



# Headteacher Newsletter December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

This newsletter provides an overview of what was discussed at the most recent Parent Council meeting. This term has been extremely busy for staff and young people in Inveralmond Community High School, and it would not be possible to capture everything. We invite parents and carers to contact the school and let us know of any achievements or successes which young people have outside of school so that we can celebrate these as well as the in-school successes of young people. This can be done via the contact us section of the school website.

Over the last month or so, young people have been involved in lots of things, not only in their school but in the wider community. This newsletter provides an update on the various activities which pupils have been involved in, and of which we can be proud as a community.

I would like to thank parents and carers for their support throughout 2025. As a school we believe that the greatest impact we can have on our young people is when we work in partnership with families. I wish each young person and family a lovely Christmas and a good start to 2026. We look forward to welcoming pupils back on Monday 5th January.

Yours Faithfully

Hamish Shankland

Headteacher

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# 1. Welcomes & Announcements

On the 5th of January we will be delighted to welcome our new Clerical Assistant, Heather Paterson. Heather joins our administrative team.

On the 5th of January we will be delighted to welcome our new Clerical Assistant, Lindsay Evans. Lindsay joins our administrative team.

Following a change of staff, we were delighted that Miss Nicola Allardice has joined the team in Business and Admin.

Following interviews, we look forward to welcoming Mr Alistair Henderson as our Principal Teacher of Science and Home Economics. Mr Henderson will join us at some point close to the start of 2026.

We are currently recruiting in the English department and hope to have new staff joining us as a result of this process.

In the last week of term we were pleased to appoint Mr Callum McGhie as part of our permanent staff in music.

## 2. Scottish Parliament Trip

37 of our S4 Modern Studies pupils were given the opportunity to visit the Scottish Parliament. Pupils travelled by train and enjoyed the picturesque views of Edinburgh while walking between Edinburgh Waverley and the Scottish Parliament building. Pupils took part in: an informative workshop; a tour of the parliament; and a Q&A with Regional MSP Sue Webber where they asked how she and other MSPs represent them and their community and how to get involved in politics. Our pupils asked very insightful questions and came away with lots of good information.

In Inveralmond our curricular excursions are designed to inspired young people in their learning, to enrich their classroom learning, and to link their learning to the wider world.

Our Scottish Parliament excursion fulfilled this vision, enabling young people not only to learn, but to understand their place in society.

This trip will support their learning as we enter the Democracy in Scotland unit in their course. The excursion was organised by Miss Moran and Mr Waddell in our Social Subjects Faculty. Staff were particularly impressed with the groups conduct and they were a credit to their school.

As a Headteacher, I am delighted that in Inveralmond Community High School we are able to offer excursions like the Scottish Parliament visit to young people at key points in their learning experience. Most people can identify a moment in their learning experience which engaged or inspired them or served to guide them in a particular direction. Our Modern Studies students have returned from the parliament with are newed interest and enthusiasm for the subject which will support their learning as they progress through the course.





11:43:09  
00:00:00



# 3. Parental Engagement – a new approach

Many parents and carers will be familiar with our online booking software which is used to book Parents' Evening appointments. This system provides data about appointment booking, uptake and times.

As a school we will now contact parents who have not booked Parents' Evening appointments or responded to offer support.

We will also match tracking logins with parents evening engagement to identify young people for whom there has been no parent/carers engagement or support. This will allow us to engage with families.

We have a new section on our website which is a One Stop Shop for parents/carers supporting learning (bottom right image).

We have a new form to collect feedback on our new model of in-person evenings. When parent's/carers attend we will as that this is completed so we can use this to plan for the future (bottom left images).

## Parent's Evening Feedback 2025/2026

Please take a few minutes to let us know about your experience this evening

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

\* Required

1. Please tell us who you are \*

☐ Parent/Carer

☐ Pupil

2. Did you attend the parents evening? \*

☐ Yes

☐ No

5. Please tell us about your booking experience \*

☐ I was able to book all the appointments I wanted in advance

☐ I was able to book some of the appointments I wanted in advance

☐ I was not able to book any appointments in advance

6. Please tell us about your experience on the night \*

☐ I was able to keep all the appointments I made

☐ I was able to keep some of the appointments I made

☐ I wasn't able to keep any of the appointments I made

7. Please tell us about your experience on the night (continued) \*

☐ I stuck to all of my appointment times

☐ I stuck to some of my appointment times, and managed to see some teachers at other times

☐ I wasn't able to keep my appointment times, but saw most of the teachers I needed

☐ I wasn't able to keep my appointment times and wasn't able to see the teachers I needed

8. Is there anything else we can do to improve the parent's evening experience? (optional)

Enter your answer

Inveralmond Community High School

About us ▾

Staff ▾

Parents/Carers ▾

Reporting & Parents Evenings ▾

Students

## Reporting & Parents Evenings

### Parents' Evening Information

Parents' Evening Information: Working Together for Your Child's Success

### Parents & Carers: Online Tracking System

Parents and Carers: Logging into Didbook Progress Online Tracking System

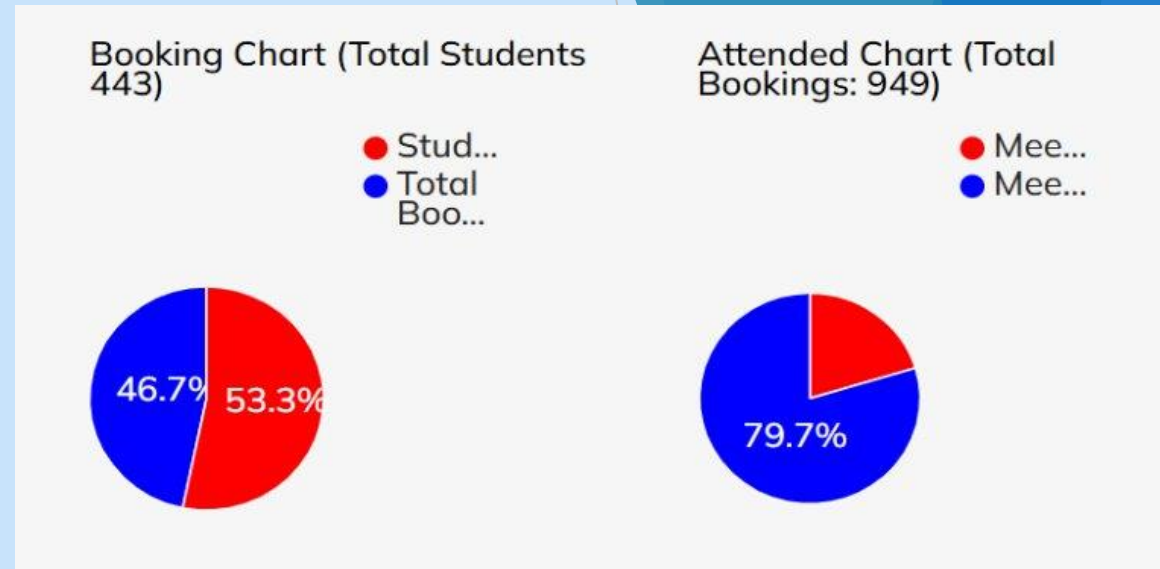
### Students: Online Tracking System

Students Logging into Didbook Progress Online Tracking System

# Senior Phase Parents' Evening Booking Data

Our S4-6 Parents' Evening data shows that 46.7% of parents/carers booked appointments.

Our data also shows demand across the whole range of the evening.

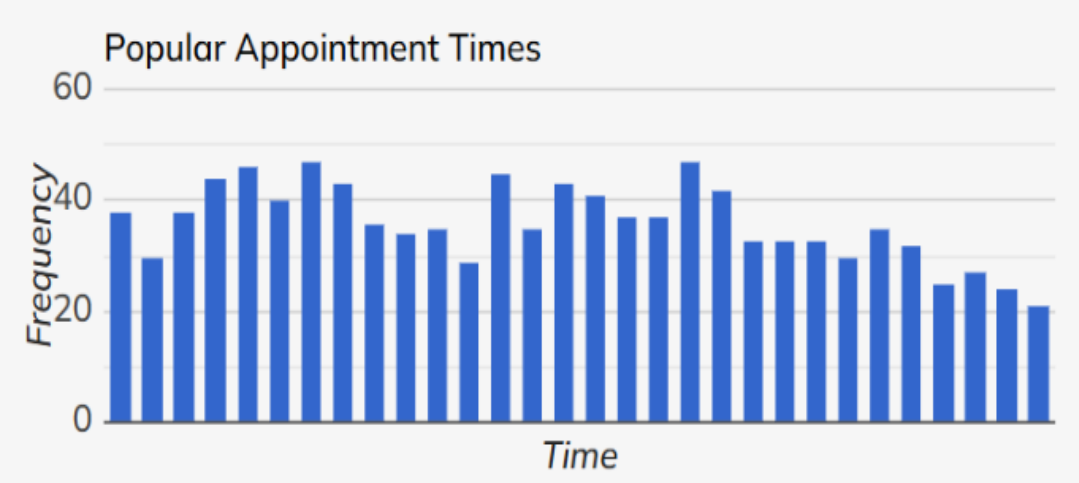
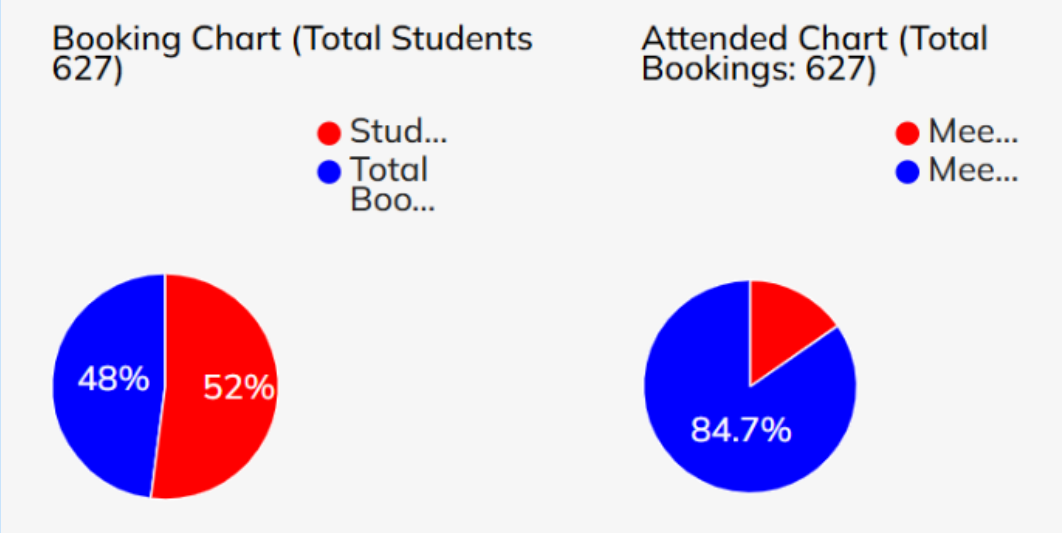




# Parents' Evening Booking Data

Our S3 Parents' Evening data shows that 48% of parents/carers booked appointments.

Our data also shows demand across the whole range of the evening.



# In-Person Parents' Evening Feedback Form:

## Feedback to date

### Common Suggestions:

- Longer notice time to make appointments
- Clearer Signage
- A bell to mark the 5 minutes
- Separate yeargroups

21. What is the earliest time you would like parents' evenings to start?

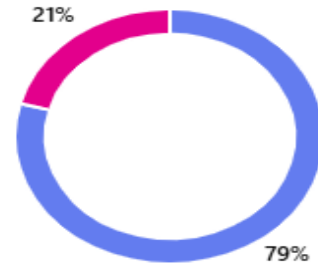


22. What is the latest time you would like parents' evenings to finish?



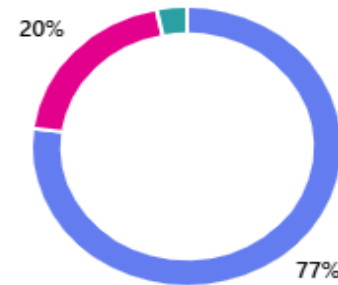
7. Please tell us about your booking experience

I was able to book all the appointments I wanted in advance	76
I was able to book some of the appointments I wanted in advance	20
I was not able to book any appointments in advance	0



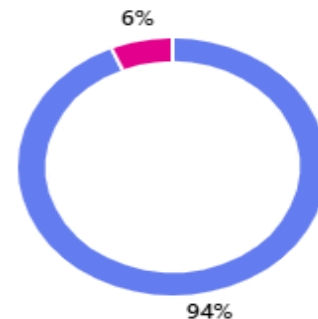
8. Please tell us about your experience on the night

I was able to keep all the appointments I made	74
I was able to keep some of the appointments I made	19
I wasn't able to keep any of the appointments I made	3



12. Thinking about the feedback you received about your child: Did you feel the feedback you received was useful?

Yes - I got a good sense of how my child was doing	87
No - I still had questions about how my child was doing	6



# In-person Parents' Evenings

We are committed to supporting young people to develop, not just in terms of their learning; but also as they grow into young adults with their own values, personalities and unique characteristics.

In ICHS we have 72 members of teaching staff. Across the school 64 positions are held with SQA. These include: exam markers; assignment markers; verifiers; visiting assessors; team leaders; question writers; exam paper verifiers.

School attendance is singularly the biggest defining factor in achieving success. However, we also believe that parents and carers have a determining role to play in the success of their young people.

We would encourage all parents/carers to fully engage with tracking reports and Parents' Evenings so that we can work together to support our young people.



# 4. Children in Need

This year's Children in Need dress down/up day took place on Friday 14th November.

All pupils were able to dress down and encouraged to give a donation.

We hosted a 'soak the teacher' event at break, which as always was a great success.

Our S6 did an amazing job of dressing up. Many of our S6 had collaborated to create themed dress-up groups. They all looked amazing.

Our Senior Leadership Team went back to the 80s with a 'Top Gun' theme.

Our Children in need fundraising totalled: £523.27.

Thankyou to everyone who contributed.



## 5. Careers Fayre and Pathways Evening

Our annual Careers Fayre took place on Wednesday 12th November. This was a fantastic opportunity for pupils and parents/carers to explore a wide range of career paths, further and higher education options, apprenticeships, and more.

The event had representatives from:

- Universities including Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow Caledonian, Queen Margaret, Stirling, Heriot-Watt, and more
- Apprenticeship and career services such as Skills Development Scotland, My World of Work, and ICHS Pupil Ambassadors and businesses taking on apprentices.
- Industry professionals from sectors like medicine, law, engineering, construction, finance, police, NHS, aerospace, and technology
- Local and national employers including Scottish Gas, Deloitte, Arnold Clark, Leonardo, and Woodland Trust
- Creative and community organisations such as Firefly Arts and Polbeth Community Hub
- School departments showcasing subject links to careers

On the same evening. Parents/carers and young people were able to attend a 30 minute talk on Pathways. This was the information event for S2-5 about how choices about subjects are made as young people transition through the school.

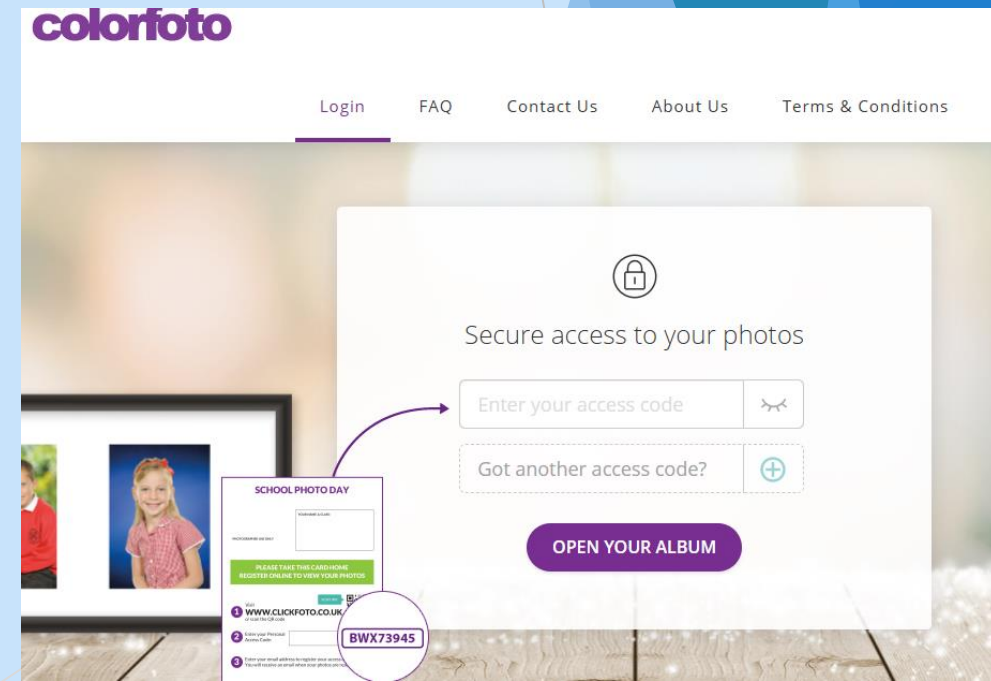
# 6. School Photographs

On Tuesday, 11 November 2025 the photography company (Colorfoto) was in school to take photographs for S1 and S6.

Having a recent photo of every young person on our system is essential for safeguarding purposes.

There was also an option to buy photographs. Colorfoto mad their ordering service available to parents/carers so they can purchase any photographs they wish.

We hope this will provide families with a keepsake of their young person from their time at school which they can look back on.





# 7. Parent Council Seminars

Date	Seminar Topic	Staff
Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	Bullying Policy	Mr H Shankland, Mrs I McGinnis & Members of the Parent Council
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Transitions For Every Year	Mr K Varty & Members of the Parent Council
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	All About Wellbeing including Assessed Arrangements	Mrs I McGinnis, Miss Hamilton & Members of the Parent Council
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Positive Relationships	Mr H Shankland & Members of the Parent Council

Full information on our Parent Council Seminars can be found [ICHS Parent Council Seminars 25-26.pdf](#)

In order to plan, we require to know rough numbers in advance. Please indicate your attendance by completing this form. If you'd like to attend more than one, please complete the form for each seminar you'd like to attend.

[Parent Council Seminars 25-26 – Fill in form](#)



## Transitions for Every Year Parent Council Seminar



Keith Varty  
Depute Head



Wilma Hamilton  
Principal Teacher

We strongly encourage you to join us and make the most of these sessions to ensure your child is ready for the exciting opportunities ahead.

During the evening, we will explore a range of workshops focused on:

- Moving from primary to secondary school
- Navigating learner pathways and subject choices
- Preparing for positive destinations beyond school

We are delighted to invite you and your young person to our supporting successful transitions evening on February 24th from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm at Inveralmond Community High School.

This event is designed to help every parent and carer feel confident and prepared to support their child as they move through key stages of their learning journey.

**Register to attend this event by using the QR code.**



# 8. School Communication

Last month an update was provided on school communications:

- ▶ How the school communicates with parents/carers
- ▶ Issues with the reliability of social media
- ▶ How to get in contact with the school
- ▶ How we triage calls and emails.

All of this information can be found on our website: [ICHS - Inveralmond Community High School](#)

Since then, we have implemented the following:

- ▶ An automated response from the school mailbox indicating timeframes for non-urgent queries. This response also requests the essential information required, in case this hasn't been included. This should help admin staff to direct queries efficiently.
- ▶ We are developing a standardised communications approach for our calendared events such as parents evenings. Events which are planned at the start of the year will have a notification at: 4 weeks, 3 weeks, 2 weeks, 1 week. This is in addition to the information on the whole-school calendar. Some events will also have a 'last minute' reminder if it's possible for parents/carers to turn up on the night.

# 9. How to Help Your Child Pass

Wednesday 14th January: 6-8pm

Workshops will be provided on:

- ▶ Study skills
- ▶ Digital tools
- ▶ Creating smart targets
- ▶ Tracking and monitoring
- ▶ Health and Wellbeing
- ▶ Using 'Succeed' for study planning
- ▶ Subject specific resources



## How to Help Your Child Pass Information Evening



Mr Hamish Shankland  
Headteacher

We are excited to invite you and your young person to our How to Help Your Child Pass Evening on January 14th, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Inveralmond Community High School.

This event is designed to support all our students to reach their potential, and we strongly encourage you to make the most of these sessions to ensure your child is fully prepared for the challenges ahead.

During the evening, we will cover a range of topics to help your child succeed.

Session include:

- Growth mindsets and time management
- Progress tracking and support
- Accessing Achieve and E-Sgoil
- Subject-specific top study resources
- Effective study planning techniques
- Setting SMART targets for success
- Wellbeing support to ensure a balanced approach to studying

**Please sign up here to join us  
on the 14th of January.**





# 10. ASN Parent & Carer Support



Parents and carers of young people with ASN are invited to come along for a cuppa and a chat on the last Friday of each month from 11am-12 noon.

The purpose of this group is to create a network of support with parents/carers and get to know staff.

# 11. Higher English - Parent/Carer Session

The Higher English parental session will run 6-7pm on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> Dec.

This evening is designed to support parents/carers with 'How to Succeed in Higher English', and how they can support their young people.

Resources will be made available to parents to take home and support home learning.

Staff will explain the breakdown of the course, how marks are allocated and how best to study for Higher English.



## How to pass Higher English



Ms Emily Thorburn  
PTC Languages

We are delighted to invite you to our 'How to pass Higher English' evening.

This session will provide you with more information about the different components of Higher English, how marks are allocated and advice for supporting your child through this course.

Attendees will also receive packs of study resources.

Thursday 18th December, 6pm to 7pm.

Session include:

- Course overview
- Resource packs and study materials
- Information about how you can support your child's success and attainment
- Study Support tips
- Information about how marks are allocated in each exam component

**Please sign up here to join us on the 18th December**



# 12. Study Resources

Our **Supported Study** Calendar can be found here: [2025-26 Supported Study Sessions.xlsx](#) We encourage all young people to attend as much supported study as possible. This structured environment is a big support as young people work towards SQA qualifications.

E-Sgoil offer an online study support programme with subject experts. All details of this can be found here: [Study Support | e-Sgoil](#) Our experience of this programme is that it is high quality and beneficial to learners.

The school has a subscription to Achieve, which is an online, interactive study tool. Pupils can login here [achieve.hashtag-learning.co.uk/accounts/login/](https://achieve.hashtag-learning.co.uk/accounts/login/) using their glow login details.

Parent/carer support to access tracking can be found here: [Parents & Carers: Online Tracking System - Inveralmond Community High School](#) This site includes all the key dates for your calendar.



# 13. Mobile Phone Mid-year feedback

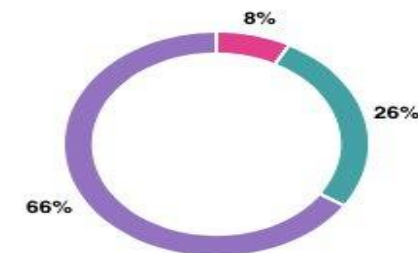
At the mid-point of our new mobile phone approach, staff were asked to feedback on the impact so far. As you can from the original consultation 66% of staff reporting over 30 minutes a week of learning time being lost to mobile phone disruption. This has changed significantly with 76% of staff reporting less than 15 minutes of lost learning time as a result of mobile phones.

## Pre-summer consultation

2. On an average week, how much time is taken from learning and teaching to challenge the use of mobile phones within the classroom?

[More details](#)

None	0
0-15 Minutes	3
15-30 Minutes	10
30+ Minutes	25

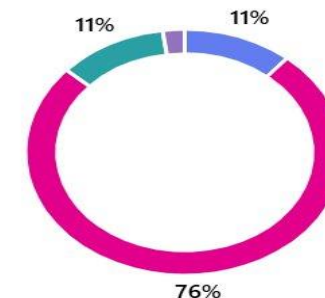


## December mid-year feedback

1. On an average week, how much time is taken from learning and teaching to challenge the use of mobile phones within the classroom?

[More details](#)

None	5
0-15 Minutes	34
15-30 Minutes	5
30+ minutes	1



# 14. Christmas Fun

In the lead up to Christmas there have been lots of fun activities for our pupils. Many of these activities are organised by our pupils, with the support of staff. These opportunities are a great opportunity for our learners to develop their skills such as leadership, creativity, communication and teamwork.

Our S5 Leadership classes have been planning their projects, as well as our National 5 Hospitality classes. The next few pages showcase just a few of these activities.

We have recently set up a house points system in Inveralmond. This allows young people to receive recognition for: behaviour, effort, values, school representation. Our first set of house rewards is taking place in the last week of term. There will be many more competitions and fun events to come as we build our house identities in the school.

We are delighted to share the success of our recent *Breakfast with Santa* event, organised and delivered by our National 5 Hospitality students. Primary 1 pupils and staff from Harrysmuir visited Inveralmond Community High School for some festive activities. The event featured a balanced breakfast, Arts & Crafts with Santa's helpers, musical entertainment and an opportunity for Primary 1 pupils to meet our special guest, Santa!

**Congratulations** to our N5 students for demonstrating outstanding organisational and leadership skills, they embodied our school values of Kindness, Honest, Respect and Aspiration with pride!

Our pupils in Inveralmond are always keen to involve the wider community in the school. As headteacher I am delighted that we have strong partnerships with our cluster Primary schools. I'm very proud of the skills and attributes our pupils demonstrate. This event shows their care and community spirit; these are attributes which I believe are essential in the world today





We are incredibly proud to announce that our school has been awarded the Reading Schools Silver Accreditation, recognising our whole-school commitment to building a strong, inclusive and inspiring reading culture.

The Reading Schools programme celebrates schools that place reading for pleasure at the heart of learning and school life. Achieving Silver accreditation reflects the dedication of our entire school community to ensuring that reading is valued, visible and enjoyed by all.

Over the past year, learners and staff have worked together to create a rich reading environment where everyone feels encouraged and empowered to read. Learners have played a central role in shaping our reading culture by sharing their reading voices, recommending books, designing reading spaces and celebrating reading in a variety of creative ways. Teachers and support staff have embedded reading across the curriculum, modelled positive reading habits and provided opportunities for choice, discussion and enjoyment.

From welcoming reading areas and engaging displays to class reading routines, events and partnerships with families, reading has become a shared experience across our school. This accreditation recognises the enthusiasm, teamwork and passion shown by both learners and staff in making reading a meaningful and enjoyable part of everyday school life.

Achieving Reading Schools Silver is an important milestone for us, and we are excited to continue building on this success as we strive to inspire a lifelong love of reading in every learner.

I am delighted that the work of the school has been recognised through this reward. Reading and literacy are key life-skills which we want all young people to develop. We know that a love of reading for enjoyment has a hugely positive impact on the development of reading and literacy skills. I am very proud of the staff and young people who have taken reading initiatives forward in the school for the benefit of the whole school community.





*At Inveralmond CHS, we were pleased to announce the wonderful success of our first ever Christmas Fayre, meticulously planned by our N5 Hospitality class! Inveralmond welcomed local businesses including: Miss Squigly Designs, Under the Stairs, Crystal Paradise UK, Craftopia Delights, Oriflame and many more.*

*Young people showcased their talents, some playing their very own rendition of our favourite Xmas songs and others putting heart and soul in to deliciously baked cakes and thoughtfully designed crafts. As a school, we felt very privileged to bring pupils, families and staff together for a festive afternoon. We are extremely grateful to the local businesses who supported our fayre, inspiring our young workforce and allowing us to bring that community feel back into school! We are very thankful to everyone who attended, their contribution has helped raise funds for our school but more importantly shown our young people that they are valued members of society.*

As a Headteacher I couldn't be prouder of our young people and staff. They work incredibly hard, and this is one example of our young people engaging positively with their own school community, and the wider community of Livingston and West Lothian. We are delighted to open our doors to the public and welcome them into our school for community events such as the Christmas Fayre. Given the success of the Fayre, we hope to see this event become an annual feature in our school calendar and aim for it to grow year on year.



# 15. Coming Up Next

- 12th December: practice exams ended
- 17th December: SP Tracking reports issued
- 19th December: Parents/ Carers of pupils with ASN- cuppa and a chat. Last Friday of every month in ICHS Loft 11:00-12:00.
- Christmas jumper/dress down day for end of term & House rewards
- 5th January: Term 3 begins
- 8th January: S4 Parents Evening (4-6pm) in person
- 14th January: How to Help Your Child Pass Information Evening
- 19th – 27th January: Senior Phase Assessment Window (not all subjects)
- 20th January: P7 Transition open mic online (5pm-6pm)
- 21st January: S1 Tracking reports issued
- 27th January: Parent Council Seminar: Bullying Policy (signup: [Parent Council Seminars 25-26 – Fill in form](#))

