



# SPOTLIGHT



Issue 4

Parents' Information Newsletter

Autumn Term 2012

## A REQUEST TO ALL OUR PARENTS/CARERS

Cooler weather, wintry showers and windy days are becoming more evident as we are now several weeks in to the Autumn term.

Please can you remind your child to bring a coat with them to school each day? It is already evident that a large number of pupils come to school without a good outdoor coat. School waterproof jackets are available to buy at Cornwall Screenprint.

### Parents' guide to technology

Hello Parents/Carers

Are you confident asking your child about 'their' technology?

Do you feel comfortable about your child playing digital games with strangers from all over the world?

Do you get confused about how to place 'child-lock' on any of your media items, like your TV?

If the answer to any of the above is yes then please make sure you read the free copy of ...Digital Parenting...that every pupil has received this week.

It includes some excellent tips and guidance about all the technologies available and all the benefits and potential risks and hazards of not being fully informed. I hope you enjoy getting fully equipped to 'take on the young techies!'

Look out for adult learning opportunities coming soon ... details to follow.

Barry Richardson  
Assistant Head – Stakeholders and Partnerships

**vodafone**

# Digital Parenting

## 10 'How to' guides

- SET smartphone Parental Controls with Vodafone Guardian
- MAKE THE MOST of BlackBerry Parental Controls
- PROTECT privacy on Facebook
- SEARCH safely on Google

**Reporting concerns**  
How to contact websites, agencies and authorities

**Expert views**  
Why are age ratings important?  
How much time online is too much?  
What technology can we expect in the future?

**Toddlers and tech**  
It's second nature

**Apps, BBM, Facebook...**  
What are teens' favourite digital spaces?

**Grandparents**  
How can they get more involved?

[www.vodafone.com/parents](http://www.vodafone.com/parents)

### DATES FOR DIARY

**Friday 26 to Saturday 27 October**  
Tewington House 24hr Sponsored Cycle Event

**Monday 29 October to Friday 2 November**  
Half Term

**Monday 5 November**  
Staff Training Day (no pupils in school)

Please note that the weekly Spotlight and any archived Spotlights, together with news items are available to view or download from the school website [www.poltairschool.co.uk](http://www.poltairschool.co.uk)

## NEW ERA FOR POLTAIR SCHOOL - POLTAIR SCHOOL BECOMES A CO-OPERATIVE

As Poltair School opened its doors for the school year, a new era has begun. Following two overwhelmingly positive consultations with stakeholders, Poltair School has changed its status, becoming a Foundation School as well as the hub institution in a newly formed co-operative trust. The St. Austell Educational Trust will see Poltair School work closely with its additional partners, Cornwall College, Cornwall Council and the Co-operative Movement. It is hoped that new partners will join in the near future.

This is an exciting moment for Poltair School and the well-considered decision to change the school's status has been founded on both sound principled and pragmatic considerations. I thought it might be useful to try and summarise the benefits of this important move for the school. So here goes, in six reasonably concise points:

1. At Poltair School we are all very proud of the unique and successful learning environment in which so many young people thrive. We are also proud of our history, tradition and high standards. In order to safeguard that which is special, we have to respond to the changing world we find ourselves in, where Council services are constricted and the diversity of schools increases. For us, the Co-operative model is the perfect blend of both 'different' and 'same'. Importantly, the day-to-day running of the school will not be affected in any way.
2. Working with partners makes sense. Cornwall College is a first class provider of Post 16 education. Many of our pupils choose to continue their studies with this, our closest neighbour. If, by planning together, we can provide a better quality of provision, particularly in terms of transition, it has to be good for young learners. Indeed, this will be the rubric for considering future partners; namely, how can this impact positively on teaching, learning and learners? In addition, Poltair School has no desire to become independent or distance itself from the local authority with which it has always had a very positive relationship. For this reason, we have specifically invited Cornwall Council to become one of our partners.
3. By working alongside other organisations within the Trust, or by allying with other Co-operative School Trusts (and there are now quite a few in Cornwall), we will be strengthening our bargaining position when it comes to commissioning services or securing resources. The importance of securing 'value for money' has never been more important than in the present days of reduced funding.
4. All Co-operative organisations are founded and operate on the basis of some common values. These are self-responsibility, self-help, equality, solidarity, democracy, honesty, openness, social responsibility, caring for others and equity. The leaders and governors of Poltair School are very mindful of the need to subscribe to principle leadership as a basis of safeguarding the interest of young people in the community. We operate in challenging and ever-changing times. Decisions are taken on a daily basis. These values are our check-list or moral compass to ensure that we execute our authority in the right way and for the right reasons.
5. Poltair School is determined to fully and comprehensively engage with our wider community, including our immediate stakeholders. We need to listen more attentively to their views and the community needs to see close-up the increasingly superb work that is undertaken in the school. The Co-operative model supports us in doing this. We are very keen to embrace the co-operative value of democracy and give it some primacy in our structural arrangements. During the course of this year, all stakeholders will have the chance to become members of the St. Austell Educational Trust. We will also establish a Forum to take account of the collective voice of these stakeholders. In turn, the Forum itself will then become fully represented at the newly constituted Trust Board.
6. By inviting additional organisations to join Poltair Governors on our Trust Board we are, of course, seeking to widen the scope of leadership and governance in the school. We anticipate that we will benefit from these new partners in terms of additional expertise and wider perspectives of the community they will bring to the table. In turn, we would also hope to secure a broader range of learning experiences and opportunities for our learners.

Please look out for the details about membership and the establishment of the Forum. The first meeting of The Trust Board will be held later this term.

Mr S Tong Headteacher

# Exciting times in English!

## Message from Miss Parker Head of English

I would like to introduce myself as the Head of English at Poltair School and to notify you of some the events which have been happening across the faculty, and some of the exciting ventures which are taking place.

Early in the term, Poltair School hosted two writing workshops in the library in which guest author Anna Murphy led various activities encouraging students to develop their creativity and imagination in writing. Furthermore, we have exciting opportunities for students to take part in National Competitions and Trips, see Spotlight for more details!

As well as this, we are in the process of purchasing exciting new software which students will be able to access in school and at home, designed to help develop literacy skills, and provide a platform for independent learning and revision at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students will receive their log-in details through their English teachers in the next few weeks.

Many students in Year 11 have examinations to prepare for which they will take in January. To support students in their preparations, all students in Year 10 and Year 11 are invited to attend revision sessions after school on Wednesdays. In addition to this, we will be arranging focus 'success' groups which will also run after school on Wednesdays and will be designed to ensure that all students achieve specific targets in order to be successful in their examinations.

We are looking forward to the year ahead, and if you have any queries or concerns regarding your son or daughter, please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the English Team.

Miss R Parker [rparker@poltair.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:rparker@poltair.cornwall.sch.uk)

**What exactly do you do at Poltair?** Head of English

**What is your favourite meal?** Roast Dinner or anything with Chocolate!

**If you were not Head of Department what would you be?** A make-up artist for film and theatre productions.

**Who is your hero?** Jillian Michaels (The Biggest Loser USA) as she inspires hundreds of people each year to achieve their dreams and realise their true potential!

**Who is your favourite singer?** Christina Aguilera

**What is your favourite book?** 'Before the Storm' by Diane Chamberlain.

**Name one thing that perhaps people don't know about you?** I hate mushy peas!

**What do you most enjoy about Poltair?** How friendly and caring everyone is.

**What do you treasure most?** My family and friends

**What one thing would you change in the world today?** That every child in the world would have access to books and the internet.



## Message from Mrs Braithwaite Deputy Head of English

The summer examination results at Poltair School were better than the National Average with students achieving a 66% pass rate at top grades A\* -C.

We are extremely proud of all the Year 11 students who passed their examinations, but there were individual success stories, where sheer determination and effort resulted in pupils smashing their target grades! Well done everyone!

### These include:

Lauren Lyndon Hill

Maddison Brady

Kayleigh Warne

Maisie Oliver

Corey Rance

Whitney Bennett

Sam Cross

Ashley Holdstock

Emma Hudson

Josh Beynon

Chantelle Richards

## Message from Mrs Bond English and Drama

Following the success and enjoyment of this year's London trip to see 'Shrek the Musical', next year's exciting London trip to see 'The Woman In Black' is booked for 17 and 18 July 2013 and is open to Years 8 – 11.

If your son/daughter has been successful in obtaining a place on this trip they will receive a letter in the next week whereby a non-refundable deposit of £30 is required to secure the place. Details to follow.

## Message from Mrs Venables English and Media



**Are you hungry enough to be a winning poet?**

**Think you could fight to the death with only a pen?**

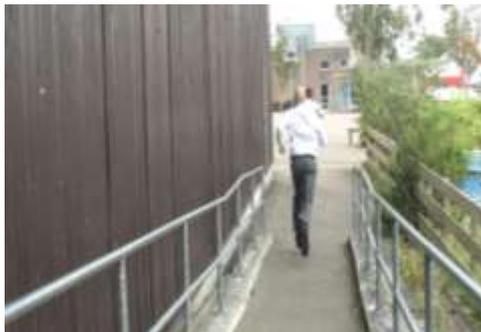
**Fancy seeing your writing in print and winning a top prize?**

Then enter **the 2012 Young Writers Poetry Competition: The Poetry Games**, open to **11-18 year olds**. All you have to do is write a poem that is **30 lines or less** on **ANY** theme or topic, and give it to **Mrs Venables**. You will have the chance to have your poem published, and you could even win **£1,000** for the school! The champion will win an **iPad**, and the other 11 finalists will receive a **Kindle** each!

**Deadline for entries: Friday 19 October 2012 *May the odds be ever in your favour!***

## Year 11 Students Make Music Masterpieces!

Recently, the Year 11 Media Studies students have been exploring the school—tripods and camcorders in hand—determined to film the perfect scene with the perfect lighting and the perfect camera angle. This year, they have been assigned to create a music video aimed at a mixed gender target audience between the ages of 13 and 30.



In planning their video projects, students had to collect and analyse action research in the form of a survey; they did so by creating a survey using the website, [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), which several members of staff and their tutor groups completed. They then adjusted their plans and storyboards to accommodate the preferences of their target audience—a difficult task indeed!

As you can imagine, the songs and themes of the videos are as varied as the weather in Cornwall—from innocent love stories to rebellious teenage parties to the effects of bullying, but they have one thing in common: they are all magnificent masterpieces! They have even shown ingenuity in their casting choices; Kimana, Jade, Bronwyn, and Stephanie have managed to persuade Mr Butterworth to play the role of their older brother while Mr Sugden and Mrs Venables played his parents! Miss Hughes has also bravely played the role of an 'evil' stepmother in their video. While Miss Brader didn't make a



personal appearance in Mike, Daisy, Bradley and Samantha's video, she kindly supervised them whilst they filmed their extreme close-ups of fire and matches in the science lab. The cleaners of the school also kindly allowed Sophie, Hannah, Courtney and Cara to borrow a water bucket for filming their scene for 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun,' the Cyndi Lauper version, of course! And the list goes on... Many thanks go to all

the members of staff and students who have assisted in the creation of the music videos!

The final touches are currently being made to the videos, and we're sure that they will be stellar!



# Professional Author Inspires Creativity

On the 11 and 18 September, Poltair School hosted writing workshops led by KEAP (Kernow Education Arts Partnership). Students were selected by their English teachers for demonstrating a talent in writing or an enthusiasm towards writing.



The purpose of the workshops, led by Anna Murphy, was to develop skills of creativity and imagination within writing, and to select students to become part of the Kernow Writing Squad.

The students had an excellent time, and produced fantastic work. Anna Murphy shared some of her inspirations for writing, and displayed her 'writing journals' and 'scrap boxes', as well as sharing her experiences in writing for the BBC and even meeting David Tennant!

Students who took part in the workshop were: Katie Sturtridge, Maya Legg, Brogan Cawley, Talitha Jobson, Gabrielle Grant, Charlotte Grigg, Alana Marks, Ben Bassett, Charlie Boothby, Rowina Caesar, Lauren James, Jenna Heppell, Hope Couchman, Alisha Armstrong, Jack Walker, Matt Horsfield, Tori Marks, Emily White, Serena Hussain and Dan Marks.



We are extremely proud of Talitha Jobson who was successful in her application to join the Kernow Writing Squad.

## **The Tree**

*"Nothing changes, nothing changes. A hundred years I've stood here at the top of this hill. Every day is the same: the sun comes up, people go about their daily business and hurry home while it is still light."*

*Rain is hitting the window; thunder and lightning roars and crack outside.  
The sky is black, as black as a tape. The wind is blowing everywhere, as hard as a punch. Steel grey raindrops snake down the window, pit pat, pit pat.*

## **Cloud**

*As I peer down to the people on earth I wonder, who thinks about me? Nobody cares and no one ever will. I'm just a piece of fluff floating lifeless. Planes fly straight through me as if I'm not there. Alone in the sky. I'm here but I'm vacant; nobody cares about me.*