

Name of pupil _____

Class _____

Smithycroft Secondary Parents' Newsletter Issue 3

www.smithycroft-sec.glasgow.sch.uk

After many months of work, Smithycroft's new website is finally ready for its launch. The website will be a source of support for parents and pupils and will keep you up to date with life at Smithycroft. We will increasingly be using our website to support pupils in their school work, particularly as a preparation for their exams. There will a parents' zone too which will keep you up to date with the activities of the Parents' Council as well as support guides to help you in the lead up to the SQA exams. We would also like to use lots of photographs of our pupils at work and at play but we are still waiting on the return of many consent forms. Another consent form will be issued soon and I would be grateful if you could return this if you have not already done so. We look forward to you visiting us on our website soon!

Wear Yellow for Marie Curie Cancer Care

Non Uniform Day Friday 2nd March—Pupils are asked to bring a donation of £1 with the proceeds going to Marie Curie Cancer Care

Show Racism the Red Card Finalists

The Smithycroft entry for this prestigious national competition has been shortlisted as a finalist. Our entry is a CD of two excellent songs written and performed by pupils and the artwork is similarly designed and drawn by a pupil. The songs were premiered at our Christmas concert on 21st December and impressed everyone there on the night. The pupils involved in the project are Jo Corrigan, Dani Boyd, Elise Prentice, Josh Thomson, Jonathan Whyteside and Christopher Anderson. They were supported by Mr Gallagher in the Music department and Mr Hodgman, Deputy Headteacher. The Awards Ceremony will take place at Hampden Park on March 22nd so we will all have to keep our fingers crossed till then!

Key dates

S4/5/6 Parents' Evening

Thursday 8th March 4.30pm

Nano Technology Debate (more details to follow)

Wednesday 14th March

Spring break

School closes 2.30 Friday 30th March

School reopens Monday 16th April

Throughout the holidays there will be exam revision classes.

S3 exams begin 18th April

SQA Exams begin 25th April

Curriculum for Excellence Update.....

On the back page of this edition of our newsletter is a letter regarding Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). There has been a lot of stories in the news regarding CfE and one council's decision to delay the sitting of new exams by one year. The letter on the back page of the newsletter explains Glasgow's position on taking forward CfE. At Smithycroft we recently held a parents' consultation evening to explain how we are taking forward the new curriculum. We also recently issued a parents consultation leaflet specifically for S1 and S2 parents seeking your opinions on the changes we are proposing. Please return this as soon as possible so that we can hear your views. We are about to have some pupil consultation activities and further parents consultation activities views so please take part.

National Newspaper Story

Smithycroft is very proud of our Young Parents' Support Base (YPSB) which ensures young mothers and mums to be from across the city are supported during and after their pregnancy to stay in education. The YPSB works to support young girls in school and has facilities at Smithycroft to support 9 girls and their children. This makes a tremendous difference to their futures and that of their children too. The YPSB was featured in an article in the Times Educational Supplement for Scotland due to the positive impact it is having on the young people we support.

BBC News Report!

Ms Callahan's S2 class have been working really hard to compile news reports for the forthcoming BBC School Report day. On the 15th March schools up and down the UK get an opportunity to function like a tv newsroom compiling lots of different reports and using sourced stories. The S2 pupils have been supported by a BBC mentor who also happens to be one of our former pupils, Preeti Prasad! So stay tuned to the BBC on the 15th and let's see if any of our reports make it to the six o'clock news!

RAP STAR in the making?

S4 classes were recently visited by GEAAP a Glasgow organization that discusses alcohol issues in schools. Classes were set the task of writing a rap about alcohol education and the work of Harry Johnston was so good that GEAAP asked permission for it to be put on their Facebook page! It is also on display in our street area. Tinie Tempah watch out—Harry J is on your heels!

Cutting Edge Science

Douglas Blane from Real Science, and a writer for the Times Educational Supplement, has been working with 1C in their Science class for two weeks from 20th February. He is encouraging the class to investigate cutting edge scientific research. The pupils will be looking at recently published articles by research scientists who are based at the University of Glasgow. The thinking behind the project is that the Science pupils study in school is

based on information that has been proven due to years of research. Many scientists feel that pupils would find cutting edge research too difficult to understand. Those at Real Science disagree and 1c are going to investigate the idea. On Friday 2nd March the scientists, whose work 1C have been studying, will come in to Smithycroft and discuss their work and life as a scientist with our pupils.

Merit Scheme Rewards

In the first week of term, two bus loads of pupils went on a reward trip to the cinema. The trip was part of the Merit Award scheme and rewarded those pupils with the top 25% of merit totals.

Commonwealth Games Winner!

The Games haven't even started yet and a Smithycroft pupil is already a winner! Kerryann Ryan of S2 has won a Glasgow wide competition to design a picture for one of the five Commonwealth Hub parks. This is a fabulous achievement and Kerryann will shortly be invited to an unveiling ceremony to collect her prize. Thanks also to Mrs Stanley in the art department for organizing the competition.

Paul Martin MSP Visit

Following a recent visit in January to the Scottish parliament by senior pupils, Paul Martin MSP, visited the school on Monday 6th February for his now annual 'question and answer session' with the Higher Modern Studies class. As ever, our young people fired a number of challenging questions at him on topics such as the Independence referendum, minimum pricing for alcohol, voting reform and reducing the budget deficit.

Breakfast Club

A reminder to parents that our breakfast club is open every morning selling hot rolls with sausage/bacon for 70p and a range of cereals for 40p and toast for 20p. There's much more—so if breakfast is a rush in the morning, encourage your child to come along and get their energy level increased for the day ahead!

Mobile Phones, Social Networking etc

This is the first newsletter since the Christmas break and many pupils returned to school with new mobile phones. I wanted to take this opportunity to remind parents that at Smithycroft pupils can only use their mobile phones during morning interval and lunchtime. We make it very clear that any pupil not following this policy will have their phone confiscated and returned at the end of the school day on the first occasion. Thereafter, parents will be asked to collect phones. This policy works well and we will continue to implement it with your support.

An increasingly testing area for us is cyber bullying where pupils go on social networking sites such as Facebook and Blackberry Messenger and make inappropriate comments about fellow pupils. Parents should be aware that young people can find themselves in trouble with the police as a result of this and that whilst the school would wish to be aware of any issues that may come into school, the school cannot directly deal with this type of bullying outwith school hours. Through our Personal and Social Education classes we are making all our young people aware of their responsibilities within social network sites and bbm.

Calling all businesses, companies and workers

At Smithycroft we prioritise ensuring that our pupils develop the key skills needed to be successful in the world of work. Our PT World of Work, Mrs McBride, works with employers and colleges to provide a range of opportunities to our young people, but we are always looking for more! So if you could help the school develop its links with the world of work we would love to hear from you. You could visit and talk about your job (our pupils love this) or perhaps your workplace could offer a placement, help out with mock interviews, allow a group of young people to visit, help mentor some of our older young people preparing to leave, assist with our younger pupils in developing an enterprise programme....anything would be appreciated no matter how big or small. Please contact Mrs McBride or myself, Headteacher, for a chat.

Malawi Bound

S4 Pupil Liam Buchanan is trying to raise funds to go to Malawi. So far he has held a tuck shop over intervals and a raffle. We will keep you posted with Liam's progress and how parents and pupils can get involved.

Sports News

Our Senior football team have had some great results since Christmas, beating local rivals St Andrews 1–0 in the third round of the Cameronian Cup . The news gets even better as we are now in the semi final of the cup. Well done to coach Mr Hood and the boys and good luck in the next round!

The senior boys success is an inspiration to our S1/2 team who, although not quite winning yet, are getting better with every performance, according to their coach Mr Murphy. Keep working hard boys!

This Sunday, 4th March, we are running our second Premier trip and this time it's off to Newcastle v Sunderland. Our first trip to Bolton v Liverpool on 21st January was absolutely wonderful and I have the hat to prove it! As ever, our pupils were a credit to the school and we had a great day out with lots of goals into the bargain!

Tweeting Film Success

Yes the times they are a changing and here's a really good example: Megan Mitchell in S6 recently won a competition for young film makers run by the British Film Institute. Megan had to send a tweetpitch for a documentary idea and her proposal won over the judging panel at the Arches Theatre. Megan's prize is a trip to Istanbul where the British Film Institute has a hub. As a result of Megan's involvement in Glasgow's Youth Film Festival, she has also been invited to go to Norway and help establish a youth film festival there. Well done to Megan. This is a fantastic achievement!

Attendance Matters

On 8th March we held our first Smithycroft disco since moving into our new building many years ago. It was a great night a and hopefully the first of many to come. Attendance at the event was based on pupils having over 90% attendance. This has really helped to drive up the school's attendance and keep our young people learning in and out of the classroom. Our next subsidised reward is a trip to M and Ds theme park in the last week of term. Again, the target is for pupils to achieve 90% attendance or more. Thanks again for your support and please keep in touch with the school if there is any reason why your child may be absent from Smithycroft.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Progress in Curriculum for Excellence in Glasgow

You may have been concerned by recent comment in the press and media regarding Curriculum for Excellence.

I can reassure you about the progress being made in Glasgow secondary schools and, in particular, in Smithycroft. We recently held a S1 and S2 Parents' Consultation Event to share our progress and way forward with Curriculum for Excellence.

Young people in Second Year in Glasgow secondaries are being appropriately challenged within the Broad General Education. The authority is engaged in ongoing discussions with Head Teachers to plan developments in the curriculum and to ensure that the progression is smooth from the Broad General Education into the Senior Phase which starts in S4.

We aim to ensure that no child is disadvantaged and that all young people will have the opportunity to achieve the best qualifications that they can when they enter the qualifications phase.

Considerable work has already been undertaken to develop appropriate pathways for all young people in the Senior Phase and to ensure that all staff are developing an understanding of the new principles of assessment and the standards within the new curriculum.

Development work in Glasgow schools has focussed firmly on improving the quality of learning and teaching and thereby raising attainment for all young people. Increasingly our young people are experiencing exciting learning opportunities which will prepare them well for the next stage.

For example, all S1 pupils are involved in a bridge building activity this week which although led by the technical department develops a large number of key skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and creativity. The S1 Scary Walk project develops key thinking skills across English, History, Music and Art.

Please be assured that you will be kept fully informed as we continue to prepare our Second Year pupils for decisions about future study, including the number and level of qualifications for study in the Senior Phase.

I hope this is helpful to you.

Jean Miller Head Teacher

(letter produced in association with Glasgow's Education Department)

If you require any further information about Curriculum for Excellence our new Junior Phase document is on the school's website. We will also be adding links which will take you to Education Scotland's website. Alternatively phone the school for a chat or to arrange a meeting.