



September
2024

Headteacher Newsletter

Dear Parent/Carer,

We were delighted to welcome pupils back to school in August, after a six week summer holiday.

At the beginning of term, we welcomed our new S1 from our cluster Primary Schools, we congratulated those young people returning to school on their exam results, and a series of Headteacher Assemblies covered our school vision, values, and expectations to begin the new year.

On Tuesday 10th September we had our first parent council meeting where we discussed, staffing updates, school results, planning for 2024/25, cost of the school day, mobile phone policy in light of Scottish Government advice, and our upcoming 'Invy's got Talent on 10th October.

Following each parent council meeting, I will issue a Headteacher Newsletter to parents and carers. This will provide updates about what has been going on in school. Our weekly newsletter is available on our website and provides additional information to pupils, parents/carers and the wider community.

Yours Faithfully

Hamish Shankland

Acting Headteacher



Headteacher Newsletter Contents:

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We welcomed new staff to ICHS in August:

New staff:

- Miss Thomson – French/Spanish
- Miss Drain – History
- Mr McGhie – Music
- Miss Moffat – PE
- Miss McCallum – Music
- Miss Williamson – PTC Languages (maternity cover)
- Ms Simpson – Business & Admin (maternity cover)
- Mrs Elliott – Business & Admin (maternity cover)

Announcements:

- Miss Burns in the Art department became Mrs Townsley over the summer – congratulations!
- Mrs Loughins our Principal Teacher of Targeted Support is now known as Miss Hamilton.
- Mrs Charters returned to us in August from maternity leave. Welcome back to Mrs Charters, and thankyou to Mr McFarlane who covered this post in session 2023/2024.



Results In August 2024

Each year we aim to see young people achieve their 'personal best'. Each young person is different, and each year group is different. Our results and attainment do not capture all our young people's achievements, but they do give us an idea of academic results from the Scottish Qualifications Authority. In Inveralmond we congratulate our young people on achieving their own 'personal best'; this is unique to each individual young person. We are immensely proud of all our young people.

In S5 16% of our cohort gained 5 Higher qualifications. This is an increase from 11% in 2018/19 which is the last time young people undertook a comparable exam with coursework. 35 of our young people achieved 5 Higher qualifications in one sitting. 3 young people achieved 5 Higher A's in one sitting, and one young person achieved 6 band 1 A's in one sitting.

In S5 37% of our cohort gained 5 or more Level 6 qualifications. This is a slight decrease from last year. However, this number does not include Level 6 First Aid which 185 of our S5 cohort passed. Many of our young people gained more than 5 qualifications at Level 6, with 2 young people gaining 9 level 6's in one sitting.

In S4 31% of our cohort gained 5 or more National 5 qualification. This is a continuing trend from 2018/19 which is the last time young people undertook a comparable exam with coursework. 36 young people achieved 6 National 5's, and 24 young people achieved 5 National 5's. 9 young people achieved 6 A's in one sitting, with a further 4 achieving 5 A's in one sitting.

In S4 64% of our cohort gained 5 or more Level 5 qualifications. This is up from 61% 2018/19. Many of our young people gained more than 5 qualifications at Level 5, with 21 young people gaining as many as 9 level 5's in one sitting.

In S6, 12% of our cohort gained an Advanced Higher Qualification. This is an increase from 5% in 2018/19 which is the last time young people undertook a comparable exam with coursework. One young person gained 4 passes at Advanced Higher, with a further 3 young people gaining 3 passes at Advanced Higher. 8 young people gained an A pass at Advanced Higher with 2 young people gaining 2 A's.

In S6 18% of our cohort gained a Level 7 qualification. This is an increase from 5% in 2018/19.

In S6, young people who undertook Higher qualifications over S5 and S6 also excelled. 24% of young people in S6 gained 5 or more Highers over 2 years, up from 15% in 2018/19 which is the last time young people undertook a comparable exam with coursework.

In S6, young people who undertook Level 6 qualifications over S5 and S6 also excelled. 46% of our S6 cohort gained 5 or more Level 6's over 2 years, compared to 45% in 2018/19. Many young people gained more than 5 Level 6's over 2 years, up to 13 in total for 3 of our young people.



School Improvement Planning: Looking to session 2024/2025

Our detailed **school improvement plan** can be found on our website, along with our Standards and Quality Report. Our priorities for 2024/2025 are divided into three categories.

Priorities for Improvement

Here, we will outline all the areas where the school is aiming to make improvements from X to Y by date Z. This can include short- and long-term improvement priorities. Schools focus on a few areas of priority in this section.

Priorities for Consolidation

Here, we will identify areas where the school is aiming to make improvements from X to Y by date Z. This can include short- and long-term improvement priorities. These priorities will already be underway to some extent and carry forward over more than one year.

Priorities for Understanding

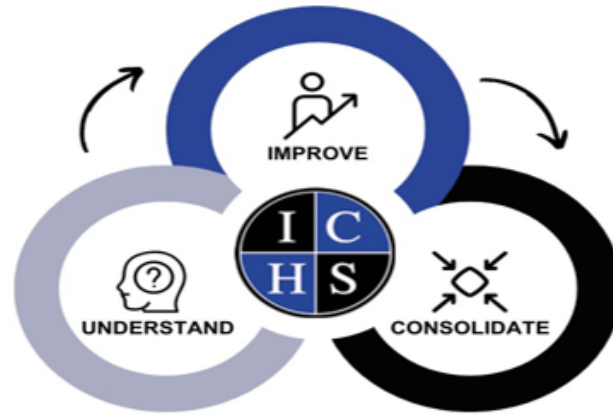
Here, we will identify areas the school is investigating to inform future actions. These are not improvement projects as such, the school is aiming to get a better understanding of the situation to plan future improvement priorities and generate possible change ideas for the following session.

On the next page you will find a summary of our School Improvement Plan for 2024/2025.



Summary of Inveralmond Community High School Priorities 2024-2025

- Supporting wellbeing and inclusion
- Working towards Very Good for Learning, Teaching and Assessment
- Improving Literacy and Numeracy for all
- Improving our S3 Curriculum Experience - Career Education
- Continuing to raise attainment across all measures
- Developing Employability skills (including School Leaver Destination Return)



- What are the barriers to attendance and engagement?
- How effective is our SCQF and Wider Achievement offer?
- How can we make Assisted Arrangements more efficient?

- Embed consistency of classroom routines
- Refine learner pathways process
- Continue to refine tracking and monitoring procedures
- Continue to build positive relationships in line with our Rights Respecting School status

Cost of the School Day Update

In Inveralmond we have taken significant steps to ensure that all young people can fully participate in the life of the school. On our website you will find details of all the measures which are in place, along with all the places where support can be accessed. If you have any financial concerns relating to your young person, our Family Link Workers can signpost you to the various supports available.

All of this information can be found in the 'about us' section of our website:



Research

There are many positive aspects of digital devices (phones/iPads etc)

But, **overwhelming** research confirms that there are lots of benefits when we use our phones less such as improvements in pupils' progress, concentration, focus, achievements and well-being.

- ▶ **Charles Hymas, Secondary schools are introducing strict new bans on mobile phones** The Daily Telegraph, 24/6/18
- ▶ **Paul Lewis Our minds can be hijacked': the tech insiders who fear a smartphone dystopia** Fri 6 Oct 2017 06.00
- ▶ **Bradley Busch , Fomo, stress and sleeplessness: are smartphones bad for students?** Tue 8 Mar 2016 07.00 GMT
- ▶ **Social-media use 'disrupting teen sleep and exercise'**, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-49330254> 14 August 2019
- ▶ Michael Mosley **Just One Thing** – 'Put your phone down' BBC sounds <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m001hx33>, last accessed 14/3/23
- ▶ **Screen Grab** BBC iPlayer, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001hlm6/screen-grab-series-1-episode-3>, last accessed 14/3/23

In Inveralmond, we have trained peer mediators. A significant number of mediations are related to mobile phone and social media use, and misuse.

20% of our Reflection Room referrals were due to mobile phone misuse.

A significant number of police incidents involve mobile phone and social media use, and misuse. Pupils report that mobile phones, whether it be their own or other people using phones, disrupts their learning.



Risk

- There are many risks associated with using mobile phones/internet such as being harassed by others.
- Society has a responsibility to protect young people from activities that pose risks and harm.
- Therefore, it is our responsibility to extend this protection to young people in their classroom.

Relationships

- Face-face communication provides a feeling of community and camaraderie. It's easier to socialise and build bonds and lasting relationships by communicating in-person.
- Relationships can be damaged via social media and access to inappropriate content on the web.
- Accessing content that is harmful to young minds has a catastrophic impact on positive relationships.



Ridicule

- Phones are often used as a platform for cyber-bullying.
- Negative content is damaging to our mental health and wellbeing, and we must protect ourselves as much as possible in our classrooms.



Reliance

- We can become addicted to our devices. It is health to have times without them.
- The internet is limitless; our time is not.



Mobile Phone Policy Pilot 2024 - Social Subjects

- ▶ When you arrive in the classroom you should place your phone into your allocated pouch. Your pouch will correspond with your desk number.
- ▶ You should get into the habit of putting your phone onto '**DO NOT DISTURB** mode' so that it does not ring/vibrate/buzz/flash during the lesson.
- ▶ Your phone will remain in the pouch for the ENTIRE lesson unless your teacher deems it necessary and permits you to use your device.
- ▶ You will collect your phone at the end of the lesson once you are dismissed.

It is important to note that all personal equipment, devices, and belongings brought to school are brought at the owner's risk. All staff and pupils are advised to ensure any valuables are covered by their home insurance or a separate policy.



Invy's Got Talent

On the 10th of October at 7pm we will hold our Invy's Got Talent showcase final. This event will have a judging panel and prizes for winning acts.

Tickets are free, and can be obtained in advance from the school office.

Refreshments will be on sale, along with raffle/tombola prizes. If you would like to donate to the raffle, please hand any items to the main office.



Pupils can sign up for auditions using the QR code.

Auditions will take place 30th Sept- 3rd October at lunchtime.

If your young person has a talent, please encourage them to sign up.



ICHS Uniform

Our uniform policy remains unchanged. It can be found on our website, along with specific information about PE equipment.

This session we changed our protocol for notifying parents about uniform issues. Pupils will no longer be sent out of class to collect a uniform pass, teachers will mark on the system when a young person is missing items of uniform.

Each day we will send a message if your young person is missing an item(s) of uniform. When you receive this, your young person will already have been spoken to and made aware of which item they need and where support is available.

As a school we are able to support with items of uniform from our own stock, or through <https://schoolbank-westlothian.org/> They can also be found by searching on Facebook. School ties can be purchased at the school office.

As a school we want to ensure every young person is clearly identifiable as an Inveralmond pupil and we want pupils to be proud to wear their uniform. To prevent pressure on young people and families, unbranded uniform items should be worn. This prevents peer pressure to spend large quantities of money on branded or designer items. School uniform items can be bought economically in supermarkets and high street chains. There is an option to buy uniform branded with the school logo should you wish, however due to costs we do not insist on school branded items. Our school uniform policy is on our website. The school is in the process of changing uniform suppliers, if you wish to purchase items with the school logo this will be possible soon. We will circulate the link with the new supplier as soon as possible.

All young people should attend school in uniform in the morning, even if they have PE period.



Inveralmond CHS Uniform Policy



School tie with a black or white formal shirt (long or short sleeved) or a sweatshirt with school logo
Black jumper or cardigan
School blazer (optional)



Must be black. Pupils can choose to wear trousers, a skirt, jeans, formal shorts, jogging bottoms or thick leggings



Shoes must be mostly black



Our uniform policy promotes accessible and equitable uniform items that can be reasonably expected to be worn by all pupils. Parent/carers are asked to co-operate with the school in encouraging the wearing of our school uniform.



As a community we are working together to become inspired and fulfilled individuals who



Attendance and Latecoming

There is significant research to suggest that attendance and latecoming are defining factors in the success of young people in school. Being in school regularly and on time allows them to benefit from the learning in class, as well as providing the opportunity to build positive relationships with staff and peers.

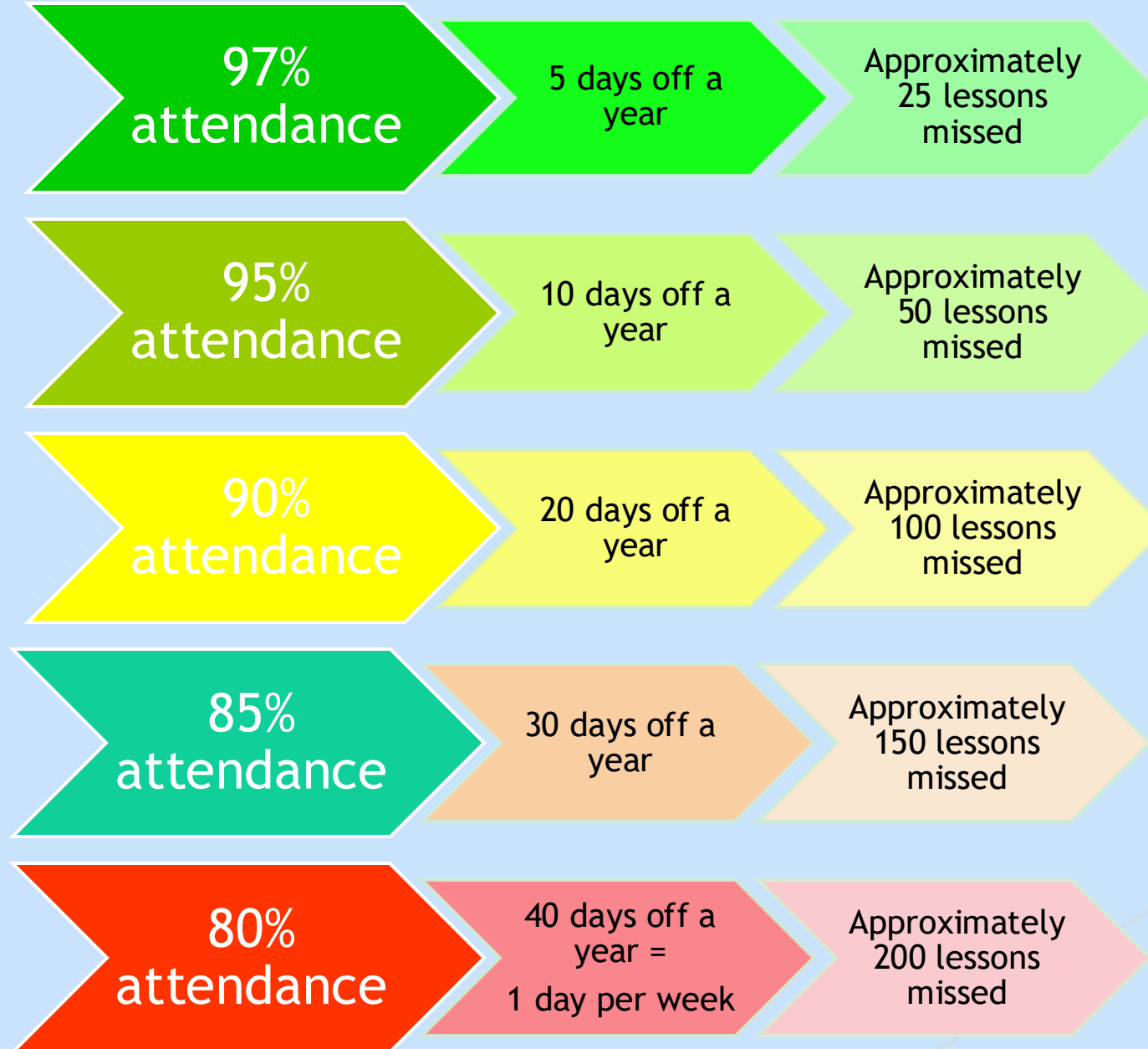
Where at all possible, pupils should attend school to avoid developing gaps in learning. If a young person is unwell or has an appointment, please call the school in the morning to prevent us having to contact you to find out what is wrong with your young person.

Our school day begins at 0835 and there is no registration/tutor period. That means that any young person arriving after this time has missed learning and is disrupting the learning of their class when they arrive. For this reason, it's essential that young people are here on time.

The next few slides show the cumulative impact of attendance and latecoming on learning.



Attendance



Latecoming

If a child is 5 minutes late a day they miss

25 minutes per week

1 hour 40 minutes per month

5 hours per term

16 hours 5 minutes per year (equivalent to over 3 days)

If a child is 10 minutes late they miss

50 minutes per week

3 hours 20 minutes per month

10 hours per term

32 hours 30 minutes per year (equivalent to over 6 days)

If a child is 15 minutes late they miss

1 hour 15 minutes per week

5 hours per month

15 hours per term (around 3 days)

48 hours 45 minutes a year (equivalent to over 9 school days)



We return on Wednesday 18th September after the September weekend – have a lovely long weekend.

Honesty



Kindness



Respect

