

At Portlethen Academy, Parents' Evenings are an important aspect of school life. Dialogue between parents and teachers during Parents' Evening give both school and home valuable information on how best to support young people to reach their potential.

It is essential for us that our parents' evenings are a valuable experience for pupils, teachers and parents and to this end with support from our parent council, we have recently updated a number of our approaches to these evenings.

This booklet is available on the school website and will be provided to all S1 parents. We look forward to seeing you at your next parents' evening at the academy.

Frequency and timing of parents' evenings

Parents' evenings take place once per year for each year group in S1-3.

For S4/5/6 there are two evenings close together which all teachers attend. Parents then choose to attend whichever evening is most convenient for them.

The timing of parents' evenings in the school calendar is planned carefully in conjunction with the timing of reports to inform important times for pupils such as course choice in S2 and S3 and the lead up to Prelim exams for seniors. The school calendar is produced in consultation with staff and parents.

Parents' evenings will also regularly be combined with opt in information sessions on the same night on topics such as course options and exams.

How will I be informed about parents' evenings?

Parents' evenings are publicised on the school calendar which is available on the school website as well as through school newsletters.

At the end of each term, parents of those children who have a parents' evening the following term will receive a reminder by text.

In addition, pupils will receive a letter for parents/carers along with their appointment sheet one week in advance of the parents' evening.

How do pupils make parents' evening appointments with teachers?

All S1 pupils are given instruction during DCT on the process for making appointments with their teachers.

Pupils are given an appointment sheet one week before their parents' evening which they take home and decide in consultation with their parents with which teachers they will ask to make an appointment.

Pupils then make appointments with their teachers as they attend each class over the course of the coming week. The appointment sheet provides space in which the pupil writes the teacher's name, subject and the time agreed for the appointment. Teachers fill in a corresponding sheet so that they know whom to expect when. Pupils can also make appointments with their Guidance teacher or Support for Learning teachers.

Pupils are welcome to attend Parents' Evening with their family.

Time allocated to parents' evenings

Teachers in Scotland's local authority secondary schools are required to attend and prepare for five parents' evenings each academic session as part of their "working time agreement". Parents' evenings run from 5pm until 7pm and appointments for each pupil are 5 minutes long. This means that each teacher can see the parents of a maximum of 24 pupils during a parents' evening.

Although some teachers regularly stay later, parents should not expect that teachers will offer to increase the time they spend at parents' evenings to fit in extra appointments, as this goes beyond contractual requirements. We do our best as far as the timetable allows to distribute classes evenly across subject staff to minimise this but where there are more pupils requesting appointments than spaces available, for example where a teacher has a number of classes in the same year group, teachers will do their best to allocate appointments fairly.

Unfortunately it cannot be guaranteed that parents will see all their child's teachers at every Parents' Evening, particularly in S1 and S2 when pupils study a larger number of subjects. However, if families have concerns about specific subjects and there are no available appointments we would encourage parents to raise concerns with Guidance staff who will liaise with all relevant staff on your behalf. Guidance teachers will be at all Parents' Evenings and available on the 5 minute appointment schedule but they are also happy to liaise with teachers and pass on any information you have not been able to find out at parents' evening.

Content of parents' evening meetings

Teachers are asked to provide evidence based specific information regarding each child's progress at parents' evenings, rather than providing general course information. The meeting should be an opportunity to discuss your child's progress, any concerns and clarify the next steps in your child's learning.

If you have specific concerns regarding your child's progress in a particular subject, which you feel may take longer to discuss, it is recommended that you contact your child's Guidance teacher to set up an additional meeting where you can discuss your concerns more fully. We value these opportunities to meet with parents and it is important to us to be able to discuss and resolve quickly any concerns you might have.

Other information available on courses and assessments

Information on courses and revision materials is available on the school website and for National Qualifications can be readily found on the SQA website.

Course information boards are also displayed at parents' evenings with general information applicable to all parents.

What to do when you arrive

As part of our self-evaluation, we like to monitor involvement of parents and guardians at our parents' evenings. We therefore ask you to sign in at the front door on your arrival. Prefects will direct you to the correct board. This also allows teachers to check whether parents who have may have missed their appointment time are present.

At reception, there is a map showing where faculties are located on the night to help you find the appropriate teacher. Consultation areas are located in the theatre, canteen and pupil social areas. We have also provided a map with this leaflet

On your arrival, you will also be given a parent survey. This is an important way for us to gather the views of as many parents as we can and provides valuable feedback which can be used to improve our school and delivery of services.

Before you leave

Please remember to hand in your parent survey. Your comments are much appreciated

Who is there to help on the night?

At each parents' evening, prefects are asked to attend to help direct parents to the right place, distribute and collect surveys and facilitate parent registration. Pupils also sell teas/coffees and biscuits from mobile trolleys which serve all areas used for parent meetings.

Principal Teachers of each curricular area will be present whether or not they have a class in that year group to answer subject related questions.

At least two of the Senior Leadership Team will also be in attendance to answer any further questions or respond to any concerns on the night.

FAQs

What will happen if a teacher is absent during a parents' evening?

Names of teachers who are absent during parents' evening will be posted on a notice board at reception for parents to see. If a teacher you had made an appointment with is absent it is possible that the principal teacher of the relevant faculty may be able to talk to you if they have appointments available. Should this not be the case, please telephone your child's Guidance teacher who will arrange for you to be provided with the information you have missed.

What if my child has not made any parents' evening appointments?

If your child has not made any appointments, please ask them to see their Guidance teacher in advance of the evening for help with ensuring they have times to see their teachers. Where your child

has not been able to do this, please telephone and your child's Guidance teacher or Year Head will make arrangements for you to see as many teachers as possible.

What happens if my child has not made an appointment with a member of staff I would like to see?

Please telephone your child's Guidance teacher to ascertain whether an appointment with the relevant teacher is available. If no appointments are left, the Guidance teacher will ensure you are provided with information from that subject.

Should pupils attend along with their parents?

Pupils are not required to attend, however we encourage them to do so as it is beneficial for them to be involved in discussions about their progress.

What if my child has 2 teachers for one subject?

Teachers will make arrangements to divide their appointments so that the largest number of pupils in that subject are able to access an appointment. It may be that one teacher will see the whole class if the other teacher has a larger number of classes in that year group. Alternatively the teacher who sees the class most often may take the appointments for that class. It would be unusual that both teachers would ask to see the same parent, although this may be the case higher up in the Senior Phase, for example where each teacher takes responsibility for a different aspect of the course.

What if I cannot attend the date of parents' evening?

If you are not able to attend parents' evening, please telephone your child's Guidance teacher to arrange for information on their progress to be provided to you.

Can my child have a priority appointment at the next parents' evening if he/she has not been able to get one this time for a particular subject?

From this session, we will be keeping a record of pupils who have requested but have not been able to be allocated an appointment for parents' evening. Their names will then be provided to faculties in advance of the next parents' evening to be given priority.