



# ULLAPOOL HIGH SCHOOL

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

So, we have reached the end of a summer term, an academic year, quite unlike anything experienced before. The challenges have been enormous, have required an impressive effort on the part of everyone involved with UHS, youngsters and adults alike, and I would like to pay tribute to all of those endeavours. All of us, parents, pupils and staff have really pulled together and managed to keep a routine around education that I think has been helpful to a large majority of our young people. It has been a difficult time but, as is often the case, it is at times like these that people rise to the occasion and here at UHS we have countless examples of people going above and beyond - too many to list individually but you have our sincere thanks.

Thanks also to everyone who has volunteered for shifts at both the Key Worker and the Keeping in Touch Hubs. Teachers, PSAs, Primary, Secondary, Highlife staff, from Ullapool and beyond...what a difference these facilities have made - even just to hear laughter around the building and see children out playing in the sun has been so uplifting.

## **NEXT SESSION**

Of course next term contains many uncertainties and unknowns but the plan for our reopening remains primarily the same as the one which was discussed with the Parent Council and emailed out last week but with one key difference for the Senior pupils as set out below.

Needless to say we will closely watch the developments to do with COVID-19 between now and 11<sup>th</sup> August and be assured that safety will be the major driver for how we open ; however we will not be drawn into unnecessary or premature speculation. Confirmation of (and any changes to) the format of the school reopening will be sent out to you all in early August and, if there are discussions to be had resulting from new information or developments, we will keep you informed.

So, the first week back will look like this –

### **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August                      S1 pupils only**

This will allow us to do some introductory work around the High School - something which the P7 pupils missed as part of their normal Transition programme to the High School

### **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August                        S3 pupils only**

This year group was the hardest hit by the lockdown, with many having real difficulty accessing their education. We will take this opportunity to assess and initiate an education recovery program, re-establishing relationships and expectations for this group.

### **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August                            S2 pupils only**

This year group worked well in lockdown so this day will focus on timetables and meeting up with their teachers. Friday will be a half-day as normal.

Having each year group in separately will also allow staff to go over and explain any protocols that have to be in place for COVID-19, for example one way systems, staggered lunches, etc. (More details on these will be available in August.)

The key change which I referred to above is that, **from Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> August, the school will be open for all pupils, from S1 to S6.** Our Senior school, with very few exceptions, have worked extremely hard during the lockdown, logging in to classes and carrying out the tasks requested of them. S4, S5 & S6 pupils will be expected to attend school from that Monday, thereby enjoying their full holiday entitlement (Highland Schools were due to re-open on 17<sup>th</sup> August, before the crisis hit).

## STAFF NEWS

There will be some staff changes next session. Firstly though, we say goodbye to 3 members of staff: after almost 20 years here at UHS, initially as a Principal Teacher of Home Economics and latterly as our very hard-working Depute, Mrs Anne Hunter is taking early retirement. She will be greatly missed by both colleagues and pupils – her energy, enthusiasm and problem-solving abilities have been much in evidence and we have all benefited from her time here. Ms Phil McCann has been a part of our lives here at UHS since April 1996 and, from her base in the Social Subjects dept. as Principal Teacher, Modern Studies, has taught countless classes, organised many trips to far-flung places and cajoled both staff and pupils into taking part in many a fundraising activity! Ullapool's loss is Glasgow's gain. And Mr Angus Thompson, our Probationer teacher of Maths, is also leaving us. He very quickly became a firm favourite with pupils who appreciated his sense of fun and ability to bring out the best in them. We wish them all well for the future.

Staff leave ... new staff join ... and we are delighted to welcome Ms Joanne Stewart to the post of Depute here at UHS. She comes from a similar post at Nairn Academy and has already been to visit us in preparation for starting in August. As well as her Depute duties, Ms Stewart will teach in the Social Subjects Dept and we look forward to welcoming her to Ullapool. Finally, we are pleased to report that Mr Iain Murray is increasing his teaching time with us back to full-time in the Maths Dept. His experience is invaluable and we have missed his presence and his wry humour whilst he has been teaching part-time.

## PUPIL ACTIVITIES

Despite not being physically present in the school building, our pupils have, nonetheless, used the time to avail themselves of different opportunities and I would like to mention 3 in particular –

- Velvet Lawton (S4) and Macy Paton (S6) took part in an online Q&A session with the Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, where they raised issues about how lockdown had affected them as well as the difficulties of online learning and potential transport concerns for rural schools in August. Both pupils were very impressive – well done.
- Another S4 pupil, Megan Loftus, wrote an excellent article for *Sailing Today* about her trip last summer to Greenland – it was beautifully written and very evocative.

Perhaps you have aware of our **Lockdown Challenges** this last week of term ... each day we have set the pupils 3 tasks and encouraged them to film themselves or provide evidence of them taking part. The resulting photos and videos have been wonderful (hastily constructed dens, toilet rolls balanced on heads, painted pebbles and word pictures using kitchen utensils to name but a few) and a large percentage of the school, including staff, has cheerfully taken part. So apologies if your peace has been disturbed, your living room upturned or your kitchen cupboards ransacked – we think it was worth it though 😊.

## YOUTUBE LINKS

Of course it has not been possible to hold either our Leavers' or our Achievers' Assemblies this year. However we were able to film the awarding of our Excellence prizes and the list of the recipients can be

found at the end of this newsletter. This film can be accessed, for the month of July, on a secure YouTube link

<https://youtu.be/67R5k-zWRuA>

Likewise, on Youtube, you can view the 'best moments' film which we have produced to celebrate our Leavers this year. It's lovely to see how these pupils have blossomed since arriving at UHS in S1!

<https://youtu.be/wP3ONJhC-9k>

And the Art Dept has produced the following compilation of the fantastic work produced by students during lockdown – enjoy

<https://youtu.be/iCXvg8y0qpc>

### **SQA EXAMINATION RESULTS**

This year's SQA results will be delivered on **Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> August**, either by post or by text if you have signed up to My SQA service (available at [www.mysqa.org.uk/cs8/content/text.action](http://www.mysqa.org.uk/cs8/content/text.action)). There is a letter on the school website which outlines the path to follow should you feel that the grade awarded to you does not reflect your performance in a subject.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

The full list of term dates for the 2020/21 session will be sent home at the start of next term and will also be available on the school website. It is worth pointing out that there will be 2 In-service days in on 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> September this year. Reminders will be sent out nearer the time.

I look forward to seeing everyone in school in August; a return to normality and a chance for us all to appreciate being together and enjoying each other's company.

I wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Yours sincerely

*Robbie McFedries*

Headteacher



# **ULLAPOOL HIGH SCHOOL AWARDS FOR** **2019/20**

## ***EXCELLENCE AWARDS***

<b>The Ron Mitchell Memorial Award for Technical Education</b>	<b>Kirsty Marsh</b>
<b>The Science Prize, donated by Wester Ross Salmon</b>	<b>Macy Paton</b>
<b>The History Prize</b>	<b>Kya Elliot</b>
<b>The Katharine Buchanan Macphail Prize</b>	<b>Iain Campbell</b>
<b>The Coigach Cup for Foreign Languages</b>	<b>Ellie Pagano</b>
<b>The Isobel Nicol Quaich for Poetry/Creative Writing</b>	<b>Ellie Pagano</b>
<b>The Lewis Fisher Loving Cup</b>	<b>Mhairi Macartney</b>
<b>The Joanne Fotheringham Prize for Excellence in Piping</b>	<b>Hardie Crawford</b>
<b>The Joanne Fotheringham Prize for Excellence in Gaelic</b>	<b>Amy MacGregor</b>
<b>The Rural Skills Prize</b>	<b>Ciara Clarke</b>