Dear Parent/Carer

As we rapidly approach the end of term I have a number of notifications for you.

**Last Day of Term Arrangements**

As you will be aware, we have been promoting wearing of uniform as a key part of security around the school. Immediately after the incident with an intruder in November we cancelled a dress down day for this reason. We have been considering what is best in relation to the end of term which we wish to celebrate. Our decisions have been influenced by the security situation but also increasing publicity around both the cost of the school day for families and the environmental issues around “one-off” clothing purchases. As well as being highlighted in the media, our pupils have raised these issues with us. As such we have decided that the last day of term will be based on still wearing the uniform but allowing Christmas jumpers (if pupils have these) instead of black jumpers or the option to decorate the uniform with a Christmas theme. We have done this previously to good effect as it gives the option for doing something that doesn’t involve the cost of buying a Christmas jumper. We will also be asking pupils to make a 50p donation to CLAN who we have been supporting this year.

**Successes**

Our young people’s successes and achievements are something we try to capture as often as possible and showcase them via our Twitter feed and in House assemblies.In the last few weeks we have had many examples of this from the tremendous performances in the Christmas Concert, through S2’s work researching and building a case to win £3,000 for a Charity to small, but no less important things, like senior pupils supporting younger pupils. On the bigger front I would like to highlight 3 recent successes that typify our value of Getting Involved.

**Thorpe Molloy My Future Aspirations Art Competition**

Eight of our S2 pupils saw their artwork go through to the finals of this annual competition **and you** can see their work here<https://www.facebook.com/tmmrecruitment/photos/a.3399413756797568/3399414173464193/?type=3&theater>

The pupils are

Lily-Anna Barclay

Julia Bugdal

Alison Robertson

Emma Taylor

Kayla Rankin

Claire Conniff

Olivia Jackson

The pupils all have their work displayed online and were able to attend a gallery showing at One Code Base in Schoolhill, Aberdeen, last week.

**Bebras Computing Challenge**

This is a national challenge in computational thinking <http://www.bebras.uk/>  We have 7 S1/2 pupils who have been invited to the finals in January in Oxford. Bebras tell us that more than 1 pupil from a non private school is unusual and 7 is remarkable. They are:

Corey Adam
Harry Bennett
Ethan Saum
Amelie Bonner
Campbell Coull

Harley Edwards
Neve Heslop

Our Business Partners, Total have kindly agreed to financially support the attendance of the pupils and accompanying staff at the finals and they have also offered support from their staff team in the preparation phase. We are incredibly grateful for this support.

**Longitude Explorer** Hard on the heels of the above we also have 3 S2 pupils chosen as a semi-finalist for the Longitude Explorer Prize for their idea of a *Dementia Prevention Phone (DPP).* The semi-finalist event will be held at Here East in London on the 30th of January 2020.

Shannon-Lee Scott

Meryn Forbes

Natalie Stewart

This one comes with funding for travel.

We are delighted for our pupils and are hugely grateful for the commitment of staff who have facilitated these opportunities.

**Ill Health (Staff and Pupils)**

As many of you will have experienced late November and December have been bad for colds and flu. We have had a significant number of pupils and staff absent with many of them off for a significant number of days.

When young people are absent, they obviously miss learning and this can be stressful, particularly for those with prelims coming in the New Year. We are very conscious of this pressure but are unable to delay prelims. The key for young people who find themselves in this situation is to get well first, establish what work they have missed and then get this from staff and fellow pupils. Then they should restructure their homework revision plans to take account of the time they were not able to study.

Where staff have been off this puts the remaining staff under significant pressure due to the need to cover classes and provide work for their absent colleagues. Last week we had a sixth of our teaching staff absent. This is most unusual and the pressure on those in school was very high. While we tried to get as many external cover staff in to school as possible, there is a limited pool of this type of worker, so it was not possible to cover all the classes in this way. It was also a particularly busy week with other events on and the commitment of staff to come to their work when not fully recovered or to send in work while absent was exceptional. Our focus and priorities have been to cover classes and ensure continuity of teaching and learning. Hopefully we are now through the worst of it.

**Morocco Group Fundraiser**

Our Morocco 2020 Youth Achievement Award S5 pupils continue their fundraising efforts and have a great event lined up for the New Year. They have organised a ceilidh which will be hosted by our Business partner, The Maryculter House Hotel. Music is by @ceilidhfusion and there will be a buffet and some fun fundraising activities with some great prizes!
Tickets are £27.55 on Eventbrite https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/morocco-2020-ceilidh-fundraiser-tickets-70762686099?aff=ebdssbdestsearch
I know they would welcome any support you can give them.

As previously intimated school breaks up at 3.30pm on Friday 20 December 2019 and we return at 8.45 am on Monday 6 January 2020. It has been another great year and I want to thank you for your continuing support for the Academy. It is a pleasure to work with you and your children. In anticipation of the holidays I wish you a happy and safe time.

Yours faithfully,

Neil Morrison

Head Teacher

