

GALASHIELS ACADEMY



NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2004

NEWS UPDATE

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Dear Parents

Now that I've been in post for around 7 months I felt it was time to recap on some of the news items we try to keep you informed about in our weekly slot in the "Border Telegraph".

In the short time I've been Headteacher at Galashiels Academy, a great deal has happened and it's good to take stock of past events, issues and achievements so that we can measure where we are to go from here.

When I say "we", I most decidedly include you, our parents! Without help, support and communication from you, we wouldn't be able to succeed as a school and wouldn't be able to give our pupils – your children – the service they deserve.

Please keep in touch with the school andif there's anything that you're unhappy or unclear about just ask! We will try to help in every way we can.

Kathleen Angus
Headteacher

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<p>OUR STAFF</p>	<p>Since August of this year there have been many changes in our staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lawrence Alexander (who was acting Depute) has been seconded for 2 years to a post at SBC. He will return at the end of this time to a PT Pastoral post. • In the meantime, the Depute's position has been permanently filled by Ross Angus from Lasswade High, who starts at the Academy at the end of November. • In Business Education, Richard Booles has been replaced by Scott Shields. • Anne Bradford has taken over as permanent PT Chemistry from John Allan. • Mark Gray has returned from Hawick to take up his post as teacher of Computing. • Philip Orr is our new member of staff in the English department. • Don Sutherland has been replaced by Eileen Hume as PT Geography. • Lisa Catto has taken on Fiona McMurray's permanent PT Pastoral post. <p>We still have vacancies to fill on a permanent basis in Maths, Science and Learning Support and on a temporary basis in the Pastoral sector.</p>
<p>CONTACTING THE SCHOOL</p>	<p>In the office, Nicola Bertham has come in as Administration Assistant and we are delighted to welcome Susan Bunyan back to her post.</p> <p>Parents should note that the school office is open from 8:30am until 4:45pm Monday and Tuesday, 8:30am until 4:30pm Wednesday and Thursday and 8.30 am to 4 pm on a Friday. Call at any time during these hours if there is something you want to ask about, somebody you want to speak to, or somebody you want to have a meeting with and on the subject of communications....</p>
<p>PRIMARY PARENTS' EVENINGS</p>	<p>.....Senior Managers, Pastoral staff and senior students have been attending parents' evenings at Galashiels Academy's associated primary schools in order to make early contact with parents of the children who will be coming up to the Academy in August 2005. We now, as a school, have Integrated Community School status and we want to extend our communication network</p>

	<p>further. Not only are our current parents encouraged to speak to us if they have questions, concerns and comments, but we want parents of our future pupils to do the same. We work closely with our associated primary schools and want you – the parents – to be part of that community.</p>
<p>SCHOOL TRANSPORT</p>	<p>Senior Managers now accompany pupils to the bus stance at the end of the school day. This has been done so that we can intervene before problems arise – an early warning system! If there is anything at all you are concerned about regarding school transport, please contact Mr Ross Angus (after 26th November) and we will do our best to see that enquiries and problems are dealt with.</p>
<p>SCHOOL CALENDAR</p>	<p>Our pupils have all now got their own versions of the school calendar. If you want further copies, please contact the school so that we can get these to you. We feel it's always useful for parents to know about key dates and events in the school since sometimes children may not be the most reliable sources of information in this respect!</p> <p>Please note that there is an extra holiday date to add: Friday 25th March 2005</p>
<p>HOMEWORK DIARIES/ PLANNERS</p>	<p>On the subject of “reliable information” we'd like to remind you that every pupil in the school has a diary or planner in which advance work is noted. It would be very helpful to us if you could look at these from time to time and, if you have any queries regarding their use, please don't hesitate to get in touch. (Your child's Pastoral teacher is probably the best first point of contact in this instance.)</p>
<p>SCHOOL DRESS CODE SLIPS</p>	<p>Thank you again for your support with our dress code. Outsiders have commented to us on how smart our pupils – particularly the younger ones - are looking. As you'll know, we've introduced our “dress code” slips to try to maintain standards of dress and we hope that these will help us with this aim.</p> <p>Can we please ask for your help further, in ensuring that your children do not come to school in clothes that are too “scanty” e.g. low-cut or revealing in any way. While we know that such clothing is very fashionable we feel that it is really not appropriate for school-wear. Again, thank you for your help with this.</p>

<p>EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES</p>	<p>Again, this year, we are offering a number of extra-curricular activities, a list of which you can see below.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Recorder Group</td> <td>Scottish Country Dance Club</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wind Band</td> <td>Athletics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>String Band</td> <td>Mountaineering</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Choir</td> <td>Tai Chi Chaun</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jazz Group</td> <td>Table Tennis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acoustic Guitar</td> <td>Girls Rugby</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Girls Football</td> <td>Boys Football</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Badminton</td> <td>Tennis</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dance Club</td> <td>Weight Training</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hockey</td> <td>Horse Riding</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rugby</td> <td>Chess</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Writing</td> <td>Scholastic Book Club</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Library</td> <td>Card Club</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Duke of Edinburgh Awards</td> <td>Computer Games</td> </tr> </table> <p>We would like to see the majority of our pupils involved in some kind of activity and hope that you will encourage your child/children to get involved.</p>	Recorder Group	Scottish Country Dance Club	Wind Band	Athletics	String Band	Mountaineering	Choir	Tai Chi Chaun	Jazz Group	Table Tennis	Acoustic Guitar	Girls Rugby	Girls Football	Boys Football	Badminton	Tennis	Dance Club	Weight Training	Hockey	Horse Riding	Rugby	Chess	Writing	Scholastic Book Club	Library	Card Club	Duke of Edinburgh Awards	Computer Games
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<p>PUPIL SUCCESSES</p>	<p>This is the part we are very proud of: we've had great success this year so far in hockey, in rugby and in girls' football. Our congratulations go to all pupils and our thanks to the staff who have worked so hard to help pupils achieve these successes.</p> <p>We also have a very successful team of dancers coached by a mixture of staff and pupils and we hope to see them going from strength to strength.</p> <p>We have had pupils participate in region-wide orchestras; win local competitions; and you, our parents, have donated so many Tesco Shopping tokens that we swept the boards at a recent presentation of equipment to schools.</p> <p>Our seniors work hard for the school – helping S1 pupils, assisting in classes and doing committee work: recently the Charities Committee raised over £800 in one day for Breast Cancer – an amazing feat. S6 students who helped out at the annual Crucial Crew event for P7 pupils were warmly congratulated by Inspector Kenny Simpson who said that the event could not continue without input from Galashiels Academy.</p> <p>The list of successes is endless</p> <p>However we move from this positive note to another, more negative one.</p>																												

LITTER IN SCOTT PARK	<p>Many of you will already be aware – through articles and letters in the Border Telegraph and other sources – that the school suffers from the fact that Scott Park has become one of two possible entrances to the school. Almost a thousand pupils use the park as a thoroughfare to and from the school four times a day: there are virtually no litterbins on the most travelled routes and the park is only cleaned at very irregular intervals. As a result, we have a build-up of litter for which our pupils and the school itself are being blamed.</p> <p>As a temporary measure, the school has undertaken to employ someone to clean up the park area closest to the school from the school’s own budget. We also hope to set up an environmental committee based in the school but with input from councillors and others who have an interest in the matter. We, as a school, are very concerned, but we alone do not have the answers to the problem. We’re looking for support from everyone in the community on this issue-particularly yourselves, our parents.</p>
DROP-INS	<p>Finally, on a very positive note, I’m very pleased to inform you of the continuing and growing support the Academy is receiving from its local community. Our school doctor and nurse continue to hold their drop-in sessions in the “Medical Room” on Thursday lunchtime and we now have two police sergeants who visit on Wednesday lunchtime and hold drop-in sessions in Abbotsford House base. In addition, Councillor Frances Moore is consulting with us on the litter problem and hopes to enlist council help on the matter. As an integrated Community School we welcome links with each and every aspect of our local community.</p>