
❖ Kincorth Academy Eagle News ❖

October 2006

Early Warning and Deadlines Information

Early warning

By now teachers have set **performance targets for pupils in S4,5,6**. These targets are based on the pupils' prior attainment in the subject, as well as other indicators such as marks from tests, homework, essays, and so on. **The purpose of setting targets is to challenge youngsters to perform to their best and get the best SQA grades of which they are capable.** The targets will have been discussed with the pupils, and agreed as realistic. Teachers regularly monitor pupils' performance against these targets and advise pupils whether they are on course, doing better than expected or, in some cases, failing to meet these targets. **We are now busy compiling information to send home to parents where pupils are not meeting targets.** This information will reach you just after the October break, and we are asking you to **take this news seriously and to discuss the reasons for underperformance, which will be detailed for you.** I am sure that you want your son or daughter to do well in exams, and **we are counting on your support to bring about the required change(s) which will result in an improved performance.** In the case of S4 pupils, their Estimate Exams begin on Monday 27 November, really only a few weeks away.

If you do not receive a letter you will be in the happy situation of knowing that your son or daughter is working well and making good progress against their targets.

Deadlines

Teachers work to strict deadlines in terms of covering the syllabus and preparing pupils for SQA exams. They have carefully worked out schemes of work, including **deadlines for pupils to submit key pieces of work, homework, folios, essays, and so on.** These are shared with pupils in plenty of time, and regular reminders are given. Unfortunately **some pupils fail to meet the deadlines** without good reason. This places considerable stress on them as well as their teachers since these pieces of work are vital components contributing to their overall award from the SQA. This year **we will share these deadlines on a termly basis with parents** in the expectation that you will find it useful and that you can **support us by monitoring your child's work to ensure that deadlines are being met.** If we can work in partnership, our young people will benefit in the

Graduation News

Congratulations to the these former pupils, graduates of Aberdeen University this year:-

Ross McKenzie, Bachelor of Laws, First Class Honours

Laura McIntyre, Master of Arts in English, Upper Second Class Honours

Claire Gribble, Master of Arts in English, Upper Second Class Honours

James Duncan, Designated Degree of Master of Arts in Accountancy



Link with School 71, Gomel

On Monday 2nd October we welcomed our latest exchange party of **6 students and 2 teachers from School 71, Gomel, Belarus.**

Our guests have spent **some time in school** following their hosts' timetables and taking the opportunity to familiarise themselves with our education system. As well as that, they have had a full programme of **cultural activities** including a tour of the city and a tour of the Town House. A joint **Concert at the Cowdray Hall** was a great success, and a friendly but competitive **game of dodge ball** proved to be a lively and fun event.

A **Ceilidh** on the Saturday evening was enjoyed by everyone, and the party got off safely early on Sunday morning. Once again I am grateful to Corinne Digges and Alan Tullock for organising the exchange, with the help of Elaine Robertson of Aberdeen City Council, and we now look forward to making a visit to Gomel next session.

Activities Week

Trips abroad have already been organised. **Information about local and other residential activities will be coming home soon.** I want to take this opportunity to remind parents that **Activities Week is a form of alternative curriculum.** As well as being fun, it gives us the chance to do different activities in different groupings from the normal timetable. In this sense it is **an important event for the social life of the school,** and contributes greatly to enriching the pupils' experience. **It is always disappointing when parents disregard Activities Week** by taking their children on holiday. Please ensure that your son or daughter makes choices for Activities Week and hands in their form by the deadline set.

Work Experience

Our S4 pupils have returned from a successful week of Work Experience. As usual, **employers have been happy with the young people they have been working with,** and most pupils found this to be a useful and worthwhile experience.

Building Work

The next phase of rewiring and relighting will take place in the Art department, and meetings with contractors will take place after the October holiday.

Drugs and Alcohol Information Evening

This event on 12 September organised by the Guidance staff was very well attended and proved to be **a hard-hitting but very useful evening for the parents in the audience.** A presentation by Grampian Police provided **information about drug use in Aberdeen and the local area,** and this highlighted the need for parents to be vigilant, since **the relative affluence of Aberdeen makes it the drugs capital of Scotland.** Parents were able to see a wide range of drugs at first hand, and were given information about the harmful effects of different substances.

The most **hard-hitting and heart-rending** part of the evening was **an account by Val Coutts, a former pupil, of her family's experiences with her son who had been a heroin addict.** Her shocking stories literally brought some members of the audience to tears, and **left no doubt in anyone's mind about the dangers of drugs, whatever the substance.** It was a brave and emotional presentation from Val and many of the audience stayed on at the end of the evening to speak with her and thank her for her contribution.

PSE materials were also available for viewing.

S5 PSE Day

The S5 PSE day on 12 September had as its aims to:-

- ◇ *enhance personal and social development*
- ◇ *increase self- confidence and self-esteem*
- ◇ *increase employability through development of core skills*
- ◇ *develop a positive and enterprising approach*
- ◇ *raise standards of personal achievement and attainment*

As well as contributions from Careers Scotland and Enterprise Education staff, the main event of the day was a **programme run by “Tree of Knowledge”**. This very engaging and punchy set of activities was **designed to allow pupils to eliminate dangers and focus on opportunities, encouraging them to see the positive, think about the opportunities of being senior students, and celebrate what they do well**. The activities certainly generated a lot of energy and enthusiasm, ably led by the very enthusiastic and friendly presenters. **Evaluations by pupils were 100% positive**, and this has been a very successful event. Teachers from other schools joined the programme at different stages, since this was the first time “The Tree of Knowledge” had worked in an Aberdeen Academy. We are grateful to the Enterprise Development team for collaborating with us and sponsoring this event.

Class Visits

Since the start of term the **Senior Management Team** have been making very regular visits to classes across the school. To date we have **visited well over 200 classes** in all subjects and year groups. In the first few weeks we concentrated particularly on new S1 classes, and are pleased to report that the vast majority of youngsters have settled in well. In almost all cases **classes are working well**, and teachers have many complimentary remarks to make about their progress and behaviour.

I have had a number of **visitors to the school**, and they have gone out of their way to say **how courteous and helpful they found our pupils**. **Relief teachers** who are familiar with the school have also made a specific point of **recognising what they describe as markedly improved behaviour and atmosphere in the school**. A recent **survey of staff and pupil opinions has also been very positive** in terms of perceptions about behaviour and relationships, and I will provide more information about this in due course. In the meantime, it is satisfying to see a positive and calm atmosphere in the school, after much work and collaboration in this area.

Petrofac

Once again Petrofac have provided funds for the purchase of new football strips, and additionally, a new set of strips for the senior basketball team.

Shakespeare

The works of William Shakespeare came alive at Kincorth Academy in September with performances by of **Romeo & Juliet**, and **A Midsummer Night’s Dream**. A number of English classes had the opportunity to attend these performances, which they greatly enjoyed. **Viewing performances of these works has greatly enhanced the pupils’ insights** into the plays, which they are currently studying as part of their course work.

School Uniform

Generally there is a **high standard of uniform in the school**, especially in the junior school where adherence to expectations is almost 100%. We have **concerns about some senior students** who regularly turn up without their tie, although they have signed an agreement to wear full school uniform. They have an important role to play as role models for other year groups. **In years 3 and 4, the problems we have relate mainly to girls who come to school quite smartly dressed, but not in uniform**. They may be wearing black, the school colour, but no identification as a Kincorth Academy pupil, i.e. a badge.

Pupils have been complimented on good uniform, and, where relevant, **some have been asked to improve**. **I regret to say that some have not responded and, in these cases, we have written to parents asking them to make the necessary changes within a 7-day period**. It may be the case that parents generally think that their children are coming to school in uniform, and we hope that these letters will alert them to the need for improvement.

School Closures

As we come into the start of poorer weather conditions, it is worthwhile reminding ourselves of procedures in the event of the school having to be closed (for whatever reason). Information about school closure will be intimated as quickly as is practically possible via:-

- ◇ Northsound One, and BBC radio
- ◇ The school information line, by dialling 0870 054 1999, and entering PIN code 011070

A new service has now been put in place which many of you will find useful. You will now be able to access information about school closures on Aberdeen City Council website by going to **www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/closure**. Detailed information will be posted and regularly updated directly by ourselves, so that you will be able to get information specific to our locality.

I would like to remind you that, whatever the school decides about opening or closing, you must decide whether it is safe for your child to travel to school in bad weather. Should we have to close for some reason during the school day, we will always make sure that pupils are able to make their way safely home before releasing them. If there is any doubt, pupils will be kept in school until suitable arrangements can be made.

Parent Teacher Association

In the past the school has had a very successful PTA which organised social events and raised substantial amounts of money for the benefit of the school. The PTA has been inactive for a couple of years, but I know there is interest among some parents to re-energise the PTA. If you are interested, please get in touch. It can only be in the interests of the school ...ultimately the pupils ... if we find ways to work together to make the school a better place.

Dates for your diary

October

Monday 23 Term starts

November

Friday 10 In Service Day
Friday 17 Children in Need
Monday 27 S4 Estimate Exams begin

December

Monday 4 P7 Parents' Evening Loirston
Tuesday 5 P7 Parents' Evening Charleston
Monday 11 S5/6 Parents' Evening
Thursday 21 Christmas Celebrations
Friday 22 Term ends

January

Monday 8 Term starts