

13th December 2018

Important Dates

December

- 14 **ES Sing-a-Long, 8:30am in The QET**
- 14 **MS/HS Assembly, 10:00am in The QET**
- 14 **EARLY DISMISSAL AT 11:00AM**
- 14 **Start of Winter Holiday**

January 2019

- 7 **Start of 2nd Semester**
- 8 **Grade 10 Parent Evening – Introduction to Futurewise, 6:00-7:00pm**
- 10 **NHS Trivia Night, 3:30-4:30pm**
- 11 **PTO Welcome Coffee, 8:30am in The Street**
- 14-18 **Digital Citizenship Week**
- 14 **PTO Meeting, 9:30am**
- 14 **Grade 10 Futurewise Profiling, 3:00-5:00pm**
- 15 **School Photographs for New Students, 8:30am in the Black Box**
- 18 **Spirit Wear Day**
- 18 **ISA Open Morning, 9:00-11:00am**
- 18 **HS Dance, 7:00-9:45pm**

► **From the Head of School**

Dear Parents,

When my daughter turned four she started Reception (Kindergarten) in an English school. Teachers began each year getting to know the children and finding out what they could do. Over the previous decade, the UK government had imposed sets of learning standards on schools, and more recently were holding teachers to account against those standards: if children didn't reach them it could affect school funding, the Head's job, and perhaps even teachers' pay. The idea, noble in itself, was to push schools toward excellence.

That may have been the motive; it was not the result. I was in the fortunate position at that time of being able to pick up my daughter at the end of the school day. She hadn't been there long when the teacher told me, 'You don't need to worry about Chloe, she has met the standards for the year already,' which for me entirely missed the point of what I hoped she would get out of school: certainly not reaching a bar for five year olds set by a politician not long in office and soon out of it; I wanted my daughter to make progress to more fully realising her potential as a human being.

I am not knocking learning standards – it is important to know what we are aiming for; but we need to remember that they are a marker, not an end in themselves. What really matters is that

each and every child is making progress, that each day they are a step closer to realising their own unique abilities.

On Monday, I listened to the Elementary School winter performance. The Grade 4 brass band played Christmas tunes we all recognise. At the end, Mr Walter asked everyone who had played their first note in September to stand up. They all stood.

I was there for that first note, and wrote about it in that week's Thistle Talk. What was remarkable was not what they could now do (there are still better brass bands in the world), but the progress they had made. It is not their current abilities that will inspire those Grade 4s to continue practising, but how their abilities have developed, and that there is a meaningful purpose to their learning. They are not learning for a test and a grade, but to produce music at a concert that brings the community together.

When we ask our children, we shouldn't be asking, 'what are you doing?' or 'how are you doing?' but 'how are you progressing?' What can you do now, that you couldn't do before? Ultimately, there is little point measuring ourselves against those around us or standards that have descended from above: we should pursue our own excellence, and measure ourselves against what we were before, and from what is within.

Kind regards,

Nicholas Little
Head of School

► **From the MS/HS Principal**

Dear Middle/High School Parents,

I hope the musical performances over the past couple of weeks have put you in the mood for an enjoyable break with family and friends. The '12 Days' song is now an established tradition at our final assembly, and is a great way to round off the semester. The MS/HS assembly on Friday, 14th December starts at 10:00am and parents are welcome to attend.

When we return, we have a National Honor Society Trivia Night to look forward to, along with an information evening for Grade 10 parents regarding the Futurewise programme in which their children will participate. The questions and interview help students explore their interests and strengths as they consider possible career paths. Feedback from families indicated this was a very helpful process for their children to go through.

PowerSchool re-opens as the semester finishes, and next week you will receive hard copies of report comments along with a reflection done by your child. Do remember there is a lot more information stored within the PowerSchool system regarding academic achievement that you can access, and I would encourage you to log in and click around.

I look forward to welcoming back the students on 7th January, and wish you a pleasant and safe holiday.

Angus Carmichael
MS/HS Principal

▶ **From the Elementary Principal**

Dear Parents,

Happy Holidays!

I'm sure that family fun and reunions with friends and loved ones will be a focus for many of you over the next three weeks. (Safe travels to everyone on the go!) I hope your vacation brings you great joy and much laughter. It's been a very strong first half of the school year and your children have all made solid progress. In the Elementary School, we divide our year into four equal quarters. The mid-year progress reports will be mailed out on 25th January.

Over the break, games, reading and outdoor fun will be featured in many homes. I'm sure you will also enjoy lots of chatter from your children throughout the holiday. When it comes to conversations from children, I'd encourage parents to use this time as an opportunity to build up articulation skills. For young boys and girls, you might want to insist on the use of complete sentences, and for the older children parents could ask for additional and focused details about a particular experience. If you have relatives around, it might be a great opportunity to share wonderful stories about life in Aberdeen. After a holiday, filled with family fun, I look forward to seeing you when we return on Monday, 7th January 2019.

Shoebox Appeal

Our drive this year brought in 94 boxes and £170 to help with shipping costs. Many thanks to all those who contributed to the Appeal and especially to the fourth grade for leading this important charity event.

Best regards,

Don Newbury,
Elementary Principal

▶ **From the HS Counsellor**

HS Counselling Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00am - 4:00pm

If you require the counselling services Thursday, please see Mrs DeGraw downstairs.

▶ **From the Fine Arts Department**

AMAZING work to the ENTIRE Elementary School for 'An AWESOME Magical Journey To The West End'!!! Outstanding work to everyone!

BRAVO Elementary Band & Choir for a beautiful concert Monday morning! EXCELLENT WORK!!!!

Well done and THANK YOU to everyone who performed in the foyer before school this week! What a great way to start the holidays!

Have a safe, relaxing and joyful holiday!

ISA Fine Arts Department

▶ **From the Library**

We hope all our students have a great holiday, and we hope that they get some relaxing reading in whilst they're off as well! All books that were borrowed in this last week of term (in the last two weeks for parents and MS/HS students) will be due back in the first week of the new term.

Josie Crimp
Librarian

▶ **From the School Nurse**

Hi everyone – last Thistle Talk of the year.

We really want to see everyone back here after the holidays safe and sound.

To those of you leaving the School, good luck in your travels and in your future ventures. We will miss you.

We hope everyone has an amazing Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Karen
School Nurse



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO EVERYONE XXX



▶ **From The National Honor Society**



Please join us for our annual Trivia Night on Thursday, 10th January from 15:30-16:30 in the Black Box Theatre. Come and test your knowledge against ISA students and teachers! Hope to see you there!

Osamagbe Igiehon
NHS President

Luke Klopp
NHS Adviser

RECYCLING FOR A GOOD CAUSE ...

USED POSTAGE STAMPS

Please collect all your used postage stamps and hand them in to Mary Rayne, Elementary School Secretary.

They will be sent off to The Oldies Club which is a charity for old dogs. They rescue and try to find forever homes for older dogs ... <http://www.oldies.org.uk/>

Thank you
Mary

It's the YEARBOOK!!

Order Form for 2018-19 Book

The price of this year's book is **£25**. The book will be distributed in the spring.
(Please make cheques payable to 'International School of Aberdeen' or 'ISA'.)

Students' names, grade levels (and in case of elementary students please also include teacher's name):

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Date: _____

Payment of £____ made by:

Cash Cheque Card IPayImpact
cheque # _____

Yearbooks may be paid for in the business office. No money to be accepted at Reception. Books will be distributed in the spring by the Yearbook staff.

Customer Receipt

The price for yearbooks is £25 **per** book.

Number of books ordered and paid for: _____

Family name: _____

Date: _____

Payment of £_____ made by:

Cash Cheque Card IPayImpact
cheque # _____

Yearbooks may be paid for in the business office. No money to be accepted at Reception. Books will be distributed in the spring by the Yearbook staff.

In case of cash payment: Signature of salesperson/Business Office stamp: _____



News From Your PTO

Thursday 13th December 2018

Dear Parents,

The festive period has been a busy and fun time for us and we are so grateful for all of your support. Thank you all so much! We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday and look forward to catching up with you at our Welcome Coffee on the first Friday of the new semester. Don't forget to book your tickets or even reserve a table for our Burns Night Ceilidh and dance off those holiday calories!



JOIN US FOR A

WELCOME COFFEE

Friday, January 11, 2019 | 8:30 AM
In The Street

Join us to welcome the new year with old friends and new!

Save the Date!

ISA PTO cordially invites you to join us

Burns Supper & Ceilidh

Our Burns night will be shortly after the Holiday Break on January 26th. **If you would like to book, send an email to pto@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk** and we will contact you to book your space or table.

Price is 25 pounds per person or 250 if you book a table for ten and you will get a bottle of wine as a gift! Price includes Dinner and Ceilidh. Bring your own drinks. Friends outside the school are welcome.

26th JANUARY 2019

ISA Gym Hall - 6:30 to 11 pm



ISA Parent Teacher Organisation



pto@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk



PTO have an exciting new initiative:

Local businesses can opt into the Bronze, Silver or Gold tier Advertising Programme. We will be advertising the Gold tier businesses on our Facebook page!

If you know of any companies who would like to opt into this programme, or if you would like more details, please contact Jen Sword our PTO advertising member via email pto.advertising@gmail.com



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