



Abercorn News



October 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

Everyone has returned to school refreshed after our October break and ready to work hard in this very busy term.

You will have received a copy of your son/daughter's curriculum plans for this session. This is a very useful document as it will provide you with:

- names of teachers
- information on subjects and courses
- your son/daughter's planned outcomes for the session

Included with the curriculum plans was a letter asking if you agree with the targets that have been set and asking if there is anything else that we as a school can do to support you. I would be very grateful if you could complete and return this letter as soon as possible.

On Wednesday, 28 October, Mrs Whitelocke and two senior pupils, Tammy-joe McDonald and Dougal Fraser were given the opportunity to visit Auschwitz with the Holocaust Educational Trust. This was an excellent opportunity for our young people to develop their knowledge and understanding of the traumatic events that took place during World War Two. They are currently working on a presentation that they will give to other pupils so that others can share their experiences.

Our first Parent's Evening of the session took place last week with a 50% turnout. Parents' evenings give you the opportunity to speak to your son/daughters subject teachers, as always feedback from this event was excellent with everyone agreeing that it gave them an opportunity to speak about their child's learning. A second parents' evening will take place in February/March 2016.

Between now and the end of term two school services/assemblies have been organised and the dates for these are shown below. The first is our annual Celebration of Success event which takes place in the middle of this month, this assembly gives us the opportunity to recognise the achievements of specific pupils and it is a great way for them to be congratulated in public. I hope that you are able to join us for this event. The second event is our annual Carol Service.

As you will be aware December is always a very busy month here in the school. Once again a range of activities and outings will be arranged for our pupils to participate in. Christmas festivities will begin on Tuesday, 8th December when a large group of pupils will be given the opportunity to attend the Pantomime in the Pavillion Theatre. Our thanks once again to Alan Rennie who donated these tickets. Mr Devlin and the school band/choir are busy preparing for their Christmas Carol Service which will take place on Friday, 18th December.

It was with great sadness last week that I had to inform you of the news that one of our much loved pupils, Jack Murray, passed away. As a school community we would like to commemorate Jack's memory in some way. We are currently talking this over and will keep you up-to-date of plans.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions, queries or suggestions. I look forward to welcoming you all over the coming weeks and hope that you are able to attend at least one of these organised events.

Patricia McGowan

MacMillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning



On Thursday 1st October our S3 pupils working towards a Personal Achievement Award hosted a coffee morning to raise funds for MacMillan Cancer Relief. They raised £170 – thanks to all who contributed.

Bingo Night

Abercorn's annual Bingo took place on Thursday 8th October 2014. We raised £. Thank you to everyone who came along and also thank you to those who donated prizes. Thanks also to Mr McKenzie and Mr Morrison in the Art department for creating signs and decorating the hall with their classes.



Transport Co-ordination Centre Freephone Number

Please call the Transport Co-ordination Centre on **287 1056** if a pupil is not going to be on the morning taxi run. The school should also then be informed of any pupil absence. This number can also be used to enquire about taxi's which may not have turned up on time report any issues.

We must also be made aware if a pupil has not travelled in the morning taxi but does require to be added to the run for the hometime journey. If pupils have not travelled in to school by taxi that morning drivers will not take them home without prior notice.

Please note also that the wait time for taxis is 5 minutes. Pupils should be ready and waiting for their taxi to arrive.



Auschwitz

On Wednesday 28th October Tammyjoe McDonald and Dougal Fraser (S6) travelled with Mrs Whitelocke for a one day trip to Auschwitz. Run in conjunction with the Holocaust Education Trust this unique experience allowed the pupils to develop a deeper understanding of what people suffered during the holocaust. The project, titled *Lessons from Auschwitz* sees pupils undertake 2 afternoon seminars and a one day visit to the former Nazi extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau in order to pass on the lessons to their schools and communities. Now that they have returned they will work on ways to disseminate the information they have gathered through the seminars and the trip.

S1 Halloween Party

The Friday afternoon Abercorn's Crazy Entertainers group hosted a Halloween party for pupils on Friday 30th October. A great time was had by all and thanks must go to Mrs Johnston and Mrs Leyden for helping the pupils to run the party and Mr McKenzie and Mr Morrison in the Art department for creating a stunning or should we say spooky backdrop with their classes.



Amazonia

To complement their work on the Crash in the Jungle novel they have been studying in English our S1 pupils recently visited Amazonia to find out more about jungle animals and how they survive. They enjoyed the trip very much.



Mr Anderson's Malawi Experience

In case any of you haven't already heard I took part in this year's Malawi Leaders of Learning education exchange project. I was away for 4 weeks over September and October and was based in a rural school a few miles outside the city (which is named Blantyre after the Scottish explorer and missionary David Livingston) in a place called Ngumbe village. In many ways Ngumbe school is the complete opposite of Abercorn, they don't have electricity so that means they don't have computers, smart boards or any kind of technology at all. The classes have around 150 pupils each, which is more pupils than we have in the whole school, and the school has a total of about 3000 pupils. However, just like Abercorn it is a warm, caring and very happy school indeed.

To begin with my role was working in the Library, developing independent reading and trying to improve their depth of understanding of what it is they are reading. This worked with some classes but with others I had to go back to basics, focusing on the nuts and bolts of reading. We had great fun going through the classics introducing many family favorites such as *The Tiger who Came to Tea*, *The Hungry Caterpillar* and *The Gruffalo* and it was a delight to see the pupils fall in love with these books for the first time. I also took some classes with the standard sevens. In Malawi you do not move up to the next class until you have passed the end of year assessments so standard seven (which would be the equivalent of primary seven here) has some much bigger kids than you would see back home. The Malawian curriculum has high and very demanding expectations. The lessons run for 35 minutes and a lot must be covered in this short time. What I learned is that by simplifying some tasks and extending others for those that are able we achieved a significant rise in the level of understanding which is very satisfying. In some ways these were smaller changes than I had anticipated I would be making but, as is often the way, it's about walking before you run.

The end of my time at Ngumbe School was spent developing a sports leaders programme, just like the one that Mr Baird runs here. The idea with this was to select ten pupils from standard 6 that we'd train up to deliver different sports activities, so that the skills and games that we were teaching them could be passed on to as many other pupils as possible. Since returning to Scotland I've heard that the sports leaders have set up an after school football club and a handball club too, which is absolutely fantastic news and shows that projects like this have an impact which continues long after we've gone home.

There were so many amazing and touching experiences and more than I can mention here but what was strangest is that I travelled out thinking that I had some of the solutions for making life better in Malawi but really it's been the other way round. The people know how to live with each other happily, without all the materialistic stuff that we think we need and enjoying the things that we've forgotten how to. It is truly humbling and profoundly inspiring. To all the pupils and parents who supported last year's Malawi Day, thank you so much, it was the experience of a lifetime. I know I've been changed for the better and I hope we've been able to do a little of that for them too.

Best,

Ned.



Dates for your diary (November-December 2015)

Tuesday 3 rd November	Firework Safety talk for all pupils
Wednesday 4 th November	S1 pupils to Age of Invention Workshop in the People's Palace
Wednesday 4 th November	S3 Social Subjects: Glasgow City Bus Tour
Tuesday 17 th November	Celebration of Success Assembly
Wednesday 18 th November	S4 pupils to Skillstart workshop in SECC
Thursday 19 th November	S4 Business class to Barclays Inspire Event, Aurora Building, Bothwell Street
Tuesday 8 th December	Pantomime, Pavillion Theatre
Wednesday 9 th December	Annual Christmas Fair (10 am – 12 noon)
Wednesday 9 th December	Variety Club Party, Hampden
Thursday 10 th December	Annual Financial Services Lunch, School Band to play
Friday 11 th December	Small group to ASD friendly pantomime at Scottish Opera
Thursday 17 th December	S5/6 hosting Ice Bucket Challenge for charity
Friday 18 th December	Carol Service
Tuesday 22 nd December	School closes at 2.30pm
Wednesday 6 th January 2016	School re-opens