

ARRAN HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

School Website: www.arran.n-ayrshire.sch.uk

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October 2014

Dear Parent/Carer

The past few weeks seem to have flown past and we are now very much 'in the swing' of session 2014-15. I have spent much of my time getting to know young people, staff, parents and partners of the school, as well as my new Head Teacher colleagues from across North Ayrshire. From 1 – 4 September I spent four days on the Columba 1400 Head Teachers Leadership Academy, this was time to reflect upon what my vision for the school is, along with other Head Teachers from North Ayrshire and you will see some of the fruits of the time spent in the coming weeks and months.

Vision, Aims and Values

In January 2015 we will begin a process of establishing our school vision, aims and values through a consultative exercise with all stakeholders in the Early Years, Primary and Secondary sectors, with a view to having this process completed by June 2015. I believe that doing so will provide the foundation upon which our school community will move forward and I believe our parent body is central to this process.

Improvement Planning

We have, in the Secondary school, agreed a set of core priorities for improvement for 2014-15 after consultation with staff. These are as follows:

- Priority 1 – Raising Attainment
- Priority 2 – Developing our curriculum
- Priority 3 – Improving the quality of self-evaluation processes

There are a number of sub-priorities which support the above and I will share these on the school website for those of you who wish further information in relation to the work of the school.

Staffing

Mr McEnaney leaves us this week for pastures new. I would like to thank him for his service to the school and wish him well in his future endeavours. Although I have only worked alongside him for a few weeks, I have a real sense of how well regarded he is by staff, students and parents alike. He will be a real loss to the school. I hope to be able to appoint a replacement for Mr McEnaney sometime next term and in the meantime we have a temporary solution to the staffing issue with Mr Reid taking all of his SQA certificate classes.

We also say goodbye to Mairead Gallagher, one of our school cleaners, who is returning to Ireland after a number of years on the island. We will miss her smiling face and cheery demeanour and wish her well for the future.

Unfortunately we were unable to appoint a new Depute Head Teacher this week due to the withdrawal of one of the candidates. We will continue with the current arrangement of Mr Lambert and Mrs Walker sharing the Acting Depute Head Teacher post for the time being and I will let you know when we intend to re-advertise the position.

Malawi Trip

We have seven pupils confirmed as travelling. Members of staff accompanying the pupils will be Mrs Hogge and Mr Garraway, our Technical Technician, who will replace Mr McEnaney.

Coffee Afternoon

Lamlash Early Years class held a coffee afternoon in the school café last week on behalf of Macmillan Cancer Support. Thanks to all who attended: £257.23 was raised for the charity.

House Charities

The four House groups have each chosen to support and raise funds for a nominated charity. Iorsa has chosen Alzheimer Scotland and raised £90 from a car boot sale during the Memory Walk on Sunday, 21 September. Thanks to all parents and pupils of Iorsa for their much-appreciated contributions.

Care Inspectorate Inspection

Our Early Years Class received an unannounced inspection visit from the Care Inspectorate at the start of term and received strong endorsement of the quality of provision in our early Years Class, with three 'Very Good' and one 'Good' rating. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Gregg, Mrs Macfarlane, Ms Scott and Mrs Inglis for their commitment and for the high standards of care they provide for every young person in our Early Years Class. I am confident that the young people of the Early Years Class receive a very good start to their education with our highly committed and professional staff team and our first class facilities.

Sixth Year Agreement

Our S6 prefects have been issued with a Sixth Year Agreement form for comment to me by the end of this week. We discussed the arrangements for directed study, as well as some concerns raised by the S6 in relation to their sixth year experience as compared with that of previous sixth years. I have reiterated to our sixth year that I am absolutely committed to the S6 experience being a positive one and that learning and opportunities for wider achievement are top of my list of priorities. I believe that we have found a 'half-way house' which not only ensures a focus upon learning, but provides a degree of flexibility for our sixth year students in how they manage their learning. The agreement will be sent home at the start of next term for your signature, to promote partnership working in achieving the best outcomes for our young people.

Head Teacher's 'Open Forum'

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you along to an 'open forum' afternoon in the cafeteria of the High School from 5 pm – 7 pm on Wednesday, 19 November. This is an opportunity for parents to come and chat informally with me about any issue they wish. It could be an idea you have for partnership working with the school, a concern about some aspect of the school, your son/daughter's progress or a simply chance to get to know one another a little better in an informal setting. There will be tea, coffee and biscuits available. Could you please contact the school office if you intend to come along to allow us to gauge numbers, however, even if you haven't let the office know, you are still welcome to come along on the day.

Cycle Champions

A group of senior pupils have won places on a five day residential Cycling Scotland camp to build leadership skills and become cycle champions in our school. The camp will run from the 20 – 25 October and the boys have been awarded a budget of £3,000 to put their plan of encouraging more cycling at Arran High into action when they return. The camp will be held at PGL Dalguise in Perth & Kinross where they will be supported by experts and experienced tutors to help develop their ideas into an action plan and later support implementation at Arran High.

Events include:

- Workshop activities to develop funding ideas and create an action plan
- Cycle Training Assistant training to deliver Bikeability 1 and 2
- Making Cycling Mainstream in planning and designing for cyclists and event management
- One day cycle maintenance for activity providers
- Go Mountain Biking riding skills day with thought of development pathways

Ayrshire Cross Country Championships

Congratulations to the senior girls who won the bronze team medal on Wednesday at the Magnum Beach Park in Irvine.

The winning team consisted of: Lucy Crawford, Abbie McKelvie, Emma Shaw & Charley Weir.

Well done to all 38 pupils who represented the school in the Championships.

School Nurse Drop In

Monday lunchtimes in the Medical Room. Come along and see us to discuss any health issues or if you just need someone to talk to. There is also a confidential post box situated outside the room if you wish to contact us.

Barry R. Smith
Head Teacher