



## MINTLAW ACADEMY

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### Introduction

Welcome to the second newsletter of the session and I do hope you enjoy it.

This newsletter is full of good news stories and I am delighted we are able to share them with you.

Janice Robinson (PT Guidance) and currently Depute Headteacher (Acting) will be leaving us, to retire, at Christmas after 26 years of dedicated and loyal service to the pupils of Mintlaw Academy, particularly those in Mormond House. More recently, Janice has been a fantastic addition to the Senior Leadership Team taking care of leading the "Welfare and Pastoral Care" teams in school. She will be sorely missed.

I have been really impressed with the number of pupils who have received the "Mintlaw Academy Pin" this term. This is an award given to pupils who have contributed in an outstanding way either locally, in school, or nationally.

- Stuart Elphinstone (S6) for being "Secretary of the Senior School Executive", designing the "Mintlaw Academy Parent Conference" marketing materials, and for outstanding leadership at an Outward Bound Course
- Taylor Erridge (S5) for presenting at the "Scottish Learning Festival" in Glasgow about the "Girls Into Engineering Course"

- Kiara Brownlie (S5) for presenting at the "Scottish Learning Festival" in Glasgow about the "Girls Into Engineering Course"
- Ellie Moore (S6) for her commendable work with "Theatre Modo" and engaging pupils in developing a wide range of skills.
- Nadine Smith (S2) for winning the UK "Young Writers Competition" and having her poem published in a book called "Grim Tales"
- Hollie Rafferty (S2) for winning the UK "Young Writers Competition" and having her poem published in a book called "Grim Tales"
- Lara Rydlewicz (S6) for organising the 2015 Careers Fair
- Jade Pollard (S5) for organising the 2015 Careers Fair
- Faye Fowlie (S5) for organising the 2015 Careers Fair

Important assessments are about to take place for S4-S6 pupils and it is vital that students set aside some to revise for these, as well as completing all homework tasks. Information on how to study better can be found on the website and I would recommend having a look at it.

It has been another really busy term and I thank all pupils, staff, and parents for their hard work and making it a great place to learn. Christmas is a busy time and I do hope that you find time during all the festivities to relax and enjoy the holiday.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

## 1. Relay for Life

Congratulations to Jack Howie who rowed 350 bales using a tractor in 6 hours. He raised £180 for Relay for Life Peterhead.



## 2. Scottish Judo Championships

Well done to Lauren McCarthy in S2 who won a bronze medal in the Scottish Judo Championships last weekend!



### 3. Charities Committee

R Sneddon

Over the past two terms Mintlaw Academy's Charities' Committee has been raising funds to support numerous local and national charities. The committee - consisting of Callum Bradford, Laura Runcie, John Burnett, Niall Gibbon, Lachlan McKenzie and Sean Johnston - began their work by raffling a toy dog, "Bat-Dog," in order to raise proceeds for the local Willows Animal Sanctuary. This project was massively successful, raising the surprisingly large sum of £144.23. Next they hosted a bake sale as part of the national MacMillan Coffee Morning event, selling cupcakes at 50p each, and again exceeded all expectations by collecting a staggering £229.59!

After this, their attention was focussed on the Poppy Appeal, selling poppies for the benefit of our countries many veterans and in doing so accumulating £130 for the appeal, before directing their efforts to Children In Need. For this national charity, the committee created their own quiz and hosted it in the social area, where a team from each house competed for a Pudsey bear trophy, adorned with a sash in the colours of the winning house - which, incidentally, was green for Mormond. In this endeavour the committee accrued £612.50 - needless to say, a substantial sum!

More recently, the charities group has been concentrating on the auction of a vast array of celebrity-related items, ranging from quilts and cushions, made from the ties of various Celebrities including MSP's and MP's, John Bishop and a fashion house in London, to signed photographs of such stars as Olly Murs, John Bishop, Derren Brown and stars from Strictly come dancing. Although this auction is still on-going, they hope to donate the takings to the Salvation Army, an organisation who are themselves renowned for their charity work.

Furthermore, at the end of the Christmas term the charities committee will be raising money for Text Santa by making our school uniforms more festive for the season with tinsel and Santa hats. The staff will also be challenged to wear Christmas jumpers.

### 4. National Pathology Week event at Robert Gordon University

L Simpson

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November, four S3 pupils (Molly Yau, Morgan Anderson, Nicola Goodey and Beth Fowlie) attended a pathology event at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.

The day included using a variety of science skills in which they stained a liver slide, investigated



bacterial growth and analysed disease causing cells such as malaria and leukaemia.

The girls' favourite activity was staining the liver slides as they found the experience fascinating and this has given them the enthusiasm to study medical science in the future. The girls had never taken part in such advanced practical investigations before and had a fantastic, valuable day. The event highlighted the many career opportunities in Medical Biosciences and the important contribution pathologists make to healthcare.

**5. NASSA Junior and Senior Girls 7 a-side Hockey Tournament 2015****L Coleman**

Congratulations to the Junior and Senior Girl's Hockey teams who did fantastically well at the NASSA hockey tournament in November. They played other schools from Aberdeenshire.

The Juniors played really well winning 3 of their league games and drawing one. They played Gordon's Schools Huntly in penalties for 1<sup>st</sup> place play-off. They lost in penalties.

The Seniors were very impressive winning all their games to win the trophy.

Well done to all! The coach, Miss Coleman, was delighted with you all!

Junior team

S1 Ellie Barron

S2 Jenny Strachan and Wallis Henderson

S3 Alix Buchan, Amy Finnie, Joanne McDonald, Taylor Sinclair, Beth Fowlie, Katie Ramsay

Senior team

S4 Lucy Henderson and Rebecca Kindness

S5 Joanne Lowe, Katie Daniel and Laura Runcie

S6 Rebecca Bruce, Lara Rydlewicz and Sophie Anderson



## 6. Badminton

S Fowlie

The annual inter-schools' badminton tournament took place on Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup> of November at Meldrum Academy, with nine schools competing for the coveted Alan Middleton trophy. The competition was divided into two sections. In group one was Mintlaw, Ellon, Meldrum, Peterhead and Fraserburgh, while Banff, Turriff, Gordon Schools and Inverurie played off in group two. Each school was represented by three age-groups - Junior (S1/2), Intermediate (S3/4) and Senior (S5/6). The format was for a boys' doubles, followed by a girls' doubles and then a mixed doubles in each age-group, in a "round robin" style.

Representing Mintlaw were:-

S1/2 Cari Willox, Ellie Barron, Liam Reid and Calum Selman

S3/4 - Joanne McDonald, Katie Ramsay, Shaun Davidson and Connor Miller

S5/6 Sophie Anderson, Jade Buchan, Bruce Mair and Ross Peden

The reserves for the event were Paige Pollard, Ryan Milne, Erin Kindness, Jack Buchan, Lindsay Baxter and Edward Flinn.

The Mintlaw team was accompanied by Pupil Support Assistant, Mrs Fowlie, who supervises the Thursday evening after-school badminton sessions. She praised the team members, "They performed extremely well, and there was a great sense of team spirit. Without exception, they played fairly and demonstrated good sportsmanship. Thankfully there were no injuries, and they supported and encouraged each other. I can't ask for any more than that!"

Mintlaw finished in overall sixth place, and was unlucky have to face the ultimate winners, Ellon, in the very first round - without the benefit of a warm-up.

Members of the team are pictured wearing their new T-shirts, which were kindly provided by Active Schools.



**7. Mintlaw Academy PTA****M McLean**

The Mintlaw Academy PTA would like to thank all who took part in their recent Silver Anniversary Mega Draw Xmas Raffle by either selling or buying tickets. A special thanks to the girls in the front office for their help.

A massive thank you to all the local businesses for supporting the event, they donated a variety of fantastic prizes.

A full list of winners and sponsors will be given in the next Mintlaw Academy newsletter.

The draw raised an incredible £3,902 which will be handed to the school at a later date by the PTA.

The next event is a bag packing session at Morrisons in Peterhead on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> December.

Many thanks from the PTA Committee for your continued support.

PTA Committee.

**8. Learning Together Mintlaw Academy Parent Conference****I Sharp**

Learning Together, Mintlaw Academy's first Parent Conference took place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November, in the Games Hall and was attended by a large number of parents and carers.

Following a key note address from Mr Horberry parents/carers opted to attend up to three workshops/presentations on a wide variety of topics including Building Resilience, Internet Safety, Study Skills, Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, Skills Development and TRUST periods, Teenage Mental Health, Substance Misuse, Technology in the Classroom, National Qualifications, the work of Skills Development Scotland, and a session led by local employers on the employability skills they look for in young people. There were also presentations from pupils on Wider Achievement and volunteering opportunities within the curriculum, and displays from the Mintlaw Academy Parent Council and PTA.

Parents had an opportunity to visit department and faculty stands and displays, enjoy performances by Drama and Music Department pupils and to view the work of pupils in the Art Department. The event was much appreciated by all who attended.

We would very much like your feedback on this event; if you attended please complete the survey on Learning Together which you will find on the school website.

## 9. RGU Access To ..... courses

I Sharp

Sixteen of our S5 and S6 pupils have been taking part in the Access To .... Programme at The Robert Gordon University, an arrangement which is part of Mintlaw Academy's developing relationship with RGU this session as part of their outreach programme designed to widen access to university and to help all young people find a positive destination, whether that be employment, training, or further or higher education. The Access to .... Courses were designed to give senior pupils the experience of learning in a university environment in a range of subjects -

Communication and Media

Computing

Engineering

Management

Life Sciences

Law and Management

Art, Design and Architecture

All the courses, apart from Art, Design and Architecture, have now finished, with each one culminating in a special event which gave parents and school staff the opportunity to join pupils at RGU and view their work. Special mention must be given to Kiara Brownlie, 5B1, who came first in a Dragon's Den event on the final day of her Management course.

Participating in these courses gave pupils a unique opportunity to develop the key skills required to be successful at university and also find out more about degree course options, entry requirements and study pathways.

Classes were held weekly at RGU's Garthdee campus from 4.30 pm to 6.30 pm, and pupils are transported to and from Aberdeen by bus.

All the pupils who attended thoroughly enjoyed the experience and would recommend participation to S5/6 pupils next session.

## 10. Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI)

N Grant

This session our S3 pupils have been taking part in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative (YPI). This initiative is funded by the Wood Group and involves groups of pupils working alongside each other to research social issues in the community, select a charity that aims to tackle one of these social issues, make contact with the charity, do research, visit the charity and make up a presentation. The winning group then receive £3000 to hand over to their charity.

We have been absolutely delighted with how the 3<sup>rd</sup> years have got involved in this project which has undoubtedly improved their skills in many key areas e.g. Communication, organisation and presentation skills to name but a few. The experience has also opened their eyes to the work of charity groups and the difficulties that some people in our community face. Some of our groups visited gene labs and treatment centres at ARI, others went on a shopping trip with some elderly people and another group spent some time at Anna Ritchie School, so they really got a feel for the work of the charities.



We have also been very proud to receive numerous phone calls, letters and e mails from the charities that our groups have chosen to support, telling us what a pleasure it was to meet our young people and how brilliantly they have conducted themselves.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Dec we held our YPI Final event. This was a very successful evening where the 6 groups of pupils that had made it through to the final were judged on their presentation. Parents and charities were invited along to attend the event. The charities who were represented in the final were Age Peterhead, Avenue, Friends Of Anchor, Northsound 1 Cash For Kids, Dial A Community Bus and Anna Ritchie School. All of the groups were brilliant but a winner had to be chosen. After much deliberation by the judges Mr Horberry announced that the winning group was Dial A Community Bus. The boys in this group (Josh Beagrie, Matthew Wheeler, Thomas Grieve, Cailean Strachan & Gregor Robertson) were then presented with a cheque for £3000 to hand over to a representative from DACB. The boys have also been invited to a national YPI event in Perth which will take place in June 2016.

## 11. Mintlaw Academy Careers Fair 2015

E-J Whitehead

The Careers Fair wider achievement group organised the careers fair that took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> November. Pupils from S2-S6, had the opportunity to interact with over 35 companies throughout the duration of the day. A wide range of companies attended the careers fair from colleges and universities to prison services and vets.



There was a parental session for both parents and pupils to come back and ask any further questions, this session ran from 16:30-18:30. On the day companies completed an inquiry form to create future links to further the development of pupils at Mintlaw Academy.

*"I would like to congratulate the girls for organising this event. It was smoothly and professionally run, the girls were helpful, cheerful and easy to deal with. Well done!"* This was feedback from a company on the day.

Their next steps are to organise the business dinner which is going to be held in March.



**12. S4-6 Reports****G Oldham**

These reports have been issued recently. It is imperative that your son or daughter acts upon the recommendations from their subject teachers contained in the reports.

**13. Prelim Examinations****G Oldham**

Advance warning that, as indicated in the calendar, these will take place from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> February. The prelim timetable and further information about study leave arrangements for these exams will be issued in the New Year.

**14. Planning for the Prelims****G Oldham**

To help your son or daughter with this they have been issued with paper copy of a prelim exam revision planner. An electronic copy of this can be found on the school website. This planner will help them to break down the work needed for the prelims into manageable 'chunks' and then organise their time to ensure they are ready for the exams. They should vary the subjects that they revise as well as the activities that they do when they are revising. It is important to be active when they revise - attempting past papers, making summary notes, or listing key terms and definitions are all examples of effective revision strategies.

**15. Supporting our young people with their National Qualifications****G Oldham**

As indicated in the covering letter for the recent S4, S5 and S6 reports, information and hyperlinks have been added to the school website to help parents / carers access materials for the Scottish Qualifications Authority, Scholar and the National Parent Forum to help them to support their child with their National Qualifications.

**16. Career Ready****G Oldham**

Five pupils in **S5** have started this two year programme which helps raise young people's aspirations and bridges the gap between education and work by giving access to real experience of the world of work. The programme includes internships, mentoring by employer volunteers, master classes and workplace visits to give 16-19 year olds the work experience and skills they need to be able to perform more effectively in the wider world.

Our **S5** pupils had their second master class at Elevator in Bridge of Don which focussed on effective networking. Feedback from this event was very positive and our pupils had the opportunity to practise their networking skills with other pupils from schools across the region.

Four of our **S6** pupils are in the second year of the programme having completed their internships (5 weeks of paid employment over the summer holidays at the workplace of their mentor). They recently attended a master class at Meldrum House on interview techniques. Our **S6** students will graduate from the programme in March.

Further information can be found at

<https://careerready.org.uk/schools-colleges/programme?area=scotland>

## 17. Online Payments for School Meals

N Robertson

Aberdeenshire Council is introducing a new and easy way of accessing the online payment system, which many parents and carers have already been using to pay for children's school meals.

From 8<sup>th</sup> December 2015 all parents/carers using the online school payments facility will be required to create a myaccount username and password by following the steps below:

### Sign Up Instructions

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**Step 1:** Visit the Aberdeenshire Council website at [www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk) and choose "Pay" from the list of online services, then select "School Meals".

**Step 2:** If you already have a myaccount, click on the sign-In logo above then move to step 4, if you do not have a myaccount choose "Register" then "Create New Account". Please note if you have an NEC card you can use this for a quick registration process.

You will be asked to add your name, Date of Birth, email address and home address, and you will be asked to create a username. You can use your email address if you wish. Following this step you can complete further information or bypass this and "Complete registration".

**Step 3:** You will be sent a temporary password to the email address you provided, follow the instructions in the email by clicking on the link and entering the temporary password. You will then be asked to provide a permanent password. Once you are signed in, you will be directed to school payments system.

**Step 4:** If you are an existing school payments user and have used the same email address to register through myaccount the system will recognise this and you will be asked to link your logins by entering your original password. Your login will then be joined and you will be able to continue to use the system. You will only need to complete this step once.

If you are a brand new customer, please choose "Link Childs Account" and enter your child's reference number from the top corner of this letter. You will then go on to link all children's accounts to your login.

To obtain your child account reference number, please contact the school office.

Please note the online account history also allows parents to look up what has been purchased from the school catering service by clicking on the Accounts tab, clicking on your child's name and then on School Meals - History.

The online payment system will hopefully extend to other types of school payments in future, e.g. consumables or school trip payments, parents will be kept notified by the school.

**18. Pupil Safety****N Robertson**

When a decision is made to close the school or close the school early during adverse weather, weather warnings and local conditions will have been taken into consideration to minimise the possible dangers that travelling in poor weather conditions can bring and the safety of those getting to or from school.

Every school in Aberdeenshire has an emergency response and business continuity plan that provides the relevant information and guidance should an emergency situation arise and if the school needs to evacuate and temporarily locate pupils elsewhere. This also includes lockdown procedures should we need to suddenly secure the school, for example, a gas leak in the vicinity.

We have also recently tightened up on the security of the school and would like to remind parents that pupils should always enter school by the front reception if they are returning to school following an appointment.

We are encouraged by the majority of pupils who follow the guidance and who help us to keep the school safe.

**19. School Excursions Insurance****N Robertson**

Aberdeenshire Council now have in place a School Excursion Insurance policy, whereby both pupils and teachers are covered for offsite activities / trips both within the UK and abroad (offsite meaning off the school premises). The policy covers medical expenses, loss of baggage, cancellation, curtailment and change of itinerary (along with other sundry benefits) etc for worldwide trips and adventurous activities (including winter sports). If personal items such as jewellery, phones/tablets, watches etc are taken on a school trip then these are taken at an individual's own risk and are not covered under the policy, unless damage or loss is caused by an Aberdeenshire Council employee. Should a parent or carer want such items to be covered then this would need to be arranged by parents/carers independently of the school. In addition to this policy, Aberdeenshire Council also holds Public Liability insurance cover for any injury or loss incurred by individuals due to the negligence of the Council or its employees (including volunteers).

## 20. mySchoolApp – Mintlaw Academy

G Oldham

Pupils can download our Mintlaw Academy app from either the Apple App Store or Google Play. Look for 'mySchoolApp'. You then need to sign in with your name, email, phone number, and your own PIN which you make up yourself. Login and type in 'Mintlaw Academy'.

## 21. Mymaths

S Ferguson

The Mathematics department would like to encourage the use of the website [www.mymaths.co.uk](http://www.mymaths.co.uk). This is an excellent resource which can be used for consolidation of the work done in class, further practice and revision. The site will provide pupils with up to date revision materials and homework tasks as well as many lessons on a wide range of topics which will help your child achieve their target in Mathematics.

When you first go on to the page the main login is

Login: mintlaw

Password: pentagon

Pupils then use their own personal login and password when completing tasks, as this allows teachers to see what they have been doing. Pupils should see their teacher if they do not have their own personal login and password

To access the website on an iPad please follow the instructions below:

Download the free app "Puffin academy" and then search for "mymaths"

## 22. PTA Mega Draw Winners



	October	November	December
Prize £70	James Swarbrick	Carol Simpson	Ally Deans
Prize £35	Gillian Wood	Stuart Dalgarno	Denise Wood
Prize £20	Arleen Watson	Mark Lovie	Mary Gibb
Prize £10	Fiona Daniel	Morna Fraser	Pauline Milne

**23. Dates for your Diary 2015/16**

Term 3	Start of term 3	Wednesday, 6 <sup>th</sup> January
	Occasional Day	Friday, 12 <sup>th</sup> February
	Mid Term	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> February
	In Service Holiday	Tuesday, 16 <sup>th</sup> February
	In Service Holiday	Wednesday, 17 <sup>th</sup> February
	End of term 3	Friday, 1 <sup>st</sup> April

**EASTER HOLIDAY : Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April (inc)**

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

Links:

[www.mintlawacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk](http://www.mintlawacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk)

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