

Smithycroft Secondary

Parents' Newsletter

August 2011

Welcome Back !

I would like to begin our August newsletter by welcoming all our pupils back to Smithycroft for the new session 2011—2012. A particular welcome to our new S1 pupils who have made an extremely positive start to their time at Smithycroft. Being a parent myself, I welcome a return to the routines which returning to school brings. Getting up out of bed early and arriving at school on time, in full uniform, with a school bag containing the appropriate equipment and school planner, working hard in classes, completing homework and then retiring to bed suitably exhausted! At Smithycroft establishing good routines and getting our young people back into positive learning habits is a priority and we could not do this without the support of our parents and carers. I therefore look forward to a very successful and productive year working with you to ensure that our young people achieve their very best!

SQA Exam Results

When the envelopes dropped through the letterboxes or messages beeped on phones in August many of our young people were delighted at their well-earned results. In S4 there were some particularly outstanding results for a number of pupils with some achieving 8 Credit 1 and 2 grades, and a number of pupils excelling at General and Foundation level as well as at Intermediate 1 and 2 levels. We also presented a group of our S3 pupils for Standard Grade English with 16 pupils achieving a Credit pass and 9 a General. These pupils will be presented for Intermediate 2 in S4 which is an excellent preparation for Higher in S5.

In S5 and S6 there was an overall pass rate of 75% for those presented at Higher level. A number of our pupils do qualifications in partnership with local colleges and these help prepare them for a place at college, work or university but are not part of our SQA statistics.

There were particularly good results in S6 with the overall pass rates showing a significant improvement including two grade As for Advanced Higher Music. However, our statistics were down in some areas and continuing to focus on raising attainment will be a major priority over the coming session. There will be more information in our next bulletin about some of the initiatives we are introducing to support our young people to do their best. One message is very clear, though. Pupils who worked hard, completed homework, attended extra study classes and Easter revision classes and were prepared and organised, did very well in their exams.

Key dates

September Weekend holiday

Friday 23rd September—Monday 26th September

Inset Day 3 (Pupils off school)

Tuesday 27th September

Smithycroft's Got Talent Show

Friday 14th October

Positive destinations.....Following their dreams!

I wanted to give parents a flavour of where a number of our leavers are heading to now that they have left Smithycroft. We will shortly be made aware of our school's statistics for leavers achieving a positive destination and we are confident that, yet again, these will be amongst the best in Glasgow. Here are some of some of the destinations; Amy Connelly - Apprentice Chef at Blythwood Square Hotel, Emily Cruickshank, Ashley Dailly, Laura Todd and Ainsley Rogers -Strathclyde University Primary Teaching, Jason Gibson -Glasgow Uni Psychology, Kiana Kalantar - Stirling Uni Film, Media and Psychology, David McColl -Glasgow Uni Engineering, Luke Prentice -Strathclyde Uni Electronic Engineering, Perry McGowan -Glasgow Uni Chemical Physics, Laura Kinnon -Biomedical Science at Caledonia Uni. A number of pupils doing HND in Sports Coaching, Engineering, Business and Administration, Computer Animation, childcare, art and design and music at college...and these are just our S6 leavers!.....PTO....for more destinations.....

More Destinations...

The majority of S4 pupils have returned to increase their qualifications in S5. Most of our leavers are attending college and studying a range of courses, some to help develop their readiness for the world of work and others doing specific courses in areas such as childcare, hairdressing, travel and tourism and dance. Shaun Kennedy exchanged his high number of Credit passes for a much sought after place on a joinery modern apprenticeship course, as did Connor Gunn—two places out of 3000 applications. The majority of our S5 pupils have gone on to either further or higher education and the school, through Mrs McBride, our PT World of Work, and Mrs Campbell, the school's Careers Advisor, continues to support a small number of former pupils seeking a job or college place. We wish all our former pupils the very best success in their future careers and look forward to them keeping in touch over the years.

Developing Young Leaders

Our returning S6 learners received a surprise on their first day back when they were told that within two days they would be participating in an outward bound team building activity. They had an excellent experience and have been rewarded with their own S6 study room. Many of them are participating in our new SQA Higher Leadership course where they are taking forward a range of initiatives from developing charity links, working in our local primary schools, developing a garden for a link nursery, setting up radio Smithycroft, and organizing a talent show. This is all part of a wider school agenda of developing confident young people who will leave Smithycroft with key skills helping them to be equipped for life outside school ...watch out Alan Sugar!

Junction 12

Many parents will have seen the Junction 12 office on Smithycroft Road but may not be aware of what it does or of its links with the school. Junction 12 provides a lunchtime drop in service to our pupils who have issues and concerns they wish to discuss in private. They talk to groups of our young people over the lunch period and run a games club and Scripture Union. They are also available after school in their office should any pupil wish further advice and support. Junction 12 are a great asset to the school. We all know that sometimes our young people find it difficult to communicate with adults they know well, including parents and teachers, and prefer to have an independent counselor. Junction 12 encourages them to think through their choices and, indeed, discuss how they feel with parents, carers and the school. We look forward to another year of support and working in partnership with Junction 12.

Medical Concerns

The school is presently updating its medical records through the data sheet responses and information from parents and carers. Can I remind all parents and carers that if young people are unwell the weekend prior to school or night before school

they should contact their GP. We have no school nurse in school and only two qualified first aiders to respond to any medical situations. Can I also remind you that we cannot issue any medication, even plasters, without written consent from parents based on a medical referral.

Large Hadron Collider Visit

As we go to print, Jennifer Esezobor of S6 is in Switzerland, near Geneva, visiting the Large Hadron Collider. The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world's largest and highest energy particle accelerator and is expected to address some of physics most fundamental questions. Isn't Wikipedia a wonderful thing! Jennifer is part of a delegation from Glasgow University and we look forward to hearing about the visit on her return.

Smithycroft Parents' Council

On Monday 19th September at 6.30pm Smithycroft Parents' Council holds its Annual General Meeting. This meeting will elect office bearers including a new Chairperson. For the past few years the Chair has been Jacqui McCallum but with Jacqui's son leaving Smithycroft, Jacqui can no longer be the Chairperson. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jacqui for her contribution to the Parents' Council over the past years and her support of the school and its young people.

Can I also ask more parents and carers to consider getting involved in the work of the Parent's Council. It meets roughly five times a year and makes a valuable contribution to many areas of Smithycroft's activities, curricular and non curricular. The Council is very small just now and would love to see more parents coming along to its meetings and giving us their views and ideas to help take Smithycroft forward. If anyone would like more information on getting involved please contact the school for a chat. We are also holding a social event after the September meeting with food and refreshment so it would be a great opportunity to find out about the Council from its members.

Finally, I have attached a return slip with the Newsletter which enters parents and pupils for a special prize draw funded by the Parents' Council. The winner of the draw will be rewarded with Asda vouchers for the parent and an i-Tunes voucher for the lucky pupil who returns the slip. Good luck!

Important Dates

Accompanying this first newsletter is a list of key dates in the Smithycroft calendar. Please keep this list to help plan your family's involvement with the school and your own calendar of events.

A reminder that if you wish to contact the school for any reason our number is 582 0220.