



October 2017

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope that you all managed to have a good October holiday and enjoyed the relatively good weather during the latter part. I would like to take this opportunity to update you on a few school related matters.

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1. Changes to National Qualifications

Following an announcement by the Depute First Minister, SQA have made changes to how National 5 courses are assessed. From this academic session there is no longer a requirement to complete unit assessments and the course award will be decided by exam performance, together with the project element of the course where applicable. I have included an attachment which provides some questions and answers about these changes and hope that you will find this useful. Further information is also available on the SQA website at <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/78398.7831.html>.

2. Staffing Update

We are delighted to welcome back Mrs Law from maternity leave and would like to thank Ms Moodie for looking after the Morven pupils so well over the past year. Ms Moodie will return to the English Faculty, but Ms Collie and Mrs Ross will also continue to work in the Academy over the remainder of the session. We are interviewing Music candidates later this week and hope to recruit into the vacant post left by Mr Cosgrove. Unfortunately there have been no suitable applicants for the post of Maths teacher and this post continues to be advertised. We are extremely grateful to Mrs Crawford who came out of her very recent retirement to support us in the Maths Faculty. Similarly we are still actively seeking an RMPS teacher to replace Mrs Wilson who moved to St Andrews school at the start of session. Several of the part-time staff have been prepared to increase their hours to ensure that RMPS classes are adequately covered and their help is gratefully appreciated.

3. Social Media

Inappropriate use of Social media continue to have an adverse impact on a few pupils in our school and I would recommend the following parental guidance to help raise your awareness of this issue -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/490001/Social_Media_Guidance_UKCCIS_Final_18122015.pdf.pdf. Please do not hesitate to contact Guidance staff if you have a concern.

Across Aberdeenshire there have been also been a small number of incidents where parents have posted entries on Facebook or other Social Media sites regarding issues with staff or pupils in their school. These posts can then reach a much wider audience than originally intended through this public forum and our

legal department has advised that making abusive or offensive comments can result in the imposition of civil or criminal sanctions.

I am grateful that the majority of Aboyne Academy parents are prepared to contact the school directly if they are concerned or frustrated about any matter. Several parents also visit the Head Teacher drop-in clinic and I am always keen to promptly address any matters that are raised at these meetings.

4. Attainment 2016-17

SQA results for Aboyne Academy continue to be very good. In particular, our S5 cohort performed extremely well. Results can be found by accessing the following link <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/find-a-school/aberdeenshire/5257530> However, our priority continues to be increasing the range of suitable courses that help prepare pupils for their future. This means that we have introduced opportunities for pupils to do modern apprenticeships in conjunction with their normal qualifications, as well as increasing Skills for Work courses such as Travel and Tourism and Hospitality. Enriching our curriculum in this way gives a more appropriate range of experiences to some of our pupils, supporting the national *Getting it Right for every Child* approach to education. Our curriculum evening is planned for Tuesday 30th January and I hope that you will come along and join us to find out more and to contribute to future planning.

5. Fund-Raising

Our sponsored walk was a huge success and enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. The event raised over £6000 towards school funds. We will ask pupils for their ideas about spending some of the sponsored walk funding on new resources which will improve their learning experience. We will also top-up the school fund which allows us to subsidise school transport for extra-curricular activities.

We are also grateful to the Rotary Club of Aboyne and Upper Deeside who assisted by our Parent Council held a Silent Auction which raised a magnificent sum of money of which, £4000 has been donated to the Academy to purchase new ICT equipment.

Our Christmas Fayre is being held on the 11th November this year and I hope that you will come along to start your Christmas shopping early and support the school. Many thanks to those of you who continue to invest time and energy into school life and a huge well-done to all who have support our fund-raising efforts. As the money devolved to schools continues to decrease in real terms we are reliant on fund-raising to ensure that our pupils can maximise their opportunities.

6. School Sport Award

I am delighted to announce that Aboyne Academy have been presented with a silver Sport Scotland School Sport Award. This is a national, Lottery funded initiative designed to encourage schools to continuously improve Physical Education (PE) and school sport opportunities.

The bronze, silver and gold awards formally recognise a school's achievement in putting physical education and school sport at the heart of their planning, practice and ethos.

7. Parent' Evenings

We hope to have the online booking system available for parents' evening this session and trust that you will find it a more efficient means of booking slots with relevant teachers. It is also our intention to trial using the games hall for parents' evenings to again make the evening easier for parents. We will ask for your feedback to find out if you favour this change or not.

8. Dates for your Diary

- I look forward to seeing lots of new faces at the next AAPC meeting being held in Torphins primary School on Wednesday 1st November at 7pm. We will continue to move the meetings to different areas of the catchment to make it easier for parents to attend at least one of the meetings per session.
- The next Head Teacher drop-in session runs from 4-6pm on Thursday 2nd November. Please feel free to come along and share your ideas or concerns. No appointment is necessary.
- Young Musician of the Year will be held on Tuesday 7th November. Tickets for this event always sell out fast!
- In-Service Days will take place on Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th of November and school will be closed to pupils on these dates.
- Children in Need day occurs on Friday 17th November. This is always well-supported and pupils are attending assemblies to get more information this week.

Yours sincerely



Lorraine Scott
Head Teacher