



Welcome to

Dyce Academy



Dyce Academy Newsletter

Session 2024 –2025

Issue 1

Welcome to the first edition of our school newsletter for this session. It has been a great start to the year for the staff and pupils of Dyce Academy, and as always, a busy one. Back in August we welcomed a number of new staff members into the Dyce Team. Mrs Lusted joined us in the English department to cover Mrs Duncan’s maternity leave, Miss Rhynas joined us as a Probationer into Biology, and Mr Gow as a Probationer into Modern Studies. At the start of this term, we also welcomed Mr Benzie into the Physics Department as a permanent member of the Dyce team. Unfortunately, we also had a fond farewell to say, as Mr McPhail headed off to New Zealand in the middle of September.

As the year started, we welcomed all of our new S1 pupils into the school. This new cohort have been very impressive indeed, settling in really well, confidently navigating their way around the school and adjusting with ease to the school routines. They have also received an important input from our partners at KPMG on how to keep themselves safe online, and we held a parents information session on this as well to support family learning

Through our assembly programme to date we have covered topics including Pupil Wellbeing and Safeguarding, Positive Behaviour Management, and School Expectations. Through a pupil led assembly and Club Fair, we focused on our extra-curricular offer encouraging pupils to get signed up to the various clubs and groups that we run throughout the school year, adding to their school experience.

As a staff team, we have started moving on our new Improvement Plan for the session, and a copy of this document can be found on our School Website. With our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy, we updated its content and then working with pupil groups, we created a pupil friendly policy document which was shared in assembly ensuring that all pupils know what they can expect from their teachers with regards to their approach to learning and teaching. The pupil groups then put together

a list of expectations to encourage our young people to take responsibility for their own learning, and to ensure they can be as successful as possible. This is now being made into an infographic by one of our pupils and will in turn be shared with all parents/carers along with our new pupil policy document.

Mr Hose has been working on our pupil assessment schedule which he will be looking to share with everyone in the coming weeks and this will support the pupil request for a balance of assessment in terms of timing across the year.

Mr Bonner has been leading on our new reporting system, ‘Pupiltracking’ and he has been working with his team to put together our Careers Fair for this session.

Ms Strachan has been developing our strategic approach for the implementation of the Circle framework which looks at ensuring learning is accessible for all learners. She has also been working with our Colleagues in Dyce and Newmachar primary schools to improve our transition work from P7 into S1.

The other big focus for us in term 1 as a whole school community was our preparation for the Inspection re-visit. This visit was to allow our colleagues from Education Scotland’s Inspection team to come and review the work we have undertaken over the last 18 months to improve on some key areas that were highlighted around our learning and teaching practice, our tracking and monitoring and our approach to raising attainment. This re-visit took place in the last week of term and we now await the outcome report from this. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents, carers, partners and pupils for their input to this process, it was very much appreciated, We will of course be sharing the outcome with all parties as soon as possible.



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S1 Pupils:

After a very successful transition programme of events, before the summer holiday, which included visits to the school, day trips to Cullen, following their new timetable, our new S1 cohort finally started with us on the 20th of August. On a day that many of the young people would have been feeling a mixture of excitement and nervousness they all arrived looking absolutely immaculate in their new school uniforms, something that they have continued to do throughout their first term and something that they have been continually praised for by staff especially our Headteacher, Miss Arthur. As a cohort this group of S1's have already set high standards of behaviour and attitude across the school and the expectations of how successful this group of young people will be as they progress through their time at Dyce Academy is growing every day.



The first academic term has already been completed with a number of important milestones already been passed. For many of our S1 parents the first experience of a secondary school Parent Information Evening has occurred. Just like the huge changes the pupils experience when moving into secondary school, following a timetable, seeing up to 15 teachers a week, moving to a new lesson every hour, many parents experienced what it is like to attend a secondary school parents night for the first time. Instead of seeing one teacher, often sitting on a small persons chair, the pressures parents face organising online appointments and then on the evening moving from one area to the next to be on time for their next teacher appointment was an eye opener for some, with many parents commenting that they definitely managed to “get their steps up” that evening. Although it was a hectic albeit a successful evening we had an excellent turn out with over 85% of parents attending the evening, something we hope we will sustain over the next few years.

The other milestone our S1's have overtaken was the “green light” to start making use of Asda on the 24th of September. Although, in many respects, we make light of this, it has to be noted that the young people followed the school's expectations in not going over to Asda, until permission was given, exceptionally well and since being given permission their overall behaviour while in Asda has also been excellent.

As stated at the start of this piece, this cohort of S1's have set the bar really high and we, as a school, are really excited to see how this group of wonderful young people progress through the school with us as they make their journey with us from childhood into adulthood.

Career Fair



At time of writing there is approximately 8 hours to go before Dyce Academy opens its doors to businesses, educational organisations, pupils and parents for its first Career Fair in a very long time. Representatives have confirmed their attendance, the Developing the Young Workforce Ambassadors have created the posters and the flyers advertising the event, the signage has been printed and laminated and will be hung in a few hours' time. In addition, I've sent out numerous messages to parents and carers letting them know that the fair is to take place between the hours of 17:30 and 19:00. The staff DYW group have sat down and worked out where the exhibitors are to go – who needs access to power points, and can we fit 32 stands in the MPA, 17 in the canteen and 11 in Drama Studio 2? I'm pretty sure the janitorial staff with the floor plans produced by the DYW staff group, will work their magic. So, it looks like everything is more or less ready to go. All that's left is the Dyce Academy community to come along and find out about the myriad of jobs, careers and courses that are available to our young people. We'll see you on the other side. Thanks Andrew Bonner, the DYW Pupil Ambassadors and the Staff DYW Working Group.



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Vaping

At Dyce Academy we are aware that young people are increasingly engaging in experimentation with e-cigarettes and vapes, including those which contain THC oil—also known as Cannabis-Vapes or Carts.

Although regulated, vaping is not risk free and most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, which is addictive. There are even concerns around those claiming to be nicotine free, as they may still contain substances which are harmful to children and young people. This can cause short and long-term health issues.

The popularity of vaping tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) oil is of particular concern. Vaping THC oil involves heating the oil and inhaling it through a vaporizing device like a vape pen or e-cigarette. THC is the primary psychoactive compound in cannabis. When prepared into vape oil the THC can be concentrated so even 1 puff could result in greater intoxication and impairments than when smoked in similar amounts. Vaping heated oil of any kind is dangerous and can result in side effects such as cough, chest pain, shortness of breath, and gastrointestinal issues. It can be particularly damaging to the lungs.

E-cigarettes/ vapes are an age restricted product and legislation prohibits their sale to under 18s. In school we address e-cigarettes as we would any other age restricted product and prohibit use by all pupils. If a pupil is found to have a vape, it will be confiscated and parents contacted.

More information on the dangers of vaping can be found here: <https://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Vaping-information-sheet-parents-and-educators-final.pdf>

For reporting of illegal tobacco sales and vape products : Contact Trading standards on 01224 522433 (this is an automated reporting line where you can leave a message) or Emailtradingstandards@aberdeencity.gov.uk

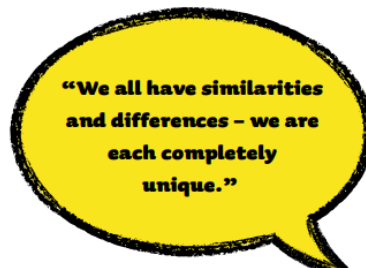
Energy Drinks

As a school we aim to encourage all our young people to take part in a healthy lifestyle. This includes spending time on healthy nutrition in terms of what pupils eat and drink through the day so that they are best able to engage in their learning. Over the years energy drinks have become increasingly popular with young people and we have seen a rise in the number of young people with these drinks in school. All pupils are encouraged to drink healthy drinks and not bring energy drinks into school.

National Anti-bullying week 11—15 Nov

Dyce Academy will be taking part in Anti-Bullying Week which is an annual UK event, held in the third week in November and aims to raise awareness of bullying of children and young people, in schools and elsewhere, and to highlight ways of preventing and responding to it. It started in 2002 and has since grown to become a significant event in the calendars of children, families and schools with an estimated . This years theme is “Choose Respect”.

Respect can mean different things to different people. There are however, certain common characteristics of respectful behaviour that exist. Having a common understanding of these basic principles is important to help us understand how to build relationships based on respect. Relationships come in many different shapes and sizes – including online relationships – but respect is fundamental to them all and it should be at the heart of how we treat each other. By role-modelling respectful relationships, we can help prevent bullying.





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Annual Halloween Fright Night

On Halloween, the Community & Enterprise Senior Ambassador group hosted the annual Fright Night experience for S1-3 pupils. This year's theme was "The Return of the Clowns" and groups of junior pupils were led



around the school on a spooky tour, with a few jump scares along the way!

Thank you to the seniors and staff who helped out on the night and contributed to it being such a success, and to

all junior pupils who attended. We had a great turnout and raised **£116** from the event, which will go towards causes to support the school community.

Miss Macdonald / Community & Enterprise Ambassadors



Aberdeen City Music School: A Thriving Start to the Year

Aberdeen City Music School has hit the ground running this year, with an exciting range of concerts and performances showcasing the talents of our pupils. The autumn term began on a high note with our vocalists leading the singing at Choral Evensong for St Andrew's Cathedral. Shortly after, they delighted audiences with a recital of English and Scottish songs, setting the tone for an inspiring season.

In the first few weeks, we bid a fond farewell to our Boarding Residence Manager, Marc Howes, who retired after 16 dedicated years with the Music School. We remain in close contact with him and look forward to his continued presence in the Music School community. We also welcome Jacqueline Edwards, who will be stepping into the role of Residence Manager on Monday, 18th November. We were honoured to be invited to the Music Hall to perform for the Wood Foundation and the Excelerate Programme, playing for an audience of teachers and head teachers focused on educational innovation. Performing in such a dynamic setting was a fantastic opportunity for our students.

This term, we have hosted three Specialist Weekend sessions, where guest musicians joined us to lead masterclasses. These weekends have allowed our students to refine their skills, rehearse, and perform together. A particular highlight was a condensed performance of Bizet's *Carmen*, which was both challenging and exhilarating for everyone involved.

Our senior pupils have been showcasing their talents at the St Andrew's Cathedral recital series, with many preparing for music college and conservatoire auditions this month. We wish them the very best of luck with their applications and auditions.



School Website: dyceacademy.aberdeen.sch.uk

Contact us: dyceacademy@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Follow us on twitter @DyceAcademy



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We closed the last term with a memorable performance at The Blue Lamp, marking our return to this iconic venue after several years. We're eagerly anticipating our next full-school concert there on Monday, 11th November, and we look forward to welcoming a lively audience.



Our *Come and Play* days have also kicked off, with the first event—a jazz improvisation workshop for local young musicians aged 9 to 17—being a resounding success. The session culminated in a short concert, allowing participants to perform alongside ACMS pupils. We have nine more *Come and Play* days planned across various musical disciplines, and we're excited to host these in the coming months.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled about the numerous performance opportunities on the horizon. Our senior string players will perform at the Fife Arms in Braemar throughout December, and we have multiple Christmas music performances planned across the community, including visits to local primary schools and residential homes. We'll also appear in concert at the Beach Ballroom as guests of the Aberdeen City Music Service, and we'll conclude the term with our two traditional Christmas concerts in the MPA.

Each week, ACMS sends out 'The ACMS Shout' a newsletter for parents, pupils, and tutors. If you would like to access the newsletter or any of the previous issues, please click on the link [HERE](#). This will give you access to the latest issue and all previous newsletters.

Going forward, a link to the 'The ACMS Shout' will be posted in the Dyce Academy newsletter each week

Please follow us on [Twitter/X](#) and [Instagram](#) or find us at the [ACMS website](#)

A heartfelt thank you goes to all of our ACMS staff, Boarding staff, tutors, Katie Arthur and the Dyce Academy staff, as well as our parents, pupils, and friends. Thanks to everyone's hard work, the Music School is flourishing and enjoying a fantastic year.

Google Classroom:



All pupils have access to our online learning platform—Google Classroom. Class teachers use Google Classroom to support the learning in class and at home through posting classwork, assignments and resources. Pupils can access Google Classroom from their school issued devices and from their personal devices such as laptops and tablets. Google Classroom also allows for parents/carers to be added as a Guardian. This feature sends weekly summaries of Google Classroom assignments that have been set to a Parent/carer email address. Being a Guardian does not give a parent/carer access to the Google Classroom itself. Over the coming weeks please look out for a Groupcall with a link to a Google Form if you would like to be added as a Guardian or if you need to update an email address that you were previously using to receive Google Classroom summaries.

Dates for your diary	
Thursday 7 November	Careers Fair 5:30pm—7pm
Week ending 15 November	S3 Reports issued
Friday 15 November	School Closed to pupils—Staff Inservice Day
Monday 25 November—Friday 6 December	S4 Estimate Exams
Thursday 12 December	Expressive Arts Christmas Concert
Week ending 20 December	S1 reports issued
Wednesday 18 December and Thursday 19 December	ACMS Christmas Concert
Friday 20 December	S4 Estimate results issued to parents/carers
Friday 20 December	End of term
Monday 6 January 2025	Start of term