



DINGWALL ACADEMY

August 2006

Parental Newsletter

A new session is now well underway and the pupils and staff have settled in to their new courses.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

I am very much indebted to all parents and guardians for supporting our school uniform policy and the percentage of pupils wearing the school uniform is even higher than it was last year.

SPONSORED WALK

The first major event of the new session sees our now traditional school sponsored walk take place on Tuesday 3 October 2006. This is a very important event in the school year as it raises much needed funds for out of school activities and initiatives. Please encourage your youngsters to try and raise as much as possible and to enjoy their day. Any adult willing to help with supervision duties on the day is invited to contact either the Rector or Mr Douglas MacIntosh, Head of PE, Health and Nutrition.

DATA CAPTURE FORM

You should have recently received a form entitled School Data Capture Form. This allows us to update all of our information relating to all pupils in our charge. As you can imagine contact

details are extremely important to us and in particular we would appreciate notification of an emergency contact number outwith parental contacts. It is particularly important to us that before we organise medical attention for youngsters that we are able to speak to a responsible person connected to the child. It is also very useful for us to have pupil mobile phone numbers.

PHOTOGRAPHER

The school photographer will be in Dingwall Academy on Wednesday 6 September. Family group photographs will also be possible at this time but parents and guardians are asked to notify the school in advance if they wish to take advantage of this facility.

BEHAVIOUR CODE

A new Behaviour Code has been introduced to Dingwall Academy this session. Although pupil behaviour within the school remains consistently good for the vast majority of youngsters, it was felt that our old discipline policy had become tired. We have refreshed it after much consultation with staff and pupils. The new policy continues to highlight the need for positive behaviour and tries to make appropriate sanctions available to all members of staff. The new policy is now published on the Dingwall Academy Website and I hope that all parents and guardians continue to

make use of the website for up to date information.

HOLIDAYS/IN SERVICE DAYS

I know that all pupils, parents and guardians are interested in knowing the holidays and regional in-service training days and these are now included with this newsletter. In addition to this, you will find inserted with this mailing a credit card type information document which I hope will be handy for wallets and purses. As well as giving key school term and holiday dates this card gives the contact number and address for the school as well as the address for our website. I hope that you find this card useful and that you use the website to become more familiar with all of our policies and news.

RECTOR'S SURGERY

Last session I introduced a Rector's Surgery type of approach whereby parents and guardians could come along to the school at times which will be notified to you in order to discuss any aspects of school life. There is no need to make a specific appointment and I will be available for the first of these opportunities on Tuesday 3 October between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

NEW SCHOOL BUILD

Finally, with regard to the new school build, the piling work was successfully completed during the course of the summer holidays and all 700 piles are now firmly in place. Over the next few weeks preparations will be made for the laying of the foundations with the steel work beginning to appear from November onwards. Morrison Construction have produced a Newsletter for the people of the town and this newsletter is now available through a link on our school website.

NABS

Parents of pupils in S5/S6 and those with pupils sitting Intermediate exams in S4 are reminded of the importance of unit assessments—often referred to as NABS. Pupils must pass all unit tests in order to gain an overall course award. Further information on NABS is available on the Policies section of the website.

Moodle Goes Live!

Since last November pupils in Dingwall Academy have had access to on-line teaching and learning resources in school. These are teaching packs (conventional booklets in electronic form), quizzes, worksheets, links to web sites, video clips and other resources. Currently most of the resources are in the Business and Computer Education Faculty (BCE) and these include materials for S1 and S2 ICT. Only pupils who have joined a course in school can access that.

These resources can now be accessed from your home computer as long as it is connected to the Internet. With broadband you will have full access to all resources at the same speed as pupils can access them in school. With dial-up things are a lot slower but everything works.

How to Access it

From the Dingwall Academy web site (www.dingwallacademy.com) follow the link to Dingwall Academy Learning Zone. Your child needs to log in with his/her school network username and password. Thereafter they will have access to all areas they are allowed to access in school.

Homework etc.

It is possible to attach homework to the site and if a subject has reference information, either in terms of an e-book or a link to a web site then pupils can download and complete homework without having to take books home and remember to bring them back.

Feedback

We are not opening Moodle up to allow everyone to post their views onto it but if you have any ideas or suggestions as to how we can improve it please let us know via the feedback facility on the Dingwall Academy Web Site. We have one or two technical issues to resolve so please do not tell us that certain quizzes do not work – we know that. We would like to know what you think of it, so let us know via your child or e-mail if you think this development could be beneficial.

Miss Maureen E Gray

The start of the session was unusual in that Miss Maureen Gray was not in her usual position as Head of Learning Support. Miss Gray started well deserved retirement on 15 August after 31 years of devoted service to the youngsters of Dingwall Academy. Everyone in the Academy would like to place on record their thanks for her commitment.



CALENDAR

2006

Monday	14	August	Staff return
Tuesday	15		Pupils return
Friday	6	October	Close
(Mod 13 – 21 October)			
Monday	23		Open
Monday	13	November	In-Service
Tuesday	14		"
Thursday	21	December	Close

2007

Monday	8	January	Open
Thursday	8	February	In-Service
Friday	9		Holiday
Monday	12		"
Friday	30	March	Close
(Good Friday/Easter Monday 6/9 April)			
Monday	16	April	In-Service Day
Tuesday	17		Open for pupils
Monday	7	May	Holiday
Thursday	28	June	Close
Monday	13	August	Open for staff
Tuesday	14		Open for pupils
Friday	5	October	Close
(Mod 12 – 20 October)			
Monday	22		Open
Thursday	20	December	Close

2008

Monday	7	January	Open
Friday	8	February	Holiday
Monday	11		"
Thursday	20	March	Close
(Good Friday/Easter Monday 21/24 March)			
Monday	7	April	Open
Monday	5	May	Holiday
Friday	27	June	Close
Monday	18	August	Open for staff
Tuesday	19		Open for pupils