

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid



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Dear Parent / Carer,

I trust you all had a lovely holiday and may I take this opportunity to welcome everyone back for what we hope will be another successful year.

I must begin with my thanks to all the staff and community partners who continued to work through the holiday period, supporting our community in a variety of ways: Office staff, Technicians, Janitors, teachers; and sports development staff were all in making sure the school was in good shape for us coming back and that our youngsters had events to attend, that they received pastoral and career support and in the case of Summer Sensations staff, ensuring the new S1s had the opportunity to enjoy bonding together before they joined their new classmates from across all 19 of our partner primaries last Thursday.

I've already led the S1 assembly and other assemblies will follow this week. Across all our assemblies, not only will everyone get a warm welcome but we will be taking the opportunity to celebrate the success of hundreds of our youngsters who have just received a whole range of qualifications; qualifications they can add to the wealth of wider experiences on offer last session. These qualifications and experiences combine to lead to what we believe will be another successful year where our school leavers go onto positive destinations in the workplace, college and university.

As noted widely on social media, for those who missed out on the results they hoped for there is help available on the SQA and SDS websites. However the first port of call is of course our Principal Teachers of Guidance, supported by our in-school SDS careers expert, Colin McLeod. Please make an appointment if necessary.

Some pupils miss out on a subject and some get passes they were not expecting. In both cases this leads to a significant period of change across the subjects / classes in the first few days back. The result will be that courses that could not run because of lack of interest, may now be back on offer; or that so many pupils have left a small class that we can no longer offer that course. This course change process occurs in all schools.

Timetable changes are also necessary at this time of year because of staffing changes. The summer term is when most teachers retire, get promoted or move schools closer to their preferred locality. Some of these vacancies are known in advance, for example a retirement; others come late in the day, like a promotion in another school. As soon as we are aware of a vacancy an advert is placed in My Job

Scotland and we begin to use Social Media, professional journals and word of mouth to attract new staff.

Often we are successful and this year we offer a warm welcome to:

Maria Wilkes (English); Hannah Douglas (Home Economics); Lesley Lyon (Maths); Jodie Dairon (Science); Jan Evetts (Technical Support); Ciaran Bateman, Lynsey McDonald and Anna Knasiecka (Support Department).

I would also like to add our congratulations to Aileen Jackson on her appointment to the position of Depute Head Teacher of Fingal. Please find attached the full Clan Support Teams. Should you need to share any information with the school or have any questions, concerns or indeed great ideas, please feel free to contact your child's Principal Teacher of Guidance in the first instance.

Despite the interviews I held in the last week of term / during the holidays and the number of adverts placed both before and during the holidays - which included enticements such as the provision of staff accommodation as well as the obvious appeal of working in a large, successful, vibrant high school with a supportive community, and set in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, there were no suitable applicants; indeed no applicants at all in the case of Home Economics. We also have vacancies for English and Art; and latterly Technical. Only a few days ago, one of our Technical teachers submitted their notice as they leave for Ireland.

We have enough English specialists to cover all the English classes. All Art classes with the exception of a single period of S1 Art will be covered by an Art specialist. The single period will be covered internally, supported by an Art specialist.

S2 Home Economics is more difficult to cover and so rather than have multiple classes covered by a qualified teacher but non-specialist, S2 classes will be temporarily relocated to another subject for a meaningful short course delivered by subject specialists in those areas. Conversational Spanish and Sport Science will be delivered to S2 until we are able to appoint a Home Economics teacher.

It is important to remind parents that we have the resources and the finance to teach every one of the extensive courses on offer, including Home Economics but this subject in particular has a national shortage of qualified teachers and many schools have had to remove Home Economics from their timetables. We feel this subject is of great benefit to our youngsters and will continue to advertise until we get the right person. At that time, and on conclusion of the alternative short courses, the S2 pupils will be moved back into a Home Economics class.

We already have an advert out for a new Technical teacher. In addition, we are also looking to create four new support posts: two Home-Link Officers and two Additional Support Needs Assistants. Keep a look out on Facebook and My Job Scotland for details.

Congratulations to our Grade 3B Pipe Band who played in the World Championships on Saturday. They secured second place in a very demanding group full of adult bands. Due to their magnificent performances and success across the competing season, they were also crowned Champion of Champions.

Our Novice/Juvenile B Band also competed in their first World Championships and were placed 13 out of 21 competing bands. A remarkable achievement for such a young band and great platform for next session.

I'd also like to say well done to all our youngsters who played so well in the MacAulay Cup Final on Saturday. Although, they were defeated at the end of the day; their passion and skill were still very evident. More news on the Shinty front is that thanks to the support of the MacAulay Association and the Oban Common Good Fund, our new School of Shinty will be established imminently. Speak to Mr Carswell or Mr Hamilton for details.

Celebrating success is something we should all strive to support and contribute to. Being proud of all our children's achievements, indeed all the achievements of our staff members and local community partners is something to smile about. Please take the time to log into Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Much of the promotion of success actually comes from the pupils themselves, and this year the Seniors have decided to use the promotional tag of #ohsmakeeverydayheroes. They have chosen this theme because they came together to discuss the level of success and wealth of opportunity across our community and concluded that this success is down to individuals and teams of committed people. Throughout the year, they will do a short biography of a whole range of people, young and old, in and out of school, who help make Oban High School a fantastic school to work and learn in.

I began and will end by mentioning assemblies. Every assembly I lead has a link to our school vision and a reiteration of our values: Compassion, Ambition, Respect and Resilience. We aspire to promote these values and in doing so hope to achieve our vision for every youngster. We are a huge organization of over a thousand individuals interacting with each other daily; all of whom have different interests, skills, views, talents and learning needs (both social and academic). We are supported by over 100 different dedicated and generous partners: local, national and international.

As we try to ensure the successful development of all our youngsters within this complex web of provision and support, we find challenges and development opportunities. The path to success, in any walk of life, is not easy and is often hard won through commitment and hard work. Thank you very much to everyone who has supported our school over the last twelve months and thank you for your continuing support for the forthcoming year. It is very much appreciated.

#ohsmakeeverydayheroes

Yours faithfully



P A Bain
Executive Head Teacher

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM 2019/20



Depute for Diarmid – Lauren Morrison

Guidance Teacher – Alex Craik

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Depute for Fingal – Aileen Jackson

Guidance Teacher – Claire Brady

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Depute for Ossian – Jemma Playfair

Guidance Teacher – Lee Dott

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Depute for Somerled – Kevin Champion

Guidance Teacher – David McLaughlin

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