaviour Group to inform the next stages in their work.

Community Partnerships – Edinburgh College

As a school we are proud of our record of helping learners into sustained positive destinations beyond Penicuik High School. Edinburgh College are an invaluable partner, offering a wide range of courses to our current pupils and helping their transition into Further or Higher education.

This year they are introducing a Schools Guarantee for all winter leavers. Edinburgh College is therefore guaranteeing a place to study for all eligible school leavers in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian, to make sure they achieve their education and career ambitions.

The guarantee promises that they will help every school student who applies find a course at the right level in the right subject. A wide range of part time and full time programmes across the curriculum start in [January 2017](#). If this is something which you feel would benefit your young person, please direct them to discuss their options with their Guidance Teacher in the first instance.

There is also the option for pupils to attend college whilst still at school as part of the [Edinburgh College Schools](#) provision. Doing a college course during S4-S6 will give them extra skills and experience to prepare for their future.

Summer leavers may like to take advantage of the [open days](#) running throughout January. Applications for courses starting in August open in the New Year.



Global Citizenship @ Penicuik High School

Word Wizard

PHS Modern Languages Dept. has entered the Word Wizard (think "spelling bee" in French!) organized by SCILT (Scotland's National Centre for Languages) and is looking for budding linguists from S1 and S2 to take part in a French spelling competition. Pupils take part as individuals and the finals will be held at the Scottish Parliament next May with a trophy and prize for the winners.

Spanish Tapas Café

Class 3H organised and ran a Spanish Tapas Café as part of their Spanish Minor course. The class made invitations for staff, wrote the menus and helped set up a selection of tapas for the staff whilst showing off their Spanish language skills by taking orders in Spanish. A great lunch was had by all staff attending who also managed a few words *en español* by the end of it!

Positive Behaviour Working Group.

We are making great progress as a working group and our next steps are to refresh our classroom posters around PRIDE and Get Set Go! We are launching with the art department a competition that will be open to all pupils to create an image that encapsulates our wonderful school values in the New Year.

There has been a tremendous response from staff, parents and pupils in response to house competitions, merits and we are keen to keep moving forward highlighting how positive behaviour can promote the vision and values of PHS and add to our great school community. If there are any parents who work in graphic design your help would be very much appreciated! More details to follow in 2017.

Parents Association

The Penicuik High School Parents Association would like to invite members of the school community to become involved in the *50/50 Club*.

Members pick a number, with each ball costing only £5.00 per month, with a monthly draw being made and the winner receiving 50% of the overall prize pot. The remaining funds are then used by the Parents' Association to support initiatives within the school. This session the Parents' Association has been able to support the opening of the Reading Room, designed to provide a positive space for learners to engage in literacy work, and the Duke of Edinburgh groups, providing funds to update equipment to ensure the lowest possible cost to pupils participating.

If you would like to support your High School by participating in the 50/50 club, please contact the Parents' Association, through the chairperson (jennifer-martin@talktalk.net), for more information on payment.



Tutor Period

11 January Period 6

26 January Period 2

Reporting Absence from School

Parents/Carers are reminded that they should phone into the school office each day of their child's absence. The office is open from 8am.

Any request for a pupil to have time off in term time must be addressed to Mr MacDonald, Acting Head teacher

Student Success

At Penicuik High we PRIDE ourselves on celebrating the successes of our pupils. Every term we celebrate our values with Merit awards, each session we celebrate their academic excellence with the subject awards ceremony and now for the first time we are publishing a selection of their wider achievements to allow our school community to join us in congratulating them. Below is a selection of their achievements – we are always keen to hear the positive work they have been involved with outwith the curriculum and would like the opportunity to recognise their success. Please get in touch with your young person's achievements so that we can join them in celebrating.

Jennifer S S3

A member of Scotland women's U15 Training Squad for Football, Jennifer plays for the Heart of Midlothian under 15's team. She has played for around eight years now and also plays for the school team, training four to five times a week, in addition to a match. She has been to 3 scouting trials of which she will find out the results in January.

Alan W S1

Alan is filming with the BBC on a project in Manchester. Alan's dad started a food bank a year and a half ago to help those who are disadvantaged which influenced him to begin participating. His dad went down to Manchester a few weeks ago to assist with an allotment at a different food bank that is funded by the BBC. It was an amazing opportunity for him to be involved in and he hopes to continue with this.

Fraser W S3

Fraser has had an amazing year of swimming, recently winning 3rd place in the 200m fly and 2nd in the 100m back crawl in the Edinburgh and Midlothian Swimming Championships. In October Fraser won the Junior Sports Personality award at the Midlothian Sports Awards. Fraser, a member of Midlothian Swimming Club, is a multiple Scottish national and schools champion.

Isla T S6

Participating in Venturefest in Glasgow as part of Project Airtch Isla was in a varied team ranging from 14-20 years old to design and develop ideas to help improve Scotland's air quality. The winning team gained a £500 prize investment from Social Investment Scotland and had a session meeting the Director of Science in Glasgow to further their ideas. It was a very interesting opportunity and Isla believes that it is very beneficial towards her future endeavours in engineering.

Dana P S3

Dana is an accomplished and very successful Karate National Champion. In November of this year, she came second in the European Championships in Switzerland. She represents Meadowbank Karate Club training twice a week and has competed in SKF karate since the age of 4. Also a keen footballer, Dana plays for Hutchison Vale Under 15's, in June of this year they participated the Barcelona Girls' Cup with many other international teams overall coming 2nd.

Marcus F, Chloe W & Emilie R S5

Three S5 students participated in the Smash Challenge which took place at Heriot-Watt University involving urban planning and design managing to win 1st place. They were given the site of Holyrood Park to do whatever they wanted with. The group's idea was to create a community centre to improve links with elderly people and schools in the area and many other amazing concepts.

Megan W S5

In December Megan won Junior Cyclo-Cross Champion 2016 by 5 laps in a time of 42:05 representing Peebles Cycling Club in Lochgelly. She trains five times a week, having participated in competitive Cyclo Cross since she was 12 years old. She also writes a blog documenting her experiences within the sport as she hopes to influence others to get involved.

Sean B S1

Sean takes part in OCR – Obstacle Course Racing which involves completing assault courses for prizes. Each race that he participates in he gains a trophy or medal for. He also participates in normal running races and trains regularly. Influenced by his family taking part in the Tough Mudder and coming 2nd he decided to take part and get involved and even participates in running races too.

Joe S S3

Joe is a very talented and skilled archer winning 1st place at the National Junior Indoors Event in Portsmouth. He participated in a series of 15 events to win the title and trains around 2-3 times a week. It is something that he is really passionate about and 6 years ago was asked to play for Edinburgh University's team making him the youngest member. Through all of these opportunities Joe is hoping that he can qualify for the Junior Commonwealth Games in the Bahamas next year.