



## MINTLAW ACADEMY

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### NEWSLETTER: Term 1 2014/15

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#### Additional In-service Day

Please note the additional in-service day in November, the school will be closed to all pupils on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> November.

#### Introduction

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new session, we do hope you enjoy reading it.

I continue to be really impressed with how smart our pupils look and how well they have embraced the school uniform. I continue to receive many comments from members of the community about how good our young people look!

It was also fantastic to see how well last year's S4 performed in their new National 5 qualifications with the number of students attaining an award at that level significantly higher than in previous years. Very well done to them.

We welcomed some new teachers to the academy this term;

Mr Methivier (Modern Languages)

Ms Carr (Science)

Ms McQueen (Social Subjects)

Mrs Roscoe (English)

Ms Clarke (Home Economics)

Ms Shepherd (Maths)

Mr Patterson (Music)

Ms Currie (PE)

Mr Merson (Faculty Head of Social Subjects)

Unfortunately we see the departure of Mrs Walker (Business Studies) at the end of this term and thank her for her dedication and support for young people during her time here.

One of the key priorities this coming session is develop our system(s) for "Pupil Voice". Giving more young people the opportunity to have a greater "say in their learning" and making decisions about further improving Mintlaw Academy. The Pupil Senate which is made up of representatives from all 4 Houses in S1-S4 has already met and the Senior School Executive comprising the Head Boy / Girl, their Deputes and all the House Captains meet every Friday with me.

Parental views continue to be extremely important to us and we will again be surveying Parental Opinions at our several Parents Evenings next term. In addition to this any parent is more than welcome to visit the Headteachers Surgery any Tuesday after school from 4-6pm to discuss any school issues. The PTA has got off to a great start this year with the largest number coming along to support the school. The Parent Council also meets regularly and we will endeavour to ensure that the website is updated with information from these groups.

Next term, may see the start of some inclement weather so please take a moment to read the arrangements for "Adverse Weather Conditions" on the website.

It has been a fast paced term with lots going on which you will read about in this newsletter. Thanks to the entire school community we continue to provide Mintlaw Academy young people with a fantastic experience.

Have a great holiday.

**A Horberry (Headteacher)**

## 1. Charities

R Sneddon

Senior Pupils of the Charities committee are working on raising money for Poppy Scotland and Children in Need this year. They are making poppies for a remembrance wall within the school once again. This builds upon the success of last year's effort when it was first tried and many pupils have asked if it would be done again. Pupils can pay 50p for a poppy and can then write a person's name on it and place it on the remembrance wall in the school.

With Children in Need coming up there is plans afoot for a dress down day, tentative approval has been given for this, also there is to be a custard pie challenge. More details to come, so watch out for notices around school. The charities committee plan to set a target and if the target is achieved then members of staff will then be the recipients of a custard pie in the face or on top of the head. So if pupils wish to see this happen then donations have to be made in advance until the target is reached.

Also to back both charities up there are various celebrity materials in school and pupils can hand in a sealed bid for parents and the items which do not receive a sealed bid will then go into a raffle.

Signed photo: Ola Johnston - Strictly Come Dancing. (Framed)

Signed photo: Anton and Erin - Strictly Come Dancing

1x signed photo and book - Derren Brown (TV Magician)

3 x Olly Murs

1 x signed CD Proclaimers

Ties from well-known people were handed in and used to make one blanket each with a cushion. The well-known people are John Bishop, Boris Johnston and Alex Salmond. Also, 30 silk ties were also donated by clothing company Charles Tyrwitt, which were also made into another blanket, cushion and a bag.

## 2. Higher Education Conference

A Kilpatrick

40 senior pupils from Mintlaw Academy recently attended the Higher Education Conference to help plan their futures for when they leave school. They met with representatives of all of the major Scottish Universities as well as a number of UK wide institutions. It was an opportunity to ask questions about potential course and find out a little about Higher Education. Pupils also attended a talk about the UCAS admissions service that they will be completing this year. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed themselves and found the whole experience worthwhile.

### 3. S3 Connexions Group

K Stephen

Miss Stephen's Connexions group have been learning all about living things and the environment. They have been visiting Aden Park with Miss Stephen and Mrs Reid to explore the creatures they find and the conditions they live in. The group have visited the woods, pond, gardens and river and have been able to take samples from each area. The group enjoyed sampling pond water and then using a microscope to look at the micro-organisms that they found. Down at the river, the group used kick-sampling to find what was lurking in the river Ugie...lots of fresh water shrimp and stonefly larvae! On the last outing to the park, the group spent the afternoon studying butterflies and ladybirds to analyse the adaptations that they have. The group plan to visit Aden during the Autumn and Winter months to see what changes they can see in the environment.



#### 4. Advanced Higher Sciences at Aberdeen University

L Simpson

Four S6 pupils enjoyed the opportunity to visit Aberdeen University this term. Nenah Bradford, 6B, and Ainsley Morrison, 6D, went to the Physics Department, where they took part in a variety of practical work for the Optics topic in AH Physics. They were able to use specialised equipment to gain greater insight into the topic, and meet other pupils studying AH Physics.

Frances Bugden, 6U, and Craig Morgan, 6D, took part in the Chemistry Practical Day, carrying out two investigations as part of their coursework for AH Chemistry. It was a very busy, but challenging and enjoyable day working in the First Year undergraduate chemistry lab.

These popular events are attended by many North-East schools and are a great chance for S6 students to experience a day working in a University setting, before making the move to higher education.



#### 5. PTA fashion show

Please note the PTA fashion show will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> November at 7.30pm. Tickets will be available from the front office.

## 6. S4 Work Experience A Campbell /N Robertson (Support Services Co-ordinator)

Work experience provides pupils with first-hand experience of the world of work. Across Aberdeenshire, the programme is highly valued by the students, school staff and the local employers who welcome our young people into their working environments.

This year, 97% of pupils went out on work placement during the last week in September. The various jobs undertaken by our students this year included gallery assistant, judo coach, farm worker, HGV repairer and veterinary assistant. This will probably be the first experience of working life for many, and is an excellent opportunity for pupils to gain an early understanding of the importance of working practices and attitudes, and can help contribute towards decisions about future career choices.

An example of some of the feedback received from the week:

*"Taylor was absolutely the best work experience pupil we have ever had. She was a tremendous help in the PE lessons where she encouraged our youngest pupils to try something quite difficult and new. In the classrooms, she spotted who needed a bit of help and was right there! In the staff room it was a pleasure to talk to her. She was a credit to her family and to Mintlaw Academy. We would have her back any time!"*

H Creighton, Headteacher - Crimond Primary School

S3 pupils will be informed about work experience after the Christmas holidays and given information about finding a placement for their work experience week in September 2015.

If you would be interested in finding out more about offering a work placement at your workplace, please contact [mintlawcsnssc@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:mintlawcsnssc@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).

**7. Senior School: Making A Difference****S Noble (Acting Depute)**

This session, we are running a volunteering programme with our S5 pupils. The programme runs for 2 periods most Friday mornings. S5 pupils were given the opportunity to form groups working towards making a difference to the school and its community. Groups have been set up as follows: Charities, Rights Respecting School, Radio, P7 to S1 Transition Projects and DVD, Community Litter Project, Primary School Book and Number Buddies, School Fundraising, Health and Well Being Leaders, School Display Boards, Talent Show, Skate Park Project and Cool Computing where pupils will teach members of the community new computer skills.

Groups are hard at work setting up their projects and one group has been tasked with organising a MAD celebration of success event later in the session. Each group will have the opportunity to detail the work it has done and how this has "made a difference" to the school - and indeed the individuals involved with each group.

Over the session, this programme will give pupils the chance to develop key skills in Working with Others and in Communication - excellent preparation for life beyond school.

**8. Reminder regarding School Uniform Arrangements:****N Robertson**

Parents wishing to order any additional uniform items throughout the year:

- purchase online at <http://www.academyuniformsltd.co.uk/>

- or purchase directly from:

Pom Print (Mintlaw) - (Unit 2/3, Station Road - Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Donalds (Peterhead) - (7 St Andrews Street - Mon-Sat 8am-5pm)

School ties are available from the school office at a price of £2.50.

Clothing Grants are available for parents or carers on a lower income to help with the cost of buying a school uniform. For more information, please contact the school or go to

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parents/carers/financial/clothing.asp>

**9. Year Heads****N Robertson**

Please note the Year Head responsibilities as of June 2014:

S1	Mrs Sharp
S2 & S3	Mr Oldham
S4 & S5	Mrs Noble
S6	Mr Horberry

**10. SQA Exams 2014  
(Depute)**

**G Oldham**

Once again Mintlaw Academy pupils achieved excellent results in their exams in May and June. In S4, almost 40% of the year passed 5 or more National 5 qualifications, 8 pupils got top grades in all of their subjects. At Higher level the hard work of our senior pupils and their teachers really paid off with 1 achieving 6 Grade A Higher passes and 2 getting 5. In S6 a number of pupils performed really well in their Advanced Highers including a student who gained 3 Advanced Highers at Grade A.

Congratulations to all pupils on their success and thanks to all staff at Mintlaw Academy for their hard work and dedication in preparing pupils for national exams as well as to parents/carers for their support and encouragement before and throughout the exam period.

**11. Tracking pupil progress**

**G Oldham (Depute)**

In S1 all pupils have now sat their 'Midyis' baseline assessments and the results of these will help teachers to track pupil progress and support your child in their learning. A 'Settling in' tracking report will be issued for all pupils in S1 and S3 pupils which will provide information about their effort in class and with homework as well as their behaviour.

In S4 and S5/6 pupils have been discussing target grades with their teachers and recording these in their planners as well as noting how they are performing at the moment in relation to these target grades. This information will allow us to monitor attainment across their different subjects and provide appropriate support when required. A full report will be issued in Term 2.

**12. Bus Safety**

**I Sharp (Depute)**

Pupils have been reminded recently at assemblies about the importance of behaving in a safe and responsible manner when using school transport and the following points were made

- Stay in seat at all times
- Don't become involved in anti-social behaviour
- Follow instructions of driver at all times
- Always wait until bus has moved before crossing road
- Find a safe place to cross
- Cross carefully - look both ways
- Only cross when safe - don't assume drivers will slow down or see you
- When crossing don't be distracted by phone or ipod or other people

In addition pupils were also reminded at these assemblies about the importance of wearing a seat belt (where provided) whilst travelling on school transport. As almost 80% of Mintlaw Academy pupils travel to school by bus on country roads, many for a considerable distance, it is important that all pupils follow this instruction and use their seat belt.

Parents are asked to take the time to reinforce these points with pupils to avoid accidents.



### 13. Safety in School Grounds

I Sharp (Depute)

Because the access road to the school goes through school grounds, it is important that drivers follow a few basic safety points:

- Parents/carers/visitors to school must observe the one way system if they are dropping off passengers: drivers are asked to go through the car park to the left of the access road and then drop off their passengers on the right hand (school) side of the road.
- Passengers should not be dropped off at the entrance to the school by the Community Education cabins as turning there is dangerous.
- Parents and carers are reminded that the bus bay must not be used at any time to drop off or pick up pupils, or for alternative parking.
- The bus bays must never be used as an exit route from school grounds.

In addition pupils should never walk across the bus bays. Pupils walking to school should use either the path by the side of the Community Education huts or by the social area.

### 14. PTA Mega Draw Winners



	September
Prize £70	Gary Duncan
Prize £35	Barbara Holligan
Prize £15	Ann Marie Kerr
Prize £10	Gillian Wood

## 15. Dates for your Diary

2014/2015

<b>Term 2</b>	Start of term 2	Monday 27 October 2014
	In-service	Monday 17 November 2014
	In-service	Tuesday 18 November 2014
	End of term 2	Wednesday 19 November 2014 Friday 19 December 2014
<b>Term 3</b>	Start of term 3	Monday 5 January 2015
	Occasional Day 1	Friday 13 February 2015
	Mid Term Holiday	Monday 16 February 2015
	In-Service	Tuesday 17 February 2015
	In-Service	Wednesday 18 February 2015
End of term 3	Thursday 2 April 2015	
<b>Term 4</b>	Start of term 4	Monday, 20 April 2015
	May Day Holiday	Monday, 4 May 2015
	Occasional Day 2	Monday 1 June 2015
	End of term 4	Friday, 3 July 2015

Link:

[http://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/term\\_dates.asp](http://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/term_dates.asp)

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## 16. Other Important Dates for your Diary

13/11/14	S2 Parents Evening
25/11/14	S1 Parents Evening
03/12/14	S3 Parents Evening
11/12/14	S4-6 Full reports issued
14/01/15	S4 Parents' / Options Evening
19/01/15	S3 - S5 Option Forms Issued
22/01/15	S5/6 Parents' / Options Evening
26/01/15	S3 - S5 Option Forms In
29/01/15	P7 Parents' Information Evening
30/01/15	S3 Full Reports Issued
02/02/15 - 11/02/15	S4 - S6 Prelims
06/02/15	S2 Tracking Reports Issued
11/02/14	Careers Fair
12/02/15	Burns Supper
19/02/15	Art Exhibition
24/02/15	S2 Options Forms Issued
25/02/15	Music Centre Concert
27/02/15	S2 Options Forms In
13/03/15	S4 - S6 Results Reports Issued
20/03/15	Business Breakfast
01/04/15	Concert for P7 Pupils
02/04/15	S1 Reports Issued
28/04/15 - 05/06/15	SQA Exams
30/04/15	S2 Reports Issued
05/05/15	Timetable Change (S1 - S3)
15/05/15	P7 Transition 15 Event - Aden Park
02/06/15	Timetable Change S4 - S5
16/06/15 - 17/06/15	Higher Geography Fieldtrip
18/06/15	Awards Ceremony (tbc)
24/06/15	P7 Visit - P7 Parents Evening
25/06/15	P7 Visit
26/06/15	P7 Visit
27/06/15 - 05/07/15	German Trip
29/06/15	Iceland Trip
30/06/15	S1 - S3 Awards Ceremony
02/07/15	House Challenge Day

PLEASE REMEMBER TO UPDATE THE SCHOOL OFFICE WITH ANY CHANGES TO YOUR HOME ADDRESS AND CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

This is a draft calendar and dates may change please check website for updates.