



5th April 2017

Dear Parents / Carers

Another term has slipped by and, once again, it has been filled with a lot of hard work and endeavour. I hope this newsletter gives a flavour of some of the many 'extras' that have happened as well as recognising the hard work which has gone on in classrooms, in particular for those students about to embark on the national exams in May.

TEACHING POSTS

I'm pleased to announce that we will be able to offer some 'new' teaching posts next year. Working together with our associated Primary schools Ullapool High School will be able to offer the position of a full time PE teacher with some of the time going directly to Primary schools. This follows on from three years of successfully piloting this method of working using three excellent probationers. We will also be looking for a part-time teacher of RME which is the result of Ms Falconer's decision to reduce her hours within the school. Both these posts will be advertised over the Easter period on 'myjobscotland'.

We also now have permission to appoint a PT in English, a post which has been in discussion since Mr Millar's retirement last year. This job should be advertised just after Easter.

VISION & VALUES EXERCISE

For the last 3 months, the school has undertaken a vision and values exercise which has involved staff, parents and pupils. Many thanks to Lorraine Thomson and Scott Irvine who helped lead up the visioning group in December. This then resulted in exercises to which all staff, parents and pupils had a chance to contribute. It was a really hard job to try and distil the many excellent suggestions and comments into a statement about what the school should (and does) value, but a small team managed to get it down to seven main themes and these values/aims are 'what Ullapool High School is about':

- ❖ **Equality** (support and inclusion)
- ❖ **Respect** (mutual, community, global)
- ❖ **Well-being** (happy, resilient, confident, mentally and physically healthy)
- ❖ **Ambition** (challenges, opportunities)
- ❖ **High quality Learning and Teaching**
- ❖ **Community** (peer learning, intergenerational work, charity, international links)
- ❖ **Environment** (climate challenges, sustainability, outdoor learning)

I am very proud of the fact that these are the values which came to the fore but not surprised, as anyone who spends any quality time with our young people and wider community know these to be tightly held ideals. Well done to all concerned

'LET'S CLIMB TREES' – NEW SCHOOL LOGO

On the back of this exercise, it is time to renew our school logo (we hope to do this every three years). One of the challenges I asked for the visioning group was to give us a motif that encapsulated all of the above themes ...no easy job! They have given us the phrase '**let's climb**

trees'...a phrase that, when you get past the literal meaning, actually provides a lot of rich ground for creativity in coming years. The idea of a tree with roots and branches is a good metaphor for learning, whilst mental and physical well-being as well as environmental notes are also alluded to. But for me, it is the sense of fun and all being in it together which really captures the spirit of this school.

So we are looking for a new school logo and the design brief will be issued after Easter. The theme will be 'Let's climb trees' and the prize will be a £50 voucher of your choice, as well as the kudos of having your logo on all official school correspondence, etc. Have some fun and we'll collect your designs at the end of May.

UK INTERMEDIATE MATHS CHALLENGE

Well done to Kepler Petzall and Ethan Gordon for achieving Gold Certificates in the UK Intermediate Maths Challenge. The challenge is for S3 and S4 pupils, with only the top 7% achieving Gold Certificates. In fact both Kepler and Ethan scored so highly that they qualified for the "Pink Kangaroo" Challenge for being in the top 3000 UK pupils.

LANTRA RURAL SCHOOLS AWARDS 2016

The work done by the school's Rural Skills team has been recognized once again when they won the Lantra Rural Schools Project Award for 2016. Ms Middleton and Lucy Beattie from Leckmelm Farm attended the annual awards ceremony in Dunblane Hydro where they were presented with a striking trophy (now on display at reception) and a cheque for £500 for Ullapool High School. The Rural Skills is a popular course and we congratulate all the team for their hard work this past year.

SPORTING SUCCESSES

Earlier this term, **Stephen Mackenzie** and **Murdo Todd**, both S4 pupils, took part in the Scottish Schools' Indoor Track & Field Championships at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow, competing in the 60m and High Jump (O16) and the 60m and Shott Putt (U16) respectively. Both pupils performed well and gained useful competition experience. Well done and we look forward to following their progress through the outdoor season.

As the football season comes to an end, 2 of our teams excelled themselves - step forward and take a bow the **Senior Girls'** and the **S1 Boys'** teams who rounded off a successful season by winning the Small Schools' League in their respective sections. Congratulations to them and indeed to all the pupils who took part in the football teams this year.

CLIMBING WALL

As many of you will already be aware, Ullapool High School and the Leisure Centre have recently 'taken delivery' of a new climbing wall. Open to pupils and the public, this new wall is both state of the art and a welcome addition to our facilities. The school will use this as part of PE lessons as well as offering the chance to build up a local climbing club.

Many thanks are due to Joanne at the Leisure Centre for backing the idea as well as Highlife Highland for getting on board. We also need to thank SportsScotland, the Macphail Centre, Ullapool Path Guide, the Harbour Trust and the Macphail Committee for fundraising.

The official opening of the wall will be on Monday, 10th April but, as many of you will have already noticed, the wall has been open for a couple of months...we just couldn't wait!

CONTACT WITH PARENTS

In these days of inter-connectivity and reduced budgets, Ullapool High School is trying to use media platforms, email and the internet as a way to share information and get the word out to parents.

With this in mind, we regularly update the school website – www.ullapoolhigh.highland.sch.uk – with photos, documents, news, etc. which we are sure will be of interest to you. Please take a look. Also consider signing up to our Twitter account - @ullapoolhs – for regular updates on school activities and projects.

Although you may well be looking at this newsletter on a paper copy given to you by your child (or extracted from the depths of their school bag 2 weeks hence), you will also have been sent a copy through email by the School Office which we very much hope you will have already received. If you haven't, can you please check your Spam or Junk folder to ensure that our emails haven't been filed there by mistake? It is the school's intention to use email more as a way of communicating directly with parents. Already we have used it to send out alerts about upcoming Parents' Evenings, information to do with school trips and reminders of overdue work, etc. Your help in ensuring that the email address we hold for you and your family is correct is much appreciated.

IMPORTANT SCHOOL DATES

The school breaks up for the Easter Holidays today and will reopen at the normal time on **Monday, 24th April**. Other school closures in the summer term include **Monday, 1st May (Bank Holiday Monday)** and **Thursday, 4th May (In-service Day)**.

Study Leave for Senior pupils will commence on **Tuesday, 2nd May** with the new S6 pupils returning on Tuesday, 30th May, and the new S5 pupil, the day after on Wednesday, 31st May.

I wish everyone the very best for the Easter holidays; remember there will be revision classes available in school for examination pupils. I also wish all senior students the best for their studies during this period - it will make a difference to your exam prospects.

Yours sincerely

Robbie McFedries

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Head Teacher