



Girvan Academy
Parent Council Meeting 7 March 2022
Head Teacher Update



1. Staffing/School Roll

- We welcomed Mrs Laura McTurk to our Music department on Friday 25th February. Laura joined us early on a part time basis and will become our full time permanent music teacher from 1st April.
- Ms Iona Templeton was successfully appointed as our temporary Closing the Gap teacher. She is currently 0.4fte and will start full time on Monday 21st March
- The projected school roll for 2022/23 is 510 pupils. This is 36 pupils less than this session and is due to much smaller rolls in the cluster Primary 7 classes.
- As a result, our staffing should have been reduced by approximately 2.3fte. However, we have received additional staffing due to COVID and because of changes to how Support & Wellbeing is staffed. Therefore, our staffing has increased from 46fte to 46.8fte.

2. SQA Update

A package of support services – including some help for learners with exam revision – will be available for learners who are taking National 5, Higher, and Advanced Higher courses in 2022.

The additional support follows the significant modifications made to the course assessments at the start of session 2021-22 to help reduce the volume of assessment and ease the workload of learners, teachers, lecturers, and training providers.

Due to levels of disruption to learning and teaching across the country, including learner and staff absences, and following discussion with partners across the education system, and agreement by the SQA Board, we moved to Scenario 2. This means that we will publish some revision support for learners to help them with their revision during the final run up to their exams.

Revision support to help learners prepare for this year's exams are due to be published this week. For some courses, the SQA will publish advance notice of content that will or will not be in the exam. For other courses, they will publish study guides that give hints and tips on how to approach different types of questions. In a small number of courses, learners will be allowed to create a short study note that they can take with them into the exam.

[View a summary of the revision support for each course.](#)

Appeals - pupils will be able to appeal if their estimated grade is higher than the grade awarded in the final exam. The estimated grade, however, must be based on "convincing assessment evidence of...demonstrated attainment." Should a pupil wish to proceed with an appeal, having met the criteria of a higher estimate than final exam mark, then centres will be asked to submit that pupil's assessment evidence – much like what happened last year. Although assessment evidence is not limited to prelims, the guidance is that often the most reliable evidence is that which replicates most closely the SQA exam.

3. School Refurbishment

Next phase of refurbishment – the plan to upgrade the old library to incorporate Business & Computing classrooms has been progressed and a draft plan attached. The new department will include two new IT rooms, two refurbished IT rooms, a new Cyber room, store cupboard and staff base.

Upgrade to the sports pitch facility - begins this week and is to be completed during the Easter holiday with the laying of the polymeric surface, subject to dry weather!

CO2 Monitors - we are the SAC pilot school to introduce remote CO2 monitors in schools. These monitors were installed over the long weekend on Friday 11th and Monday 14th February to reduce any impact on learning & teaching. Training is being provided and monthly meetings held to discuss the CO2 level in classrooms and any actions that need to be taken to reduce levels.

4. Parents' Evenings

All parents' evenings have now been concluded for the session. The feedback from parents and staff has been very positive despite issues with the first evening of the session, S4, and the most recent S2 parents' evening last week.

The attendance for each year group was S4 - 42%, S5/6 - 39%, S1 - 55%, S3 - 38% & S2 - 34%

Points to consider include parents' evenings going forward next session and how to increase parental engagement.

5. Columba 1400

13 S2 pupils and 3 staff spend the week in Skye next week for the residential part of the Columba 1400 residential leadership course. The pupils and staff had a fantastic experience and are now in the next phase of the programme to determine how their experience and enhanced leadership skills can support school improvement in the coming months and into next session.

6. Cyber First Girls

A team of S2 girls (Lily W, Emily W, Elle S and Daisy R) won the Scottish final of the CyberFirst Girls Competition 2022, which took place virtually on Wednesday 2nd February. This involved successfully solving as many Computing Science puzzles as they could, which focussed on areas including Cyber Security, Cryptography, Logic & Coding and Computer Networking.

As Scottish winners, they will now travel down to Bradford on 22nd March and receive a tour of a GCHQ exhibition called Top Secret: From Code Breaking to Cyber Security and a presentation dinner, where their achievement will be celebrated.

Morgan Stanley are one of the main sponsors of the event and as a result of this partnership, each member of the team has won a new laptop. Morgan Stanley and representatives from Education Scotland will be visiting the school on Tuesday 15th March to meet with the team and present the laptops.

Furthermore, the Scottish Government has awarded a prize of £2000 to Girvan Academy, to mark the girls' success. This prize money can be used to buy kit and other learning resources, or pay activities, to enable the school to deliver excellent cyber security learning in the future.

7. Extra-curricular Activities

- 50 pupils and staff attended the recent Scotland v France rugby international at Murrayfield stadium. They all had an excellent day out despite the final result!
- Outdoor Education – 19 S1 pupils were given the experience of working with Rangers from Dolphin House and supported by school staff to increase the participation numbers. The activities in the first few days included orienteering, first aid and team games and were based around the school. On the third day, the activities moved on to the Galloway Forrest, Culzean Castle and included an overnight stay at Dolphin House. The final day consisted of further activities at Culzean Castle before everyone returned safely to school. This opportunity was given free of charge by Dolphin House to support young people who missed out in opportunities due to COVID in the last two years.

Mark Anderson
Head Teacher
7th March 2022