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Reminder

We are still unable to welcome visitors including parents/carers to the building. Please do not visit in person for the time being. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.



New School Number

A reminder that the new school number (including for absences) is

01467 532290



INVERURIE ACADEMY

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Looking forward to a return for all students!

As I wrote the December Newsletter, I didn't think that by this March Newsletter, we would have been through so many phases of lockdown and phased return to school. As hard as this has been for us as a school team, I fully understand that this has been even harder for students and their families as they have adjusted to such a lot of change.

It looks very much as though we are reaching the end of this phased return and we look forward to a full return of students from Monday 19th April. We have taken the opportunity to provide induction on this return to students during their in-person experience over this last few weeks and we will continue to communicate with you as parents and carers with information and updates.



1

Mark Jones
Head Teacher

COVID-19 Latest

Term 3 brought a lockdown that was both unexpected and unwelcome to all parts of the school community, and yet reflected the really challenging situation that the nation found itself in.

From 22nd February, we began a process of phased return to in-person learning, with a step change made from 15th March where we were able to meet the Scottish Government expectation that every student would have an experience of in-person learning each week (with Senior Phase being prioritised).

Over the last week, we have been working with students who are in school to provide them with induction information about our expectations from 19th April. This induction information can be reviewed by parents & carers on the COVID-19 page of our website [here](#).

A key part of the process of maintaining a safe and healthy school community is participation in the LFD testing programme that is offered to all students and staff members at Inverurie Academy. This programme is voluntary but is strongly encouraged by the Scottish Government and we would echo this encouragement.

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Reminder of additional INSET Days

Following Scottish Government advice, a further two INSET days will be in place for Aberdeenshire Secondary Schools on **3rd and 4th June 2021**.

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SQA / Assessment Update

In the absence of the formal 2020-21 examination diet, parents/carers and candidates should already have received a useful communication from school and SQA regarding arrangements for this year's Alternative Certification Model – [here](#). In all courses/subjects in all Aberdeenshire schools, we are working towards gathering final assessment evidence by 28th May in advance of additional INSET days (3rd/4th June) and local holiday (7th June) prior to commencing our new Session 2021-22 timetable on 8th June. Additionally, our in-school, local and national SQA verification, quality assurance and data input processes will continue up to 25th June.

S4-6 students have received an assessment period timetable and advice around assessment to prepare them for the final term of working towards their National Qualifications. Students have also been shown a video summary of how to best prepare for this period. Please spend some time over the Easter break looking over the information with your young person.

We have all lived through what has been an absolutely unimaginable year and in partnership with parents/carers, the staff at Inverurie Academy will continue to do our best to support all students to achieve their full potential. The period of face-to-face learning prior to Easter has already supported dialogue between staff and students, helping them to re-engage with the school environment and physical resources to further support their progress. In addition to resources shared directly by classroom teachers, we have provided a variety of home learning support via our website <https://sites.google.com/as.glow.scot/inverurie-academy-learning/>. Young people can also access support resources in English, Maths, B&IT, Languages & Sciences from SCHOLAR (<http://scholar.hw.ac.uk>), directly from their Glow log-in, including useful videos on how to use this resource to support revision.

We would continue to encourage young people to have open and honest conversations with their teachers regarding their current working grade and what they can do to improve upon this. Whether your young person intends to stay on at school or move into further education or employment, these qualifications are their passport to a wide range of options in the future and we encourage them to do their very best in the remaining nine weeks.



Virtual Star, Home Hero and Senior Merits

At Inverurie Academy, we place a great importance in the small 'well done' moments for students. These can be in class (when we have physical classes!), and through private comments on Google Classroom. However, this term we have also launched Virtual Star, Home Hero and Senior Merit Awards as a way to recognise high quality and consistent effort of students in their learning. Below you will see a summary of the numbers of nominations and students who have been recognised across this term (up to 27th March 2021).

Merits in Numbers

338
S1 nominations

S1 students
155

Senior Merits
177

201
S2 nominations

199
S2 students

Senior Students
138

176
S3 nominations

104
S3 students

Home Hero

Nominations
123



Digital Literacy at Inverurie Academy

The Collins Word of the Year for 2020 was “lockdown” – a word that has come to symbolise so much of our collective experiences over the past year. While we must rightly acknowledge that lockdowns are tough emotionally, financially, and socially, they have offered some opportunities for education. Indeed, digital learning is a core theme of Scottish education policy – and underpins several of the indicators within ‘How Good Is Our School?’ – Education Scotland documentation which schools engage with, and evaluate themselves against, to drive forward improvement. In evaluating our virtual learning against the examples of high-quality practice in ‘How Good Is Our School?’, it’s clear that parents/carers, students, and staff have all grown their confidence and honed their expertise in digital learning technologies, such as Google Classroom, over the past year.

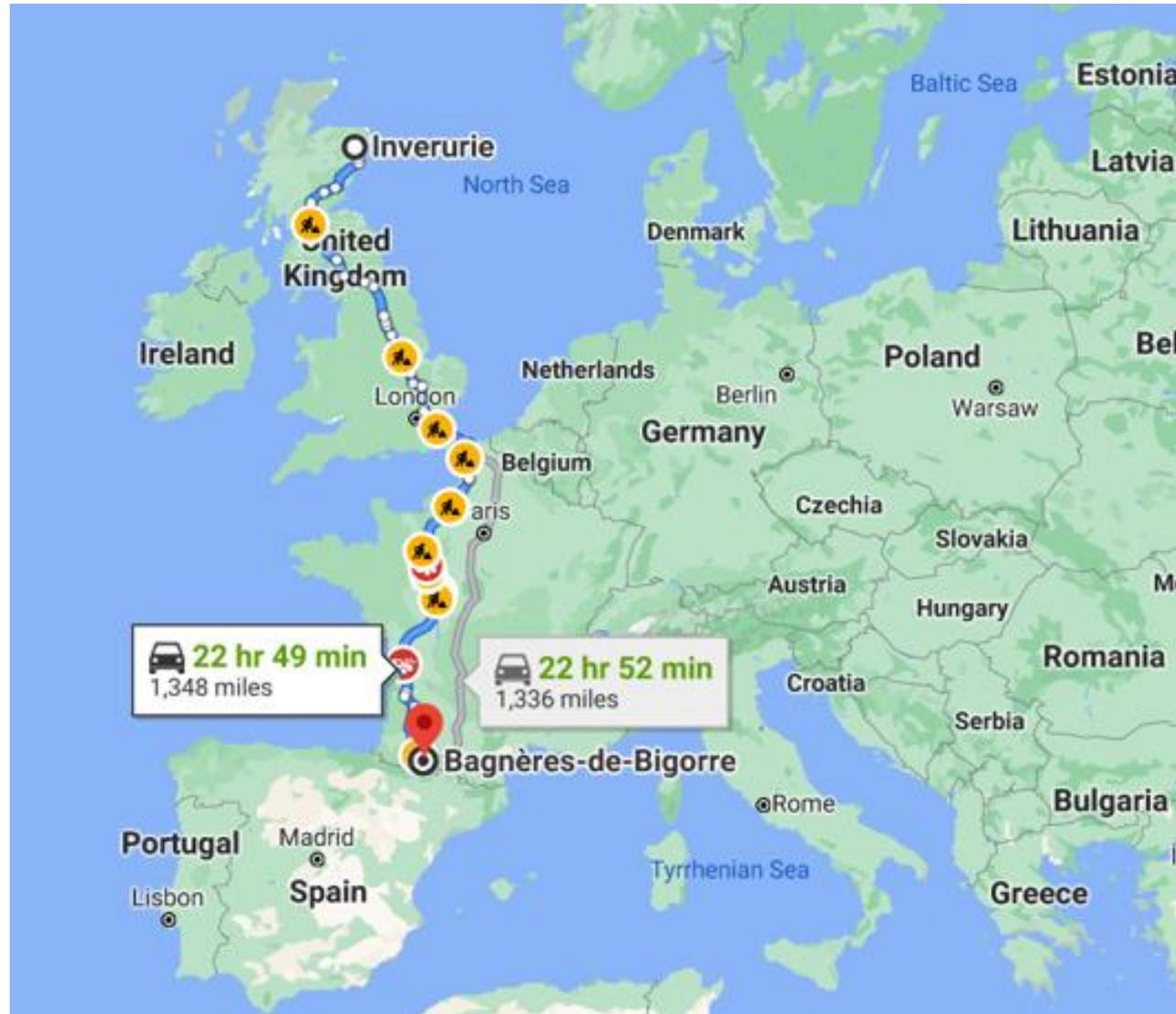
There are a myriad of digital resources and tools teachers can use to enrich and support their learning and teaching, while parents/carers and young people have an infinite amount of knowledge at the click of a few buttons, as well as a countless selection of options to continue learning virtually. To support staff and build their confidence with some of these online tools, Mr Campbell was appointed to the role of Principal Teacher (PT) for Digital Learning Technologies in December 2020. Since then, staff have embraced opportunities to attend sessions aimed at answering their questions on tools such as **Google Calendar, Google Classroom, Google Jamboard, Google Meet, Mote, Read&Write, and Whiteboard.FI.**

The benefit of these resources is that they allow for further engagement and involvement of young people in their learning. Through Google Calendar, for instance, staff have been able to schedule 1-to-1 appointments to have learner conversations with students. Through Google Meet, staff have been able to run virtual lessons and provide a continuity of learning. Meanwhile, through Mote and Read&Write, staff have been able to deliver verbal feedback to students – saving them significant amounts of time typing out feedback and sparing young people from reading extensive comments. Read&Write software also has the further benefit of supporting young people who might require additional support, such as by reading the screen aloud.

Outside of the staff team, Mr Campbell organised the first ever parent/carer focus group on digital learning at Inverurie Academy. Having presented to the Parent Forum shortly after being appointed to his role, volunteers were sought for the focus group with the objective of finding more about the experience of virtual learning at Inverurie Academy from an individual perspective. Those who volunteered to participate attended the first focus group meeting via Skype on 18th February. The group’s discussions looked at parent/carer and student experiences of Google Classroom and Google Guardian, with the ambition to host one such meeting each term.



Bagnerre or Bust!



- You may know that Inverurie is twinned with *Bagnerre-de-Bigorre* in France. As such, Inverurie Academy has been involved with a number of twinning projects over the last few years (sadly less recently with the COVID-19 pandemic!)
- Our Health & Wellbeing Team are keen to encourage healthy approaches for all members of the school community.
- Inverurie Academy recently came 1st in a staff & students challenge to run/walk/cycle as far as possible against other Aberdeenshire Schools. During a single week in February, we collectively travelled 3,589 miles on foot or by bike – a great effort!
- On the back of this victory, we thought it would be a good healthy competition to have a staff versus students challenge to see who can (virtually) get down to Bagnerre and back first, covering nearly 2,700 miles.
- This will take place during the two weeks of the Easter Holidays. 5 participating students will be drawn at random to win a £10 Amazon Voucher.
- Can the students successfully take on the top staff performers like Mr Wynne, Mrs Sinclair, Mr Warnock, Mr Platt and Mrs Toet? We will soon find out! Student instructions have been shared via Google Classroom.



A Virtual Award Ceremony

One of the many things that have been impacted with COVID-19 has been the inability to hold events where we can welcome parents/carers to school. Despite this, Inverurie Academy will both continue to recognise positive attainment and achievement and also seek to involve parents/carers in this recognition.

This year, we will hold *virtual* Award Ceremonies for both S1-S3 and S4-6 students with two thirty-minute videos. These will be released on **10th June**, the date we would have planned to hold our Award Ceremony.

These award ceremonies will showcase both academic and achievement success, some music, art & classwork that students have been involved in during this past year, and also celebrate some of the usual Trophies that are awarded at this time including the Millennium Cup for the winning House.

Although it is impossible to recognise the special effort from all deserving students at such an event, this does form a part of the way we say 'well done' to young people for their efforts.

Award Winning Community Campus



On 25th March, we heard that our Inverurie Community Campus had been identified as the winner of the *Development of the Year (Public Buildings)*. After a long wait for this building, we are delighted to be here and look forward to the community element becoming more and more evident when COVID-19 is finally behind us.



A new House for Inverurie Academy

As the school roll continues to grow over the next few years, we have reached the point where we need to add to our five houses of Barra, Crichtie, Davah, Harlaw and Selbie.

Mr Anderson has taken the lead in challenging our Primary 7 students from local schools to research some new options for our sixth house and we were delighted to have received over eighty five entries.

Having whittled these down to six entries, we have created voting opportunities for students, parents/carers and staff and the winning entry will then be taken by local Graphic Designers CP&Co to create the name crest, animal and colour-scheme for our new house.

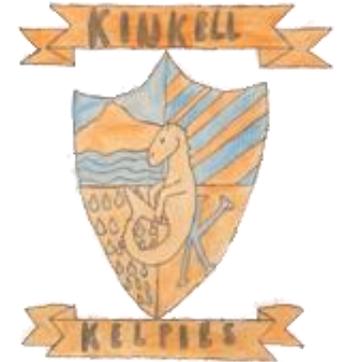
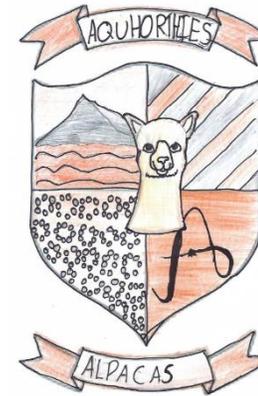
Creativity



A massive well done to all those who used their creativity skills, and particularly to the designers of the six shortlisted entries: **Declan** and **Niamh** from Kinellar Primary; **Tara** from Keithhall Primary; **Lauren** and **Dermot** from Hatton of Fintray Primary, and **Maisie** from Kellands Primary. The entries can be seen in the right-hand box on this page. Watch out for publicity about the winning entry shortly after term resumes in April.



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Immunisations

Immunisations for students commence again during next term. Please find listed below an Immunisation Timetable for information.

DATE	Immunisation Timetable
Mon 26 th April	HPV S2 GIRLS
Tues 27 th April	HPV S2 BOYS
Mon 10 th May	Catch ups & MMR'S
Mon 17 th May	DTP's /MENACWY
Tues 18 th May	DTP's /MENACWY
Wed 19 th May	DTP's /MENACWY
Mon 14 th June	HPV S1 GIRLS
Tues 15 th June	HPV S1 BOYS

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Parent Council donate *Treehouse* resources

The Parent Carer have made a donation to allow us to access *Treehouse*, a suite of materials to support wellbeing for our school community. These have already been used by our Guidance Team during the phased return and will continue to be used during the remainder of the session.



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Term dates for your diary

19.04.21	Term Begins
03.05.21	School Holiday
10.05.21	Final SQA Assessment Window Opens
25.05.21	S1 Tracking Report to Parents/Carers
26.05.21	Parent Council Meeting (18.30 – 20.30)
28.05.21	Final SQA Assessment Window Closes
03.06.21	Additional INSET Day 1
04.06.21	Additional INSET Day 2
07.06.21	School Holiday
08.06.21	<i>Provisional</i> Change of Timetable
10.06.21	<i>Provisional</i> Virtual Award Ceremonies
17.06.21	<i>Provisional</i> Virtual P7 Parent Information Evening
25.06.21	Last Day of Term
17.08.21	<i>First Day of Term for Students 2021-22</i>



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