**Head teacher weekly update**

**Friday 26th November 2021**

Dear Parent / Carer,

Here is the news for week 22-26th November 2021.

1. **School Holiday**

Another reminder that the school is CLOSED for the St Andrew’s Day holiday on Tuesday 30th November. Pupils should NOT attend that day.

1. **S5/6 Parents’ Evening**

The S5/6 parents’ evening took place, online, on Tuesday 23rd November. This seems to have gone well and I am relieved that the technical issues we experienced with the S4 evening have been rectified (for example, the iOS issue with the Parent’s Booking system seems to have been fixed). We are going to put a MS survey out to S5/6 parents next week.

1. **Prelims**

Prelims start on Wednesday 1st of December. There has been a lot of preparation taking place in classrooms, and our booster class programme has been promoted with S4-6; it is a hybrid mixture of after school sessions, either in school or online. All pupils in S4-6 have received recent tracking reports and their parents’ evening, so families are up to date about progress and next steps in learning.

It has been quite a while since we last had ‘traditional exams’ in school, and the staff are all committed to making sure the seniors get a positive experience over the next few weeks. We appreciate many of the pupils will be anxious about exams, with most never having sat them before. However, it is vitally important that they have the exam experience prior to the formal SQA exam diet in May 2022.

1. **SCQF Bronze Ambassador Award**

This week the school was delighted to receive the bronze level award for our work with the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

There are hundreds of courses and awards in the SQA catalogue that young people can study which are different to traditional Nationals and Highers. Often these alternative courses better meet the needs and interests of our pupils. All these alternative courses and awards are levelled on the SCQF framework at 4-7, the same as National 4, National 5, Higher (level 6) and Advanced Higher (level 7). They also have similar ‘tariff points’ (the points needed for uni/college) as the traditional courses, however, tend to be more practical and don’t have an exam at the end – the SQA certificate will note a ‘pass’ rather than a grade A-D.

Good examples of an alternative courses already on offer in JHS include:

Cyber Security Level 5/6

SFA Refereeing Level 7

We are keen to continue to improve our curriculum offer for our pupils, which involves raising awareness with pupils and parents about what other options are available.

Below is information from SCQF on their award:

*The SCQF School Ambassador programme offers schools the opportunity to learn more about the benefits of the SCQF and the wider ways in which it supports learners such as recognising wider achievement, developing learning pathways in S4-6 in line with the national Developing the Young Workforce strategy and giving equality between vocational and academic qualifications.*

We are now working on obtaining the silver award.

1. **Curriculum meetings**

Following on from the point above, this week Mr Menzies (DHT Curriculum/Timetable) and myself have been involved in curriculum meetings with all the Principal Teachers. This is an exercise we do every year before launching the options process to make sure the ‘offer’ to young people, particularly in S4-6, meets their needs and aligns with the destinations that young people move into – university courses, college courses, apprenticeships and employment opportunities in our local area.

The Principal Teachers have been looking at a range of new SQA courses across the SCQF levels. There have been interesting discussions and we will give pupils and parents a flavour of what could be offered from August 2022 at the forthcoming Options Launch Information Evening. This session is scheduled for the evening of Tuesday 14th December and will be online; a letter will be out in due course to give you information on how to access the presentation.

1. **Umbrella group**

This week I met with the Umbrella group who represent LGBTQ pupils and their allies. The young people brought a number of important points to my attention, and it was great to sit down with them and hear what school life is like for them. The issues of facilities, PE, homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying were discussed, and I am looking forward to working with them on these points to ensure our school is fully inclusive and nurturing for all youngsters.

1. **S6 Update**

The Glynhill is now booked for the S6 prom, and families have a few days to pay the £5 deposit via ParentPay. Similarly, the leavers hoodies are also underway, and the pupils have the online ordering details.

I am also really proud that the year group have been working hard on the Christmas foodbank collection (sweets and chocs again next week) and the Captains have just completed the first round of chairing pupil council meetings with S1-4.

With very best wishes to you and your family,



Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher