

Portland High School

Care, Support and Respect

DECEMBER 2015

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Welcome to our December Newsletter. The holidays will be here when you receive this but, rest assured, you will all still be in our thoughts at this time of year.

I'm always proud of the fundraising we do at this time of year for the St Andrew's Hospice in Airdrie. You can read about it inside.

Thank you, again, for your continuing support. Have a great Festive Season and we look forward to working together with you in 2016.

All the best!



M. McGovern (Head Teacher)



Parent Support Group

Our Parent Support Group meets regularly—usually on a Wednesday morning— and is a great chance to find out about what we do in school. It is a great support network for the parents and carers of our young people. It is always worthwhile to hear how other people face the same challenges we do in nurturing children towards their best possible futures and to swap tales, tips and approaches.

In the New Year, the group will be discussing, and looking at ways to help coping, difficult teenage behaviours. All parents & carers are welcome to attend and we can even arrange transport. Please contact the school with any enquiries you have about this.



PUPIL COUNCIL

Our Pupil Council have had a busy time since August. It has negotiated well, and pupils now leave the school for two lunchtimes per week. In addition, they have made a number of suggestions for 2016, including some great ideas for Mentor Group Reward Trips and in-school activities for lunch and interval. Well done to all who have been involved. Looking beyond school, it is a lovely addition to Further Education applications and your CV, to say you were a Pupil Council Representative.

News In Brief

FAB FRIDAYS

We are pleased to report that a number of parents and carers have now received letters and text messages to inform them of pupils' success. Every Friday we nominate a student or students who have shown great care during the week: in class-work, in relationships with others or having demonstrated responsibility by helping out in some way.

POSITIVE REFERRALS

The same is true of Positive Referrals, though these are mainly issued for excellent work in class. We are always pleased to let parents know when things are going well.

MENTOR GROUP REWARD TRIPS

Our Mentor Groups have had a

number of Reward Trips, organised between Mentor Teacher and pupils in each group. Some of the trips have included cinema, go-karting and Air Space Trampoline Park. Well done to all our pupils who deserved this reward for positive behaviour, sustained over a period of time.

It was difficult to timetable all the Mentor Group Reward Trips so some are already being lined up for the new term in January 2016—something to look forward to when the holidays are over.



Christmas Lunch

Our annual Christmas Lunch was a huge success, once again. Our students sold raffle tickets to raise money for St Andrew's Hospice. Well done everyone—great citizenship in action.

Over the year we also raised money from Dress-Down-Days and Mrs Morris works very hard to support this cause.

In total, we raised a grand total of £850. We are very proud that, as a small school, we can make such a sizeable donation to a worthwhile cause.

Andrew Flynn, the Schools and Community Development Co-ordinator, joined us for lunch and was delighted to receive the cheque. He informed us of some of the work our fundraising could support and he emphasised how much it could

support vital physiotherapy sessions that can really help improve wellbeing for patients.

He encouraged our pupils to consider becoming School Ambassadors—increasing our engagement with this local charity by having our young people visit the hospice to see and support further the work they do.

Any pupil interested can speak to any member of the school staff.

The lunch was rounded off with a fantastic raffle and we are indebted to the kindness shown by all who donated gifts for the raffle and the hampers.

A special thank you to our support staff who work tirelessly to make sure this event goes smoothly: from decorating the

room, preparing hampers, serving lunch and that job that is an essential part of every Christmas Lunch: clearing up.

It's been said already, but it's worth saying again—Well Done Everyone!



A fantastic array of raffle prizes.

Mr Thomson compared the proceedings (left)



Mr McGovern, our Head Teacher, presents our cheque to the Hospice's representative.

The Great Outdoors

LOCH EIL

Next year we have two trips going on our Outward Bound Outdoor Pursuits trips – one in February and one in April. These residential trips see our pupils attending this popular venue in the Scottish Highlands.

A number of pupils have been given paperwork which they should return to school at the start of the new term in January 2016. We would hate for anyone to miss out on all the hill walking, canoeing, abseiling and adventure training on offer.

And don't worry if you haven't gained a place on the first trip of the year. We hope, that by the time the summer comes, everyone will have benefitted from the excellent learning and development offered on this unique outdoor course.



Expanded Learning Outcomes

Once again, we have been offering expanded learning opportunities in partnership with local colleges and trainers. A number of our pupils have been pursuing qualifications in painting and decorating and car mechanics.

It is hoped that these will be broadened even further with some new courses being offered in the new term.

Well done to everyone for showing great perseverance in getting through these worthwhile vocational experiences. The reports that come back from the courses are always glowing.



SPINE CHILLERS

MINI SAGA WRITERS' STORIES

We all like a spooky story at this time of year—think of Dickens' (or The Muppets') 'Christmas Carol' with its series of ghosts.

A number of our pupils have entered a Creative Writing Competition. They had to cre-

ate a 'Mini Saga' - a short spine-chilling story in no more than 100 words. We hope to report on their success in the new year. In the meantime, here are a few examples of their work. These are some great short, short stories with a real twist in the tale.

MAD MONDAY

Walking through that scary door, people were going mad all around me. I put a foot on a creaky stair until I lifted my head to see a pale white woman. I was filled with fear. I bolted for my life until I hit a stone brick wall. I started to feel sick. At that point I turned to my left to see another set of old stairs. They looked so scabby. I started to walk up them. I realised there was no escape. It was Monday and I had to face my worst fear - Mr Liddle's English class.

THE DAY HAD COME

The day had come, I had been dreading this. I knew he was going to get me. I knew there was going to be blood everywhere, he



was going to hurt me or even kill me. He was going to hunt me down. By this time I was shaking with fear, knowing I could not hide any longer. He was going to find me. I don't understand what I have done wrong for him wanting to hurt me so much. He knew I was scared of him. I hated going to the dentist.

The Spine Chillers

I started running through, down the corridors, desperate to escape. There it was— the door. A shadow steps out from nowhere. Where could I go. The stairs!

I ran for the stair my pursuers hot on my trail. How could I escape? I hid, knowing I would be found soon. I had to think fast. How could I get past these evil creatures that stood in my way with freedom behind them? I could hear the footsteps getting closer and closer. It was 10 to 3. School was nearly finished. Mr Liddle and Mr Stot peer round the corner .

Football News

In November, a much changed Portland High School football team entered its first tournament. With many of our former players having left the school to take up places in mainstream, college, employment or Supported Access for Learning and Employment (SALE), a reshaped squad performed well in their first outing. Showing improvement over the four games they played, a win was secured in the final match against Carrongrange. Here is how our roving reporter saw the match:

A team is only as good as its last result. If Portland's final game is anything to go by, the current squad have a promising future together.

The Portland team seemed to recover from the Carrongrange match as they stepped up to play Sanderson High. All the pressure came from Portland in the early minutes of this game.

Portland attackers, captain Tollan among them, were able to waltz into the Sanderson goal area. Sanderson packed the penalty area and made it near impossible for the subsequent shots to find the target.

Sanderson seemed to lack any game plan, and their hopeful shots went wild and wayward. Urged on by their coach, Sanderson put together a nice move, but Buglass and his keeper Sproul were good to the task at the back.

A fine shot by George looked netbound but just moved in the air to go wide. A minute later the young striker was denied again.

Portland were relentless in their pursuit of a goal and the deadlock was eventually broken by team captain Tollan who scored a fine goal.

A second quickly followed. Buglass, who had played strongly throughout the tournament rifled a shot into the corner of the net—certainly the best goal of the day for Portland.

This was a real team performance and it shows great promise for the future. After the considerable shake up in the team over the closed season, these new players were just finding their feet as this tournament was coming to a close.

The next outing might be something to look forward to.

We're On Our Way To Hampden

As part of how we celebrate success and reward positive interactions, our P.E. teacher, Mr Gibb, took some pupils to visit Hampden on November 17th. The boys, one from S1 and two from S3, had achieved the required number of points in the PE reward system for the August-October period. Points are awarded for effort, behaviour, sportsmanship and helpfulness in class.

Pictures from both the tournament and the trip are below:





Since the last newsletter, Portland High School has been happy to welcome some new faces in Junior and Senior school classes, and we look forward to a number of new pupils joining us in the new year.

We have had the services of two dedicated and caring Maths teachers, and we want to thank Mr Simpson and Mr Stott for all they have done to support our students in this subject. We wish both of them well. Mrs McGhie, who has been helping us in the final weeks of this term will be joining us in January 2016.



BROADENING THE CURRICULUM

We are pleased to report that we have broadened the curriculum which means that, as well as our considerable Expanded Learning Experiences offering great vocational opportunities, we now offer English, Maths, Technical, History, Modern Studies, Physical Education, Sports Leadership, Science and Computing.

All that remains to be said is that we look forward to welcoming all our pupils—old and new—in January 2016. The first day of the new term is Wednesday 6th January.

Take care and enjoy the holidays.