



Garnock Academy



Parent Bulletin

No. 56

Also at the Garnock Academy website www.garnockacademy.org

Staffing Changes

Mr W McClung retired from teaching Modern Languages on the 19th November after twenty-two years of teaching in Garnock Academy. All at the school wish Mr McClung a long and happy retirement, and thank him for his dedicated service to pupils of the school. Mr S Duff started teaching in Garnock on 22nd November as Principal Teacher of Art Design Technology, and Mr O Scott started teaching in Garnock on 6th December as Principal Teacher of Science. Mr M Sanderson has also recently joined the Geography department. We wish these staff well and hope that they will enjoy their teaching in Garnock Academy.

Head Boy and Head Girl

Ewan Ross and Janice Petrie, both of S6, were recently appointed Head Boy and Head Girl respectively. Martin Jones and Sheryl Gough, also from S6, were appointed Deputy Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl respectively. Fourteen senior students were nominated by staff and then interviewed by Mr Clarkson (Depute Rector, S5/6), along with Mr McNaught. Congratulations to all involved.

Prelims

Standard Grade Prelims started on Thursday 2nd December and will continue until Friday 17th December. Higher Prelims start on 2nd February and continue to 11th February. It is crucially important that every pupil does as well as he or she can in these prelims, since results are used to support appeals in the SQA examinations should these be needed.

Parents will have the opportunity to discuss how pupils have performed in their prelims at the S4 Parents' evening on 24th February and at the S5/6 Parents' evening on 23rd March.

This year's S4 pupils were the first pupils to move to their middle school subject choices in Christmas of S2. Consequently in many subjects, the S4 Prelim will cover the entire course, and should give an accurate measure of how each pupil is performing. One advantage of this is that there should be plenty of time to consolidate and revise for the examinations in May, as well as the opportunity to move into more demanding areas required for further study.

Revision and essential Study Aids

There is a section on our school website which deals specifically with helping pupils prepare for prelims and SQA exams. It is titled "Revision and Essential Study" and covers almost every subject taught in school. As an aid to revising for exams it is very useful, and I recommend you to encourage your son or daughter to make use of this facility. Certain subjects at Higher (Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Computing) have access to a dedicated self-study project called "Scholar" written by Heriot Watt University. The school pays the subscription fees for this facility and all pupils studying these Highers should have a password. Any student who has forgotten his or her password should speak to Mr Clarkson, DHT.

Please make use of these excellent facilities on the internet. A sheet giving details is enclosed with this newsletter.

Supported Study

The school has been running a programme of supported study after school from 3.35pm to 4.50pm, to assist pupils to prepare for examinations. These will restart in the Spring term with a range of Standard Grade and Higher revision classes for most subjects as well as general study in the library. Free transport is provided to Glengarnock, Beith and Dalry. The Homework club for pupils in S1 to S3 has also met on a number of Wednesday afternoons after school. Pupils are encouraged to attend this, which also has transport home provided at 5.00pm

Any parent who wishes more details on this should contact Mrs Stewart, DHT.

Winter Weather Arrangements

During the winter we may be unfortunate enough to experience difficult weather conditions. Each session there are normally one or two occasions when snowfalls during the day cause road conditions to deteriorate quickly. If the Police advise us to send children home, we may be forced to shut the school early. The school is most reluctant to do this because of the difficulty it produces with children reaching home long before the normal time and the consequent problems of supervision, but we may have no alternative. Under these circumstances, the buses will run early and pupils will be delivered as far as possible to their normal stops, but much earlier. Please therefore discuss with your son or daughter exactly what you expect them to do if the school has to close early. Ideally, pupils, particularly S1 - S3 should be in the care of a responsible adult, grandparents, next door neighbour, relatives, etc., if you are not able to be at home during the day. Please make the necessary arrangements sooner rather than later, for it is too late when the snow is falling heavily and set in for the day. Please be prepared.



Safety in the School Buspark

Parents who drop off or pick up their children in the school buspark just before 9.00am or just after 3.25pm place the safety of other pupils at risk, since the playground is extremely busy with more than 700 pupils crossing the buspark at this time. If you have to drive through the school buspark, please keep to the speed limit of 5mph and conform to instructions from school staff on duty. In particular, at 3.25pm, you will be requested to wait until all pupils have safely boarded buses and the staff on duty are satisfied that it is safe for vehicles to move.

Attendance

I wrote to parents several times last session to say that pupil attendance needs to be improved since previously high standards of pupil attendance need to be maintained. Again this session we are trying to telephone parents on the first day of absence so that cases of truancy can be detected early. A new post "pupil welfare officer" has just been appointed which has as one of its main responsibilities to improve pupil attendance. Mrs J McCafferty, will carry out this post from January 2005. Please note that it is essential that every pupil remembers to sign in at the main office if they have not been at registration, or they will be marked absent all day.

Young Enterprise

"Totally Yellow Chicken" is a company devised and run by S6 pupils under the Young Enterprise scheme. The school has been very successful with Young Enterprise companies over the past seven years, and this company of enterprising, hard-working and shrewd young people will also do well. They have devised a range of products, produced or assembled by themselves, and managed a diverse range of services, from providing service in the school Tuck Shop every lunchtime and interval, to washing staff cars on the inservice-day. The students involved manage their own financial affairs, under supervision from staff, and have attended a number of trade fairs to market their wares. "Totally Yellow Chicken" shows signs of making a large and healthy profit.

Gold for School Windband

The school windband was awarded a Gold award at the Scottish windband championships at Dundee on Sunday 14th November. This was a first class achievement, thanks in no small measure to our woodwind/brass instructor, Mr G Lindsay, who as well as conducting the band, is also music instructor to many of the pupils in the band. North Ayrshire schools' windband, which also contains many Garnock pupils, was also successful in gaining a gold award in the local authority category. Both bands will now compete in the UK finals in Manchester in the Spring.

The finals of the school Young Musician of the Year, sponsored by the Rotary Club of the Garnock Valley, were held in the Radio City on the evening of Wednesday 24th November. Robert McLean, playing marimbas, won the event, and will compete against other young musician winners in Vikingar! in February.



Children in Need

The school participated in the Children in Need project, held nationally on Friday 19th November. As well as several individual sponsored events taking place at interval and lunchtime, through the day, an evening concert in the school hall was organised by several S6 pupils for budding pop stars. The acts, entirely pupils apart from one staff item, were well received by the capacity audience. As well as having good fun and being entertained, a total of over £1000 was raised. Well done to those involved.

End of Term Events

The school concert will be held on Monday 20th December. Pupil choirs performed at Princes Square, Glasgow, on Thursday 2nd December, Saturday 4th December and Saturday 11th December. They will also perform from 10am to 12noon on Christmas Eve, Friday 24th December in Princes Square. So far they have raised almost £1300 for the Hansel foundation. If you are Christmas shopping in Glasgow, please come along and listen to these pupils, whose performance is a credit to the school.

The S1 choir will perform at the Rivergate, Irvine from 2.30pm to 3.30pm on Friday 17th December. Similarly the junior Strings will perform at the Rivergate, Irvine on Thursday 16th December from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

The S1 Christmas party will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday 21st December.

S1 pupils will visit the Pantomime "Mother Goose" at the King's Theatre on 15th December, and the whole school will attend a Christmas service in St Columba's Church on Wednesday 22nd December, weather permitting. Term ends at 2.30pm on Wednesday 22nd December with school restarting for pupils at 9.00am on Thursday 6th January 2005.

Seasonal Wishes

The staff of Garnock Academy wish all pupils
and parents a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.

Brian McNaught Rector
15th December 2004



