



Portlethen Academy
Bruntland Road
Portlethen
Aberdeen AB12 4QL
Telephone 01224 782174
Fax 01224 782076
portlethen.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
www.portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

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Dear Parent/Carer

School Security Update

Further to my letter of 14 November, I write to update you. On Friday 22 November, an Aberdeen City In-Service day, we had a further incident where pupils from a city school appeared on our site. On this occasion the group stayed away from the building and did not appear to attempt to gain access. The group were quickly identified by staff and pupils who reported their concerns. Again, the group were quickly identified as they did not have uniform, all being in joggers and hoodies. The Senior Leadership Team and other staff asked the small group to leave our site and we contacted the Police to ensure this happened. The group left after the police had taken names. These were followed up by Police visits to their houses over the weekend. We have also been liaising with the school these young people attend, to stress that they must not visit our school. There does not appear to have been a threat to any of our pupils, however we cannot take this risk and will always call the Police if unidentified persons are on our site. The young person who came to our school on 13 November was not involved on this occasion and the pupil he is in dispute with is not currently attending Portlethen Academy and is not likely to do so in the immediate future.

On Friday we also had an unfortunate incident where two S1 pupils were in conflict and this led to a crowd gathering around them. This was unconnected to the other incident. We had a further incident today where another couple of S1 pupils became involved in what seems to be called a "roast battle". It comes from a TV show but has taken a nasty turn. In this the pupils deliberately attempt to be as nasty as possible to each on social media and this is shared with friends. This can then lead to a face to face confrontation with others encouraging the pair to fight. We are absolutely appalled at this and would ask that you support us by speaking to your child to ensure they do not get involved. If they hear about further examples, please ensure you contact us or that they alert a member of staff.

We are currently running through a series of assemblies for all year groups, where we are covering security issues and what to do to keep all members of the school community safe. Central amongst these are wearing full uniform, passing any concerns on to staff immediately and only using the front door for entry and exit during class time. A small number of pupils still do not have full uniform and we would be grateful for your support in resolving this. We have many new staff in school and on any given day we could have supply teachers in the building. Full uniform saves any confusion and stops pupils being challenged needlessly.

We understand that many of you will be concerned at the recent incidents and we would wish to assure you that the safety of pupils and staff is paramount. We are working closely with the Police and are constantly reviewing our security procedures. If you wish to discuss the matter with the school leadership team, the Depute Heads and myself will be available at the two Senior Parents Evenings on Thursday 28 November and 3 December between 5pm and 7pm.

I would also like to apologise for my delay in putting out this communication to you. In the recent incidents we have had significant follow up with the Police and Aberdeenshire colleagues to clarify the situations and to take advice on how we progress. It is crucial that we get all the facts clarified and do not act on rumours prior to communicating with you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Neil Morrison', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Neil Morrison
Head teacher