

Hawick High School

Headteacher Update

January 2019



Dear Parent/Carer

A belated Happy New Year to you all. I have delayed in sending out the update for this month until I had confirmation of some items which are covered below.

Centre for Excellence in Textiles at Hawick High School

The staff and students of Hawick High School are delighted that Scottish Borders Council have confirmed that the 'Centre for Excellence in Textiles' is to be based in our school. Hawick High School is committed to developing the Young Workforce and the establishment of the centre in our school provides both a visible and direct link for the young people of the community with the textile industry. Such partnership working strengthens our business links with the community and will provide tangible vocational opportunities for the young people of Hawick to enable them to develop skills and qualities required for the work place.

I would like to highlight that **we are not losing any resource areas that are required** for Craft Design and Technology subjects. The school roll has fallen somewhat over the past ten years and we currently have a number of rooms in this area that are not used by students for these subjects. The costs the school would incur to modify these rooms for other purposes are prohibitively expensive and as such they have been lying dormant for a number of years.

We look forward to working with Alastair Young in the future as the Textile Centre is established to identify training opportunities for our students.

Staffing

I am delighted to announce that Debbie Martin joins us this term as PT Creative Technologies (Art, Music and Craft Design and Technology subjects). I am looking forward to working with Debbie, a teacher of Art and Design herself, and the rest of our Middle Leadership team this term as we move the school forward.

It has been confirmed that Dr Barrie will be absent from work for an extended period of time. We have rearranged the Biology department timetable to ensure that students taking Higher Human Biology and Nat 5 Biology will have input from a subject specialist teacher.

They will be given appropriate support for coursework and assignment preparation and completion.

There is no other teacher in Scottish Borders region qualified to support with Psychology. For students taking Nat 5 and Higher Psychology we have, at a significant financial cost, secured the services of two lecturers from Scottish Borders College as follows;

- **Higher Class** **Monday 2 – 3.45pm** (normal class time)
- **National 5 Class** **Thursday 10.55 – 12.35pm** (normal class time)
- **Friday afternoon** **1.30 – 4pm for HIGHER CLASS ONLY**

These lecturers will mark the prelims sat by the students and give appropriate feedback, support the candidates with their assignments and deliver course work yet to be covered. These arrangements will commence this week for the Nat 5 class and next week for the Higher class and will continue until Dr Barrie returns to school. It is important that the Higher students attend the Friday afternoon session. Whilst we appreciate it is out of class time the support the students will receive will be vital to ensuring they achieve their potential.

Parental support

Here at Hawick High School we value the support that parents give to the school. The very best schools in Scotland have outstanding partnership working between home and school. It is only when parents and the school work together that we can ensure the very best outcomes for young people, whether that be high level attainment in exam qualifications, ensuring young people develop the skills and qualities to be effective members of society or supporting young people to move on to sustained positive destinations.

Smoking in school grounds

A small number of young people are smoking on school premises. This is not acceptable or permitted; not only does it give a poor impression of the school but it is absolutely harmful to their health.

We will contact any parent /carer of a child caught smoking in school grounds and take appropriate action. Please support us by discussing the dangers of smoking with your child.

School uniform

The vast majority of our students wear school uniform to school each day. There are however a few young people who are coming to school in other inappropriate dress. School uniform is an important aspect of school ethos; it gives our young people a sense of pride, of community and purpose. A school uniform is also a social leveller. We would like to

thank the parents and pupils for the genuine efforts they make to ensure such a high standard. If a pupil is unable to wear the recommended uniform on a particular day, parents should send a note or phone to explain the reasons.

Students who have PE during the day should come to school in their uniform and change for PE; they should change back into school uniform after PE.

Our school uniform is;

- Black trousers/skirt
 - No tracksuit bottoms
 - No leggings
- Black school jumper/cardigan (does not need to have school logo*)
- White shirt
- School tie
- Black shoes
 - No coloured/white trainers

Attendance

A number of studies have provided evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Consider the following;

100% attendance	0 days missed	Excellent	Gives you child the best chance of success and gets them off to a flying start
95% attendance	9 days of Absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory	
90% attendance	19 days of Absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor	Less chance of success. Makes it harder to progress
85% attendance	27 days of Absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed Almost half a term missed	Very poor	
80% attendance	36 days of Absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed Half a term missed	Unacceptable	
75% attendance	45 days of Absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed Half a term missed Almost a whole term missed	Unacceptable	
			Serious implications on learning and progress

If your child has 90% attendance they will have the equivalent of:

- ½ a day off per week,
- 19 days off per year

- 247 days off over their school career of 13 academic years, equivalent to over 1 year of lost education.

This year we have developed a new attendance policy in Hawick High School which aims to improve attendance. This will be uploaded onto the school website in the next few days. Please support your child to make the best progress with their learning by discussing these facts with them. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school contact your child's Guidance teacher in the first instance.

Burns supper

I am delighted to inform you that this year sees the return of our Burns Supper to Hawick High School. This will take place this Thursday 31st January evening (re-arrangement from the original date 24th January for prelims) and has been organised by our fabulous S6.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Mr Neil MacAskill the President of Hawick Burns Clubs and the club members for their kind donation of £100 to support our event. **Many thanks to you all.**

I am very much looking forward to attending the event this week and welcoming our guests.

Parent council

I would like to inform all parents that the date of the next parent council has been re-arranged to accommodate the Burns Supper this Thursday evening.

The next Parent Council meeting will be held on **Tuesday 12th February.**

Careers fair and Course Choices

Following our very successful Careers Fair last year we are holding the event again this year. This is an opportunity for young people and their parents to speak to representatives from the world of work, universities and colleges about jobs, training and courses available to young people post school.

The date for your diaries is Thursday 7th February from 6:00pm till 8:00pm. All young people and their parents are welcome to attend; the event will be particularly useful to students in S2, S3 and the Senior Phase who will be making decisions about course choices for next session later this term.

Please see the school calendar on the school web site for dates of upcoming parents evenings, curricular information evenings and course option interview days.

Vicky Porteous
Headteacher

