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(JD/KL)



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Dear Parent/Carer

Changes to Primary Staffing/PSA Support

As there have been a number of changes to primary staffing, I thought that it would be useful to summarise these before the start of the new session. I will also take this opportunity to explain the complex picture of PSA staffing as a few parents have asked me about this recently.

- **Acting Principal Teacher**

I am really pleased to inform you that we have been authorised to maintain the post of Acting-Principal Teacher in the primary for the entirety of Session 2018/19 and that this role will be performed by Mrs Jenkins. Mrs Jenkins has been a real rock in the primary department this session, particularly in the context of staffing difficulties, and this post should be a great support in maintaining strong leadership in the primary.

- **Nurture Base**

As you will know, Mrs Hazel Murch will be retiring after many years of service to the school. She will be a huge loss but I am very pleased to say that Ms Mairi Simmons has been appointed to replace her. I am sure that Ms Simmons will do a great job in this role.

- **Gaelic Medium Education**

I am also very pleased to announce that we have appointed Mrs Katy Cochrane to the post of Gaelic Medium Education teacher. This will allow the current GME class to be split as two separate classes (P1-3; P4-7). Mrs Cochrane will take the P5-7 class and Mrs MacDonald will take the younger pupils. Despite the addition of another teacher, we will also continue to have the additional PSA time in the GME class that was agreed last session.

- **Pupil Support Teacher**

As Ms Simmons will now be taking up the post of Nurture Base Teacher, I am pleased to say that Mrs Steph Brown will be temporarily covering the post of Pupil Support Teacher vacated by Ms Simmons for three days a week. I would hope we could formalise this arrangement early in the new session to allow us to continue it for the whole of session 2018/19.



- **'Sky Room' Enhanced Support Class**

We have now had this provision in the school for a full session, and alongside the Nurture Base, it allows the school to provide customised learning experiences in an alternative context for pupils for some or all of the week. This allows us greater scope in the range of ways we can go about meeting the needs of all learners in our classes. I am pleased to say that Ms Morag Charity will continue to be the lead teacher in this class. It is an excellent support to the school to have an additional teacher allocated centrally to support us in this way.

- **PSA Staffing**

Parents may or may not be aware that Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) are allocated centrally and that these allocations are reviewed annually according to the measured needs across all Perth and Kinross schools. As changes at Authority level often have a contractual implication for staff involved, schools are required to inform PSAs on the same day, so that all staff across the Council have clarity, rather than hearing information through rumours as schools pass this information on at different times.

However, this approach does not take account of the fluid nature of PSA funding which can change at short notice if there is a change to the pupil cohort, or the fact that central reductions can be mitigated by schools choosing to fund some PSA time from their own budget. As an all-through school we have considerably larger budget than a free-standing primary school with the same pupil roll, and we also have the advantage of being able to move PSA time between secondary and primary.

I am sorry to go into such detail about the intricacies of PSA staffing, but without such an explanation the process may seem very opaque to parents. The point I am trying to get to is that the reduction in PSA time in the primary in Session 18/19 will be considerably less than parents may be thinking, based on rumours they will have heard. We have already agreed to fund additional primary PSA time from our own budget, and to move some PSA hours in the secondary to the primary. In addition, we are also currently seeking a further full-time PSA from the central budget based on recent changes to our pupil cohort. This, combined with the additional full-time PSA staffing in GME and the support provided by both the Nurture and Sky Classes, leaves me confident that the school will be able to provide a high level of support within the primary in Session 18/19.

If you have any question about these or any other staffing matters, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school.

Yours faithfully



John Devine
Headteacher