

Banchory Academy Parents' Bulletin

January-March 2019



Easter 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome to our Spring Bulletin.

This has without doubt been one of the fastest third terms that I can remember. We have been very fortunate that the weather has been kind to us this winter and we have not lost any days to snow closures.

This term has seen pupils participating in a number of activities both in and out of school. Public speaking, sports, music and STEM have involved many young people. I would like to say thank you to all the staff that have supported these events. Last week, the school participated in Comic Relief. Well done to Miss Thompson's S3 class who organised the event. It was a great success, raising nearly £1300.

I would like to wish both Catriona Chapman and Jonas Newey good luck in the World School Orienteering Championships in Estonia. Both Catriona and Jonas are representing Scotland. An amazing achievement and we are very proud of them both.

Senior pupils have been working hard as they prepare for their exams. It is important that the Easter holidays are a time for rest and relaxation as well as time for revision. We wish everyone sitting their SQA exams every success.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Parents' Bulletin and I would like to wish all parents, carers and pupils a very enjoyable Easter break.

Judith Wight
Rector

Inside this issue:

Message from the Rector	1
Staffing Update / Absence Reporting	2
PTA / Xpressions App	3
Parent Council	4-5
Term Dates	6



Staffing Update



We are pleased to advise that Mrs Lisa Rodger, Teacher of ASL, was appointed as a Permanent member of staff in February.

Our best wishes to Mrs Lorna McPhail , Teacher of ASL who starts a Career Break in April. Recruitment is underway for her temporary replacement.

Mrs Anna Marie Milligan will take up a Permanent position as Teacher of English after the Easter holidays.

Mrs Heidi Jamieson has begun Maternity Leave, and we wish her well.

School Absence Text Number 07860 029020



Absence Reporting

We would like to encourage parents and carers to use the school's dedicated text number **07860 029020** to report a pupil's absence. This is an efficient system for both parents and the school office—please advise pupil name, reason and length of absence in your text.

Pupils should be reminded that if they feel unwell during the school day, **they should report to First Aid or Reception.** We still have a number of instances of pupils phoning home and leaving the building before the school is aware, which has potential for anomalies if there is a fire alarm.



Banchory Academy PTA Update

Banchory Academy P.T.A would like to thank you all for your on going support. We are always on the lookout for new members, please get in touch if you are interested in joining us. If you cannot commit to join us for meetings but would still like to help send an email to

katherine.diamond@btinternet.com.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 26th March 7.30pm —Young Musician evening at Woodend Barn, a wonderful evening. The P.T.A will be serving teas and coffee at the Interval to help raise funds.

Tuesday 30th April - Bag2School collection. Bags can be left with a P.T.A member in the school carpark from 08.30- 09.15 on the day. Information regarding what types of textiles can be donated can be found at <https://bag2school.com> We currently organize 2 collections per year and this raises approximately £600 of much needed funds. All donations help , however big or small.



Saturday 7th September Quiz and Chips evening. More details to follow, but this event is always a fun evening why not plan ahead and put a team together and join us on the night?

Communications via Groupcall / Xpressions App

There are still a number of parents who we have no email address for, so for this or any other contact changes, please email the school at

BanchoryAcademyContacts@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

A reminder also that signing up for the free App –**Groupcall Xpressions** will save the school the cost of a text by sending free messages. The more parents who sign up – the more the school will save when sending messages! (We will continue to send texts to those who prefer this method).

Spring term report from the Parent Council

BAPC – dealing with matters that directly affect our children

We welcome parents/carers to attend the PC meetings – whether it's one meeting or all!

We welcome new ideas about what would help parents support their children's education

Email chair.bapc@gmail.com

STOP PRESS!

Local Development Plan

The development of Banchory is currently being planned. The public has an opportunity to make their voice heard right now, **until April 8th**. The future development will affect many aspects of our community. If you would like to see what bids have been made to develop land in and around Banchory, go to <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/plans-and-policies/ldp-2021/main-issues-report/>, scroll down and click on 'Appendix Marr', then go to pages 14-25. To make a comment on any proposed development, go back to the home page, scroll down and click on 'Response Form'.

Plans for pool and changing area

The PC heard in January that plans and costings were being drawn up by the school and the Local Authority design team for the pool and changing room area, which will close when the new Banchory Sports Village opens this summer. Parents would be able to view the plans in due course.

Internet Wellbeing information evening for parents

With the mounting concern about young people's interaction with social media on their phones, three members of the Parent Council organised an extremely informative and very well attended evening on February 21st. Four young people from the Princes Trust Achieve Groups gave an excellent presentation about apps currently being used. School liaison police officer Seb Cook spoke about the sharing of text and images, and the law surrounding this. Mrs Wight, Rector at the school, and Ms McIlraith, Guidance teacher, both spoke about the school's perspective and experience. A spokesperson for local charity MyLifeDynamic gave information about support offered to people locally, and Susan MacGregor of Community Learning and Development explained about a 5-week 'Living With Your Teenager' course starting May 7th in Aboyne that will also address social media.

Next school year the PC is hoping to deliver an information evening on mental wellbeing.

Soul Academy fundraiser organised by PC and PTA

As you will read in the PTA news report, the school's Soul Academy band laid on an excellent night of soul tunes, getting people on the dance floor and raising over £1800 as a contribution towards replacing the old (30 years old!) stage lights.

Litter at lunchtimes in the community

Littering by some pupils, including broken glass, particularly in the playground in the park opposite Morrisons and along the route from the playground to school, has become a growing problem, as seen by two PC members just after the school lunch break. Despite bins being available, a small number of pupils are not using them. This creates a horrible environment for mothers bringing their young children to the playground, as well as risk of harm to pets. It also sends out a negative image of the school pupils, the vast majority of whom are not littering. The PC plan to look at ways of reducing the littering. If anyone would like to help with this initiative, please email chair.bapc@gmail.com

Improving communication with the Parent Forum

In line with our aim to improve communication with all parents, many of you will have seen the PC desk at the entrance to the Parents' Evenings this year where we were handing out leaflets about the activities and purpose of the Parent Council.

Meetings – all parents welcome!

Parent Council meetings continue to be well attended – thank you to all those who have supported the meetings. Any parent of a Banchory Academy pupil is invited to attend the PC meetings, and our aim is to make you feel very welcome (tea/coffee & biscuits always available!).

Giving a parent voice on school Working Groups (WG)

Literacy WG – two members of the PC are part of this WG which aims to promote literacy across the whole curriculum. To support this, the PC agreed to buy jotters for the new S1 pupils arriving in August 2019.

Numeracy WG – a maths challenge for 40 P7s to help bridge the gap between primary and secondary school took place in February and Jeanne Ritchie of the PC provided refreshments. Thanks to Mrs Stewart for organising the challenge, which was extremely well received by the pupils.

Developing the Young Workforce - this WG is new and will look at how the school can help prepare pupils for the work place. The Careers Talks, initiated in 2015 by the Parent Council, are giving pupils the opportunity to find out first-hand about many different jobs. **Mark your diary...on September 30th 2019, the school will hold a big Careers Fair in the evening for pupils and their parents.**

Network capability

As a result of a PC enquiry, the reliability of the school's connectivity was investigated with the Local Authority. By the November meeting, the school had found that connection to the internet had improved and was no longer an issue of ongoing concern.

Bus for pupils travelling to and from Drumoak area

Following some less-than-satisfactory experiences with the service buses that transport pupils living in the Drumoak area, PC members Trish Amundrud and Alison Smart have been liaising with Councillor Eileen Durno who has been communicating with the Local Authority to try to achieve a better service.

Duke of Edinburgh

The DofE activities are run by the Banchory Open Award Group (BOAG) which is independent of the school and the PC. However, PC members Colin Macleod and Scott Newey with the other DofE leaders have worked hard in difficult transition circumstances to ensure the continuation of this excellent activity for pupils of Banchory Academy. BOAG is run entirely by volunteers and needs as many as possible. If you are interested in finding out more, please email bronzedofebanchory@gmail.com

Helpful information for parents about the education of their children

Connect is a 70-year old Scottish charity that supports Parent Involvement in education, and is still going stronger than ever! Go to <https://connect.scot/> to find out all sorts of useful information. Banchory Academy parents can access to the membership area as our PC is signed up as a member.

NPFS is a government-run association that works hard to improve parent involvement and engagement in education. The NPFS website has a series of very helpful 'In A Nutshell' guides about the examination subjects in secondary school, as well guides on careers. Go to: <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

Wishing you a good spring break! Banchory Academy Parent Council



Diary Dates

School Term Dates 2015-2020

We receive many telephone calls enquiring about school term dates. For your convenience, please refer to the [Aberdeenshire Council](#) website.

Session 2018/19

Term 3 Ends	Friday	29th March 2019
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Term 4 Starts	Monday	15th April 2019
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Local Holiday	Monday	3rd June 2019
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Term 4 Ends	Friday	5th July 2019
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Session 2019/20

Term 1 Starts (Staff Only)	Monday	19th August 2019
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Pupils Return	Tuesday	20th August 2019
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Term 1 Ends	Friday	11th October 2019
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Term 2 Starts	Monday	28th October 2019
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In Service (Staff Only)	Monday	18th November 2019
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In Service (Staff Only)	Tuesday	19th November 2019
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Term 2 Ends	Friday	20th December 2019
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