



## PARENTS' INFORMATION SHEET

**Subject:** December Update

**From:** Ms L Menzies, Head Teacher

**Date:** 20 December 2018

**Facebook:** Turriff Academy@Turracademy

**Twitter:** TurriffAcademy@TurriffAcademy

**Website:** [www.turriff.aberdeenshire.sch.uk](http://www.turriff.aberdeenshire.sch.uk)

### Communications

We continue to look at ways of improving communications and reduce our carbon footprint, which is why we have decided to send this information sheet electronically. This information sheet is also available on the school website and via Facebook. In order to do this it is important that we have your up to date e-mail address. The following app enables information to go directly to your phone or tablet. You should have received information about this app previously, however if not, please see how to use it. Please contact the school office if you have any issues with it.

### Our New Phone Number

We have a new school phone number of 01888 530900, this allows you to press 1 to leave details of a pupils absence or 2 to speak to the Office staff.

Our old mobile number to leave absence details, 07979945970, will be switched off in January.

### Group Call Xpressions

This App allows us to communicate with you by e-mail and text. If you have this App, we can e-mail out information to you which means you don't need to worry about it getting 'lost' in your child's school bag. Full details of this app are available on the Website.

To start receiving messages via the app:

- Make sure the school holds an up to date mobile number and e-mail address. Contact the school if you need to change your details now or in the future.
- Visit your phone/tablet's app store to download the *Groupcall Xpressions* app and follow set up guidance at:  
<http://parents.groupcall.com/setup/>

### Parental Information Evenings

This session we ran 2 very successful parental information evenings looking at supporting your young people in their learning:

**S1 Literacy Evening** - provided opportunities for Parents to find out more about how literacy is delivered in the secondary school with staff from our English Department, Modern Languages Department and Library: Feedback from the evening was very positive. Thank you to all who attended and those involved in running the event.

**Supporting your Young Person in the Senior Phase** - an opportunity for parents to find out more about S4 - S6 at Turriff Academy. A number of workshops were provided for parents to opt in to, were offered. These included; SCHOLAR, Revision, UCAS and SAAS, SQA, Skills Development Scotland and NESCOL.

## **Parental Engagement**

### **Parent Council**

After our AGM in September, our newly elected parent body has met twice and they are looking at ways of increasing parental engagement to improve outcomes for all our young people. Below is a letter of introduction from our new chair Mrs Carol Walker which can be viewed on the Parent Council section of our website:

*I would like to introduce myself as the Chair of Turriff Academy Parent Council (TAPC) for the academic year 2018-19. I have 2 children currently attending Turriff Academy. TAPC is an inclusive committee of parents/guardians/carers which supports the school by discussing matters of interest to parents etc. and providing feedback on parents' views. The meetings for the rest of this school year all take place at school (usually the school Conference room) at 7pm and are on 10 Dec, 5 Feb, 11 Mar, 13 May and 10 June. All parents/guardians/carers are welcome to attend. Parents are the experts on their own children and their engagement in school matters is very important. Minutes of our meetings are available on the Parent tab on the school website (under 'Parent Council') and in reception at school, so you can see what has been discussed. We can also be contacted on [turriffacademypc@hotmail.com](mailto:turriffacademypc@hotmail.com).*

*Friends of Turriff Academy (formerly Turriff Academy PTA) is a small, fun group of parents which focuses on fundraising activities. They are a sub-group of TAPC. In the past they have raised funds for the sensory room, visiting authors, transport for rugby trips, craft supplies, among many others. If you wish to get involved please contact the PC email address.*

*Many thanks,  
Carol Walker  
Chair*

Parent Council Minutes can be found on the school website or parent copy can be read in the folder in the front reception of the school.

### **Focus on Learning:**

I am sure that you will agree that we all want our young people gaining their most from their time in school and as such I would like to alert you to 3 things that we are working on to help with this:

#### **Mobile Phone Use:**

For many of our young people, the temptation of a phone in their pocket is too much with the result their attention is often focused on this rather than their work. As such, in addition to our current mobile phone policy, we have introduced a traffic light system in each classroom, where there is a visual display of when a phone may be allowed:

**RED** - Mobile phones should be turned off and in bags out of sight.

**AMBER** - pupils may be allowed to use their phone for an educational purpose at the discretion of the teacher.

**GREEN** - pupils may use their phone for educational purpose or listen to music with headphones at the discretion of the teacher.

This has been explained to pupils and I would welcome your support in having a discussion about appropriate use. Pupils have also been reminded that they should not use their phones to photograph or film in the school premises or out and about without prior permission.

I would also ask that if you do need to contact your child during class time, that you contact the office using the usual number.

### **Anti-bullying Guidelines**

Our updated anti bullying guidelines can be viewed on our school website. This was put together earlier in the year, with input from pupils in S3 during their health and wellbeing skills development time, as well as input from external partners. I would welcome feedback from parents on this and as such, I would ask that you contact the office either by phone or e-mail to be part of a focus group early in the New Year.

### **Positive Behaviour Review**

We are currently having a working group reviewing and developing our current behaviour policy based around the following 3 rules:

Ready : does your behaviour show you are ready to learn?

Respectful : is your behaviour respectful to others?

Safe : is your behaviour safe to you and others?

The staff group is currently working on a Behaviour Blue Print which will form the basis of the policy. Again if you would like to be involved in a parent focus group support us moving forward with this, please contact the school either by phone call or e-mail. We will also be asking for pupil feedback and involvement with this too.

### **Community Involvement and Fundraising**

Pupils at Turriff Academy are always keen to be involved in supporting our local community:

**Foodbank:** Many thanks to all those who donated to the Tesco Foodbank Appeal (we were able to donate 5 trolley loads to the local Appeal). A number of our pupils also helped in store - thank you to those who gave up their time to support Tesco Staff.

**Poppy Scotland:** Pupils and staff donated generously to the National Poppy Appeal. Assemblies led by senior pupil Hana Slater allowed our pupils to reflect on a very personal story about how WW1 affected her family directly. Pupils were also involved in commemorating WW1 at The Gordon Highlanders Museum in Aberdeen and at the unveiling of a memorial to the animals involved in WW1. Thanks to Mr Baird for his support with ensuring that our pupils have opportunities to reflect on the past.

**Lepra:** S1 pupils took part in our annual slideathon raising money to help eradicate Leprosy and support those affected by this debilitating disease.

**Children in Need:** £383.60 was raised by our young people wearing something 'spotty' on a dress down day.

**Romanian Shoe Box Appeal:** S1 pupils were involved in collecting items and helped to fill boxes as part of our ongoing partnership with the Romanian Shop.

**Friends of Turriff Hospital:** Two senior pupils Scott Purdie and Vicky Legge represent Turriff Academy on the Friends of Turriff Hospital Committee.

**Saltire Volunteering Awards (SVA):** All pupils were given the opportunity to meet with representatives from SVA over 3 lunchtimes to look at how they can get involved in volunteering and gain Saltire Awards. The representatives fed back that Turriff Academy pupils were the 'most engaged' and welcoming young people that they had met, and were delighted with the enthusiasm that they had shown.

Thanks to all business and community groups who continue to support Turriff Academy.

### **Celebrating our successes and informing you about events:**

Since the launch of Facebook we have been able to showcase many successes and achievement as well as providing up to date information on events etc, I hope you have enjoyed viewing these.

As these are tools for providing information to our community, can I please remind all users that if there are concerns that they contact the school directly so that queries can be answered promptly, rather than post publicly, which may result in a delay.

We continue to look for ways to acknowledge achievement and our Achievement Wall of Fame in our reception area allows us to do this. If your young person has achieved excellence in any area, please let us know via the school e-mail address so that we can arrange to have their successes displayed.

As well as being available on line, our Weekly News Sheets are available to view in folders in our reception area - you will also be able to find Parent Council Minutes here too.

### **Expressive Arts Show Case**

Our Expressive Arts Faculty took time to share their achievements in Turriff Academy's first Expressive Arts Show Case.

Under the leadership of Faculty Head Mrs Zoe Hall, youngsters displayed their skills and work across the curricular areas of Art and Design, Drama, Music and Music Technology.

Visitors to our well attended event were able to view the Art work presented by our senior students as part of their SQA course work, as well see what our younger pupils are doing in the Broad General Education.

Performances from our musicians, Junior Drama Club and Senior Drama pupils entertained the audience displaying much talent, skill and creativity.

Thanks to our newly formed Parent Group - the Friends of Turriff Academy for providing refreshments and the opportunity to win 2 festive hampers.

Well done to all the performers and a big thank you to staff for putting together such a varied event highlighting the creativity skills necessary for a successful future. I certainly enjoyed it. I hope that you will join us again for our school show 'High School Musical' in June.

### **Swimming Gala**

Good Luck to all our finalists who will be participating in our Swimming Gala on Thursday 20 December. All participants and winners will earn points towards the House Championships. Heats have already taken place with valuable participation points being added to each house for all those involved Well done and thanks to the House Committees for ensuring as many pupils as possible have taken part this week.

### **School Dances**

Around 350 of our young people dance the night away to the music of Margaret and Dennis. Thanks to the band and the MC for the night, Mr Shearer, for ensuring that the pupils had a great night. Thanks also to the leadership group for organising both events and to staff for their help.

A special thanks to Margaret who started playing at Turriff Academy Dances in 1943 - we would like to celebrate and acknowledge her 75 years of playing at the school dance here.

## **200 Club Winners for December**

Congratulations to:

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	L Grieve	£123.75
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	E Paterson	£61.87
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	L Dalgarno	£20.62
4 <sup>th</sup> Prize	F Barron	£20.62
5 <sup>th</sup> Prize	K Fraser	£20.62

Many thanks to those who continue to support our 200 Club, which is drawn quarterly.

Applications to join are available at the school office

## **Into 2019..... Another busy term ahead**

### **Senior Phase Assessment - S4 - S6 Pupils**

Our Senior Phase assessment weeks run from 28 January - 7 February. Pupils have been issued their timetable already and it will also be available on the school website. Pupils have been asked to check for clashes and let Mrs Clarke DHT know. In addition to preparation done in class, a variety of other supports are available such as study clubs, SCHOLAR and SQA websites. If pupils do not know their password for SCHOLAR, they should ask their teacher for a reminder.

### **Key Dates**

7 January	Term 3 begins
17 January	S2 - S5 Parental Information Pathways Evening
24 January	S2 Parents' Evening
28 January - 7 February	Senior Assessments
8 February	Occasional Holiday
11 February	Mid Term Holiday
12 - 13 February	In Service Days
14 February	S3 Reports Issued
21 February	S3 Parents' Evening
1 March	Senior Phase Summary Report
29 March	Last Day of Term 3
1 - 12 April	Easter Holidays
15 April	Term 4 begins

***Merry Christmas and all the best for 2019 to all!***