



Tain Royal Academy

ACADAMAIDH RÌOGHAIL BHAILE DHUBHTHAICH
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Dear Parent/Guardian,

4th February 2019

I am writing to keep you up to date with what is happening in TRA at the moment, as there is a lot going on and I am sure you will welcome being kept abreast of events.

2019-2020 Options and Preferences

For the next school year we will be using new software that allows pupils to choose their subject preferences/options in a different way. Parent/carers of our current S4 and S5 pupils will be invited to attend our Senior Subject/Options Event, details will be sent home next week. Pupils moving up from S3/S4/S5 into S4/S5/S6 in session 2019-2020 will be issued with their individual preference/options information following the February in service day. Our current S2 pupils will be issued with their preference/option information moving to S3 on 4th March.

Study Leave / Exams

This year the SQA exams start almost immediately after the Easter holidays. We return on Tuesday 23rd April and the first exam is Thursday 25th April. All pupils are expected to return on Tuesday 23rd and study leave begins on Wednesday 24th April. It would be good for the senior pupils to meet their teachers formally before the exams actually start and any last minute information can be relayed to one another. Study leave ends on 31st May and the new timetable begins on Tuesday 4th June.

Webpage

I would like the school webpage to be revamped and updated to make it more user friendly so that everyone in the community can be more regularly informed of the very positive things that are happening in the school. Mr Waldie is very keen to be involved in the creation of a new website and he would like to hear the views of parents and our pupils as to what the webpage should look like to make it as user friendly as possible before he starts to construct it. If you are willing to be involved with this group please email tainroyal.academy@highland.gov.uk or get in touch with Wendy Hennem, Parent Council Chair, via email tainroyalacademypc@gmail.com

Parent Council

There are two parent council meetings to be held this year and you are welcome to join us. The dates are Thursday 21st March at 6:45pm and Thursday 23rd May at 6.45pm.

Chrome Books

We've been informed by Highland Council that our pupils are to be issued with chrome books shortly. These are for taking to school to complete school work and also using at home to complete homework or if absent for any reason, can catch up with work that is posted on google classroom and accessed from the chrome book. There will be a parent information evening arranged once the chrome books arrive in school and we would encourage all parents to attend.

Spring Ceilidh

We will be hosting our annual Spring Ceilidh on Thursday 4th April, 7pm to 10pm, which will also be a farewell evening to our S6 pupils who will be leaving us.

Youth Forum

TRA Youth forum, with the help of a professional cameraman, have been busy putting together a film that highlights the condition of the school and the need for a new school. The film will go out on social media and we hope that this will help encourage funding to be forthcoming for building a new school and campus for Tain.

P7 to S1 Transition

On Thursday 28th February we will be hosting our Associated Primary Schools Scottish Dancing competition, which has run for a few years. It's a great evening and we warmly invite all parent/carers to come along.

Another project we have to help pupils with their transition from primary school to secondary school is our Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) project. This will begin on Monday 4th February where the primary pupils will engage with local companies and culminates with a showcase day on 21st March where the companies involved run workshops which the pupils attend so as to give the pupils an idea and flavour of what skills the various jobs entail and what subjects they might want to follow as a learning path through school as a result.

Human Rights Group

Our Human Rights group, meet weekly and have been discussing LGBTI+ issues and working on bullying information they will produce following their bullying survey. The group are also coming up with ideas on how to promote Purple Friday and LGBTQ+ history month and how they can raise awareness and perhaps even money. The group members have also recently met with the Youth Forum to exchange ideas.

We have gained our bronze award as a Rights Respecting School, based upon Unicef's Children's Charter and how this impacts on how we treat one another. We are working towards silver, which will see this scheme rolled throughout the school in assemblies, lessons in particular subjects and our Human Rights group who meet regularly on Tuesday lunch time.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

We are continuing to focus on the mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils.

We have a Senior Pupil Mentoring Course running, allowing these pupils to meet their assigned mentor, who they can meet with as regularly as they want to help with homework schedules, revision timetable, revision techniques. To liaise with other members of staff to aid the pupils with their work or even just as an ear to listen to any concerns pupils may have. This has been running since November and will continue up until the SQA exams in May.

A group of senior pupils have been trained to deliver mental health first aid. These senior pupils act as a point of contact for any pupils, to talk or discuss any issues affecting their mental health, and who may not feel comfortable in talking with a member of staff in the first instance. The trained pupils are then able to help support their peers, and liaise with guidance, support or other staff as necessary. We would encourage more pupils to use this facility.

We have a group of senior pupils trained to deliver MVP (Mentors In Violence Prevention) sessions to our S1 pupils. These sessions involve S1 pupils being encouraged to consider particular scenarios and help them consider various options and what outcomes they may have.

Pupils Signing Out of School/Feeling Unwell

We want to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, and we do not allow them to leave school without communication from home via email/voicemail/telephone/notes or appointment cards. If pupils do not return to school after lunch, we would appreciate a phone call on 01862 892121 so that we are made aware before classes commence in the afternoon.

Pupils who feel unwell during the school day are reminded that they should report to reception and see a designated staff member, who will assess them and contact home as required. It is advised that pupils should not be texting or phoning parents directly but allow us to do this, as pupils have left school to go home without our knowledge previously and we have had to record them as a missing person to the police. I appreciate your understanding regarding this. We want to ensure the wellbeing of all our young people.

Staff Changes

Finally, there have been a few staffing changes over the winter months at TRA. Mrs Eaglesfield and Mrs MacDonald, both now on maternity leave, and we welcome Miss Macleod, who is covering their vacancies. In November 2018 we said farewell to Mrs Fraser, Support Teacher, who retired. In January 2019, we welcomed Ms Lockhart, who has replaced Mrs Clapton in our English department. You may be aware, there is a 'freeze' on recruitment with Highland Council at present, therefore we still continue to have a vacancy in our English department and we are fortunate to have Mr P Hodgkinson covering until the summer. We are also short staffed in the school office with 2 clericals off on long term sick.

I have attached a list of dates for your diary

Yours faithfully



Mark Jones
Rector

Dates for your Diary

February

- Thursday 14th taster evening at North Highland College S3/S4/S5 Pupils
Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th Mid Term Break *School Closed*
Wednesday 20th In Service Day *School Closed to Pupils*
Thurs 21st Feb taster evening UHI S3/S4/S5 Pupils
Thurs 21st Feb Senior options evening at TRA 7pm > 8pm
Thursday 28th ASG Scottish Dance Competition at TRA 7pm

March

- Thurs 14th P6 & P7's visit TRA for Catherine Wheels Theatre company
Thursday 21st Parent Council Meeting 6.45pm

April

- Thursday 4th Spring Ceilidh 7pm to 10pm
Monday 8th to Monday 22nd Easter Break *School reopens Tuesday 23rd*
Wednesday 24th Study Leave begins
Thursday 25th SQA Exams commence

May

- Monday 6th May Day Holiday
Thursday 23rd Parent Council Meeting 6.45pm
Friday 31st SQA Exams finish

June

- Monday 3rd In Service Day *School Closed to Pupils*
Tuesday 4th New timetable begins

July

- Thursday 4th School closes for Summer Break