



MINTLAW ACADEMY

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NEWSLETTER: Term 1 2018/19

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An Introduction from Mrs Duthie

It's hard to believe we are at the end of Term 1 already. As ever this has been a very busy term at Mintlaw Academy.

Our 18-19 Executive team of Katie Ramsay, (Head Girl) Findlay Grant, (Head Boy) Joanne McDonald (Depute Head Girl) and Daniel Richardson (Depute Head Boy) head up a large team of House Captains, Sports Captains and their deputies. In conjunction with our prefect group, who are made up of a number of S4 students as well as their S5-6 peers, our seniors have been working hard to support school events.

Back in August, pupils celebrated another set of very strong results with eleven S4 students gaining six Grade A National 5 Awards and two S5 students delighted to achieve straight A results across five Higher courses. Well done to them and to last year's S4-S6 as a whole who worked hard and should be very proud of their results. Our S5 results were the strongest the school has seen.

Our S1 pupils are settling in and enjoying their new courses. In fact, across the school, staff are impressed with the work ethic shown by all our students. It is very pleasing to see how well turned out our youngsters are with school uniform being adhered to by almost all. I would ask your continued support in this and, in particular footwear which should be all black, including trainers if worn.

We are now very much back in to and enjoying our lovely new Learning Plaza. The library area is fantastic, the ICT hub also a superb resource for pupils and it's great to see many of the classrooms on the first floor repainted and recarpeted. Parents will be given the opportunity for a tour of the new area at each parents' evening this

session. Over next summer, we plan to paint and carpet the remaining first floor main block classrooms and then continue with a redecoration programme over subsequent years. Another excellent piece of news is that work has begun on improving the surface of two of our grass pitches to the rear of the school, and the plan is that they are up and functional for next spring. This would allow for their use as part of PE delivery as well as hopefully meaning we can host a whole-school Sports Day in May. Work is also continuing in our Therapeutic Garden where Mrs Reid, of our

SfL Faculty, is currently planning a fantastic initiative where she is coordinating the painting of plastic bottle ends to create a poppy display for Remembrance weekend. Members of the community are very welcome to come and visit.

We had a visit from our new Director of Education, Laurence Findlay earlier this term. Our Head Boy and Girl took him up to see the Learning Plaza which he later tweeted looked "amazing!" He intends to visit for a more extensive tour of the school very soon.

A number of staff leave us at the October holidays. Ms Mitchell, Modern Languages has moved back to the Central Belt and is replaced by Mrs Bream increasing her teaching commitment to full-time. Mrs Gore, of the Science Faculty, retires at the October break to be replaced by Mr McHugh in Physics. Mrs Gore has served Mintlaw Academy extremely well over the past 13 years and staff and pupils alike wish her all the very best in her retirement. Post the holidays we also welcome an Acting Principal Teacher of Skills Development, Mrs Karin Leslie to Mintlaw Academy, along with an Acting Principal Teacher, Leader of Health and Wellbeing Ms Lucy Murison. We also welcome Mrs Donna Donald, of our SfL Faculty to the post of Acting PT Literacy.

Coming up soon after the October break will be the In-service Days on 12/13 November. On the 13th, along with a number of opportunities for professional learning, primary and secondary cluster staff will meet in order to look at delivery of Numeracy. We have a focus currently across the Cluster on Numeracy and the In-service event builds on Family Learning events coordinated over recent months by both primary and Academy colleagues. These events are all aimed at building confidence in Numeracy in both youngsters and parents!

In conclusion, can I wish you and yours a lovely and relaxing October break. I look forward to seeing all our young people back ready to embark on Term 2 on the 29th of October and have every confidence that we will continue on what will be yet another successful year for the school.

Potato Project

D Donald

In the spring, pupils from the ELS planted seed potatoes, given to us as part of One Seed Forward community project.

They were planted in old "Bags for Life" and grown in the courtyard garden where they were watered and checked regularly.

The shaws were removed when we came back to school in August and at the end of September, they were dug up.

This was our crop.

Mathew Paterson took the potatoes to Abbey Court, a Very Sheltered Housing Complex, and handed them over to grateful staff in the kitchen.



Mintlaw Academy Therapeutic Garden

A McKeown

Pupils and staff have been working hard to progress our exciting project, the Mintlaw Academy Therapeutic Garden. In the months leading up to the summer holidays we were delighted with the installation of our security fence which enabled us to focus on the creation of the reflective shelter, paths and flower beds. During this time we were excited to have the team from SSE Community Development helping us and have also managed to plant some appropriate flowers, shrubs and trees.

This term has been a very busy one in the continued development of the garden. We were delighted to receive a donation from the Mintlaw Shoppe and invite members of the Shoppe to the Happy Cafe and have a tour of the garden. We have made links with Alexander Robertson, Landscaper and Gardener who has been very kind, donating his time and expertise helping us prepare the garden for winter and we are excited to work with him again in the coming months. Peterhead Prison Community Initiative has been very helpful too and have donated a number of pieces to the garden and provided a substantial amount of woodchip for our shelter floor!

Our pupils have been very keen to work on the garden and we have a number of groups who work on the garden throughout the week. Myra McCredie has been a font of information and has been working with our young people every Friday afternoon, teaching us about plants, weeds and how to remove them properly. Thank you Myra! We are keen to work with members and groups within the local community so if you are a keen gardener and would like to work with us and our young people in creating this space for the benefit of all please get in touch with Mrs A McKeown, Mintlaw Academy, 01771 622994.



Once again Mintlaw Academy pupils achieved excellent results in their exams in May and June. In S4, more than 40% of the year passed 5 or more National 5 qualifications and 12 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 40% of our S5 pupils gaining 3 or more Higher qualifications. This was the best ever performance from an S5 year group. 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.

Tracking pupil progress

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 has been issued for all pupils in S1 and tracking reports for S2 and S3 pupils will be issued in Term 2 which will provide information about 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 has been collated to produce a tracking report which was issued recently. As explained in the accompanying letter it is not necessarily an issue if a pupil's target and working grades do not match in a particular subject at the beginning of a course. What would be a concern is if the 'ratings' for effort, homework and behaviour indicated that your son or daughter was not working to potential and this was the reason for a difference between the two grades.

Further detail about the strategies that teachers can use to support and challenge your child to improve their performance if this is required are given in the letter accompanying the tracking reports.

Adverse Weather Procedures

As we head towards colder weather it is worth confirming our procedures at this early stage.

The first port of call for information during adverse weather is the Aberdeenshire Council Website for School Closure information. We will also add a message to our Adverse Weather Line details follow below.

With regards to the information that goes onto the website, it will detail buses by coach number. Mintlaw Academy contracts all start with the prefix NS467 and a letter then follows which distinguishes the bus route. This information is on the bus pass so please ensure you familiarise yourself with this information from your child's/ward's bus pass in order to fully understand communications on the website.

Phone:

School Information line: **0370 054 4999**
then use the pin no: **021100**

Website:

- <https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/schools-closures/>
(you can register and subscribe to receive email alerts when the school updates its closure status.)

School Health

K Jarvis & S Robertson

All pupils

Can we ask that parents remind their children of the importance of good hand hygiene to prevent the spread of illness. We also advise that children remain off school for at least 48 hours after symptoms have settled with any vomiting and diarrhoea illness.

If any pupil has to take medication at school, please note that written consent is required. Forms are available from Mrs Robertson in the medical room.

S1 pupils will be invited to attend a health and wellbeing assessment including distance and colour vision screening this school year.

Absence Procedure**Office**

Could parents/carers please text the Academy on **07860029120** or call the absence line on **01771 620000** to report an absence as soon as you can and leave a message at any time. Please leave pupils name, class and reason for absence. Thank you in advance.

Follow us on Twitter!**L Simpson**

A number of Faculties and Departments now have Twitter accounts, with news, photos and updates of the wide variety of activities and achievements of our pupils and staff.

Mintlaw Academy	@MintlawAcademy
Developing Young Workforce	@MintlawDYW
Home Economics Department	@MintlawHomeEc
Music Department	@MintlawMusic
Science Faculty	@MintlawSci
Social Subjects Faculty	@mintlawsocsub
Support and Challenge	@Mintlaw_SandC
Technology Faculty	@Mintlawtech
Health & Wellbeing Faculty	@mintlaw_health

Dates for your Diary 2018/19

Term 2

- 29th October 2018 - start of term 2
- 12th and 13th November 2018 - in-service day
- 21st December 2018 - end of term 2
- 24th December 2018 to 4th January 2019 - Christmas holiday

Term 3

- 7th January 2019 - start of term 3
- 8th February 2019 - Occasional Day 1
- 11th February 2019 - mid term holiday
- 12th and 13th February 2019 - in-service day
- 29th March 2019 - end of term 3
- 1st to 12th April 2019 - Spring holiday

Term 4

- 15th April 2019 - start of term 4
- 19th April 2019 - Good Friday holiday
- 6th May 2019 - May Day holiday
- 3rd June 2019 - Occasional Day 2
- 5th July 2019 - end of term 4
- 8th July 2018 to 16th August - Summer holiday