

Harlaw Academy

18-20 Albyn Place
Aberdeen
AB10 1RG
Headteacher: Mr R McLaren



22nd August 2022

Dear parents and carers

Headteacher Update

I am delighted to write to you again. Hopefully you too have enjoyed a peaceful and restful holiday and your children are raring to get back to school! Despite being closed for seven weeks, much has happened and as always, I am keen to keep you updated with key matters.

1. Staffing
2. Attainment
3. SQA Appeals
4. Improvements to our building
5. School uniform
6. COVID-19 protocols
7. School photographs
8. First day arrangements

1. Staffing

Following on from my last letter, where I made you aware of the departure of several members of staff, I am delighted to advise that we have many new members of staff joining the team.

PT Science	Seonaid Forrester has been appointed to the post of Principal Teacher Science. Seonaid comes to us from the central belt and has a wealth of experience, particularly in her specialist subject, Biology.
PT Pupil Support Leader	Erin Kermath has been appointed to our Head of Guidance role whilst Lauren Lawson is on maternity leave. In addition to taking on Lauren's management duties, Erin will continue to be responsible for her year group – the new S3.
PT Guidance	Jane Lawrenson (from Social Subjects) has been appointed for a year to provide cover for Lauren's year group responsibilities. As such, Jane will be Guidance teacher for the new S2.
PT Guidance	I'm delighted to report that Ashleigh Wilson is back from her maternity leave and will be undertaking the role of P7 Transition Guidance teacher. She will be working with the new P7 to prepare them for the start with us in August 2023.
Physics	Stephen Goodwin is joining our Physics department. We are absolutely delighted to welcome Steve from RGC where he worked last session.

Newly Qualified Teachers	We have been allocated five NQTs for this session. This is a fantastic development given the enthusiasm and energy they always bring fresh from teacher training. We look forward to working with; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trudy Hunter - Art • Karen Haig - Chemistry • Jennifer Louden – Geography • Matthew Angell - Modern Studies • Liam Bowie - Music
School Administrator	After many years of service in our office, Avril Kessack has now transitioned to the role of Technician, specifically supporting our Home Economics department. Melanie Fowlie has now been appointed and will start her new role today.
Pupil Support Assistants	We are also fortunate to have secured three new Pupil Support Assistants. Serilda Fonseca, Rebecca Pang and Ammany Stephan will join the Sfl team as of today.

I am sure I speak for our whole community when I offer our warm welcome to Harlaw Academy. As always, we are excited about the opportunity to work with new colleagues who will bring different experiences, new ideas and fresh enthusiasm to their work with us.

2. Attainment

As you know, pupils undertook formal SQA examinations for the first time in three years. Over the past year in particular, pupils and their teachers, had been working extremely hard to prepare for the exam diet. Many have much to be proud of. As a school we have demonstrated improvements in virtually all key performance levels when compared with 2019, the last time pupils sat exams. The table below demonstrates where these improvements have taken place. With your ongoing support, we continue to increase the number and quality of qualifications our pupils achieve in our school. Together, we will set even higher expectations of what can be achieved with the right mindset and work ethic. Congratulations to all pupils and their teachers!

Year	Measure	2019	2022
S4	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at Nat 3 or above	67.7%	74.4%
	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at Nat 4 or above	63.4%	70.6%
	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at Nat 5	36.6%	35.6%
S5	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at Nat 4 or above	18.1%	20.1%
	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at Nat 5 or above	17.5%	20.3%
	Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more qualifications at Higher	12.3%	13.2%
S6	Percentage of pupils leaving with 5 or more qualifications at Nat 5 or above	48.3%	67.8%
	Percentage of pupils leaving with 3 or more qualifications at Higher or above	29.8%	49.7%
	Percentage of pupils leaving with 5 or more qualifications at Higher or above	21.9%	27.7%
	Percentage of pupils leaving with 1 or more qualification at Adv. Higher or above	13.5%	16.4%

3. SQA Appeals

As is always the case, a number of pupils may not have achieved the grades they were hoping for. Over the past two weeks, the school admin team have supported Val Esslemont (DHT) in processing requests for priority appeals. In addition to these, staff will work with pupils from Tuesday to identify other eligible appeals. Where we have evidence to support an appeal, we would want to do so!

4. **Improvements to our building**

I am delighted to advise that all our planned renovations have taken place.

- Our Art and Music classrooms have been completed redecorated and carpeted.
- Our second quad has been transformed into an outdoor learning space complete with standing tables and chalkboards.
- A number of our external and internal corridor doors have been refitted in order to ensure we have improved security. This includes magnets at our main entry doors at A and C blocks.
- I am overjoyed to confirm that four of our pupil toilet facilities have been completely refitted. It is important that pupils play their part in ensuring that they remain in good condition for the benefit of all.

5. **School Uniform**

There continues to be an expectation that pupils who attend Harlaw Academy will adhere to our dress code.

Please can I take this opportunity again to remind you that our current dress code requires pupils to adhere to the following uniform standards:

S1-S3 Pupils

- Black tailored trousers or skirt
- Harlaw Academy polo shirt
- Harlaw Academy sweatshirt

S4-S6 Pupils

- Black tailored trousers or skirt
- Blue or white shirt with school tie
- Harlaw Academy Blazer

Our full uniform information can be viewed here; <https://harlawacademy.aberdeen.sch.uk/uniform/>

Whilst we appreciate that purchasing uniform can be expensive, please be reminded that the school is able to provide assistance with this. If you would like to discuss, please contact your child's Guidance teacher. From tomorrow, members of the year team will be working with pupils and contacting home where a pupil does not meet this expectation. I am keen to have your full support in ensuring that children come to school appropriately dressed and in accordance with our dress code.

6. **Covid-19 protocols**

When pupils return to school tomorrow, they will no longer be required to sanitise their hands on entry to the school/classrooms. That said, we would of course encourage all pupils to maintain good hand hygiene given that the virus remains in circulation. Whilst pupils are free to hand sanitise as often as they like and take advantage of hand sanitiser provided by staff, we will not require them to do so.

In addition, pupils will no longer be required to sanitise their tables and chairs at the start/end of a lesson. Again, we will do our utmost to ensure that resources are available for those who wish to do so.

7. School photographs

I am happy to confirm that the school photographer will be visiting on Thursday 25th & Friday 26th August to undertake the annual photoshoot. Individual pictures as well as a number of group pictures will be taken over the two days. This will be the first time since 2019 that this is happened.

Proofs will be made available to families with the option to purchase being made available to you. Further information on this will follow in due course.

8. First day arrangements

- Pupils are required to arrive at school between 0815 and 0825. The warning bell will sound at 0825.
- Pupils should assemble in their allocated areas within the playground. These are as follows.
 - S1 - Rear Playground
 - S2 - Main playground next to the glass corridor entrance
 - S3 - Main playground next to the boiler house door
 - S4 - Main playground, on the grass, next to the Social subject's door
 - S5 - Front car park, next to the left (as you look at the school) hand ramp
 - S6 - Front playground, next to the right (as you look at the school) hand ramp
- All pupils should come to school prepared for lessons, including their fully charged chromebooks.
- Registration (or Form class) will be extended on Tuesday to allow for the dissemination of new time timetable and other important information.
- Please note that if your child is in the **New S1**, they do not have PE on Tuesday and as such, will **not require to bring their PE kit on their first day.**
- Please can I also advise that due to the removal of hand sanitising and desk cleaning, we intend to revert back to our more familiar pattern of school day. If you recall, we stole a single minute from each of our six periods in order to lengthen Form from twelve to eighteen minutes. From tomorrow, our school day will look like this.

Warning Bell	Form start	P1	P2	Break Start	P3	P4	Lunch Start	Warning bell	P5	P6	End of day
08:25	08:30	08:42	09:35	10:28	10:43	11:36	12:29	13:14	13:19	14:12	15:05

Once again, can I thank you for your ongoing support of our school. Despite the most challenging of circumstances, we continue to make improvements in several key areas. We could not do this without your support.

I wish you all the very best for the new school year and look forward to working with you again through 2022-23 session.

Yours sincerely



Mr R McLaren
Headteacher