



Girvan Academy
Parent Council Meeting 17 January 2022
Head Teacher Update



1. Staffing

- We welcomed Joyce Carey as our new DHT on Thursday 6th January.
- Mark McDicken joined us on Monday 13th December as our new IT Technician. Donald Collins returned to his Support Engineer post for the Girvan & South Carrick area
- Last week Callum Johnston (Music/PT Pedagogy) was appointed as PT Music at Prestwick Academy. Callum's music post was advertised on Friday and Callum will leave us sometime in February
- We currently have a vacancy for a temporary Closing the Gap teacher in SWB
- COVID issues – continue to affect the staffing and attendance

2. SQA Attainment/ Self Improvement Visit

Our School Improvement Visit with the Director of Educational Services, Quality Improvement Manager and Peer Head Teacher was on Monday 1st November. It was a very positive experience where we shared some of the strengths of the school and areas we would like to develop in the coming months using the national data hub Insight and our own self-evaluation.

3. School Refurbishment

Support & Wellbeing – we took ownership of the department after the October holidays.

Next phase of refurbishment – the plan to upgrade the old library to incorporate Business & Computing classrooms has been progressed. A meeting is to be convened in early February with the architect and Educational Services colleagues to discuss funding and next steps.

The upgrade to the sports pitch facility was due to begin last week. I was advised that similar to a number of current projects, a shortage of materials has affected timescales. In addition, the conditions needed for the laying of the polymeric surface requires the weather to be warmer and dryer than it is currently. A tough ask in the west of Scotland in winter!

4. Parents' Evenings

Following initial issues with the council firewall, the first parents' evening of the session (S4) was conducted by telephone call. Following support from the IT department to resolve the issues, parents' evenings for S5/6 and S1 were successfully completed using video calls on the Parents Booking platform. The feedback from parents and staff has been very positive.

The attendance for each year group was S1 - 55%, S4 - 42%, S5/6 - 39%

5. Device for every learner – Staff Consultation: Lynn Robertson -Co-ordinator (Education Projects & IT)

The Scottish Government has committed that by the end of this parliamentary session, all school-aged pupils in Scotland will have access to an appropriate digital device, and where necessary an internet connection, to support their learning.

The process of considering what this will look like in South Ayrshire for schools, teachers and pupils has begun with an initial staff consultation. As part of this there will need to be consideration to the type of devices used, improvements required to network infrastructure, increasing capacity for technical, operational and training support and how it will shape future pedagogy to ensure South Ayrshire maximises the potential that digital can offer and that these devices support teaching and learning effectively.

6. Columba 1400

13 S2 pupils and 3 staff will visit Staffin in Skye next week for the Columba 1400 residential leadership course. The pupils have been preparing for this experience over a number of sessions and will support school improvement on their return over the coming months.

7. Cyber First Girls

A team of S2 girls (Lily W, Emily W, Ceilidh L and Daisy R) calling themselves CtrlAltElite, have qualified for the Scottish final of the CyberFirst Girls Competition 2022. This will take place virtually on Wednesday 2nd February.

This is the third year in a row a team from Girvan Academy has qualified for the national final. Last year we finished in 3rd place.

The team battled hard through the qualifying round before Christmas, to become only one of 12 teams making it to the Scottish final. They had to solve a series of Computing Science puzzles with a focus on Cyber Security, Cryptography, Logic & Coding and Computer Networking.

The CyberFirst Girls Competition provides a fun but challenging environment to inspire the next generation of young women to consider a career in computing science and cyber security. It is run by the National Cyber Security Centre which is the UK Government organisation tasked to support organisations and individuals in the prevention of and recovery from cyber security threats.

Mark Anderson
Head Teacher
17th January 2022