



Portlethen Academy
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Dear Parent/Carer

It has been great seeing our pupils return after the summer and the Academy back in full swing with a real focus on attainment and creating a positive ethos. Pupils have made a great start to the session settling in to working patterns straight away. They look fantastic in their uniforms and I want to take this opportunity to thank all parents/carers and pupils for their support in this. Our new S1 pupils seem to have settled in well and we have spent some time this week running through procedures with them to help them in their day to day progress around the school.

Attainment

Our results this session show a range of success for our pupils with significant numbers reaching or exceeding their targets. This was particularly the case in S4 and S6 where the overall performance of pupils exceeded the targets agreed with Aberdeenshire. S5 had a number of pupils who did not do as well as expected and this affected the overall target. Where pupils did not do as well as they had hoped or expected we have worked with them to put in place timetables and supports so that they can get on track and do well this session. In essence, the key to high attainment is hard work from the very start of session with practice of classwork, regular revision and use of past papers. This early emphasis is heightened in relation to all National 5 subjects this year as there is no longer a fall back to National 4 and decisions have to be made on presentation levels by mid November. This earlier decision on level means that staff will use the evidence they have up to that point to advise on levels. We will provide further information on this in the following weeks.

Staffing

You may recall that our pre summer letter highlighted (available via the school website) significant staff changes. Since the summer Ms Evans has joined us in the English Faculty. We have had further changes with Mr Evans and Mr Rigg leaving us and we wish them well in their new posts. We are currently recruiting for their replacements and will provide further information for you as this progresses.

Friday 22 September: Sponsored Walk

Our annual sponsored walk takes place around Durriss Forest. The aims are to have a great day out while raising funds for local charities and to support opportunities for pupils. Full details are in a separate letter which was issued earlier this week and is also available on the website. Fingers crossed the sun shines like last year.

Portlethen Academy Parent Council Meetings

Our Parent Council supports the school both financially through their fund raising and by working in partnership around school matters. They have recently been involved in consultations around reporting, the school's vision and the Scottish Governments School Governance Review. They are always keen to recruit new members and although the post of secretary will be vacant at the AGM the practice is to allow new members time to settle in before picking up posts. All parents are welcome and we look forward to seeing new members at the meeting. Dates for this session are:

Term 1 Wed 20 September

Term 2 Thurs 9 November

Term 3 Thurs 18 January Wed 28 February

Term 4 Thurs 26 April Wed 6 June

All meetings are in the Academy staffroom from 7pm.

Contacting the school

We always try to respond to parental contact as quickly as possible and have recently had a couple of times when parents have arrived at reception hoping to see staff about their child and we have been unable to manage this due to meetings or timetabled teaching commitments. We ask that you phone and make an appointment to avoid disappointment and so that we can respond to you when we do meet. This can be done through the school office (01224 782174) who will direct your calls to the relevant person. This will normally be your child's Guidance Teacher. If emailing the school please use the general email Portlethen.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk highlighting who it is for the attention of and this will be forwarded by the school office.

School Website

Our website was transferred to a new platform over the summer and much of the old content was removed. We are in the process of developing the new site and would welcome your thoughts on content. If you have suggestions please contact us through the general email address above highlighting School Website in the subject line.

Twitter

Many parents already follow the school's Twitter feed which aims to give a window into activities in school. In addition to the main school feed a number of faculties also post items. PE, Home Economics, Design and Technology, Science and Music all post regularly. These are all signposted and retweeted on the school's main twitter feed and I would encourage you to have a look and follow them if interested.

Thank you for your support.

Yours faithfully



 **Neil Morrison**
Head Teacher