



17 January 2020

## Important Dates

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### January

18-19	Language Immersion Workshop – Language B Students
24	ISA Open Morning, 9:00-11:00am
25-26	Language Immersion Workshop – Ab Initio Students
27-31	ES Healthy Eating Week
27	Grade 10 Psychometric Testing, 3:00-5:00pm
27	Grade 10 Parent Evening: Introduction to Psychometric Testing, 6:00-7:00pm
29-30	Grade 10 IB Course Information Lunches, 1:00pm
31	Grade 12 Parent Coffee: Transition to University/Keeping Well, 8:30am
31	Grade 12 Student Workshop: Preparing for Transition to University, 9:40am
31	NESCol Presentation for Grades 9-11 Students, 9:40am in The QET

### ► From the Head of School

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Dear Parents,

An Invitation to a conversation about ISA's Guiding Statements: Monday, 3rd February - 9.15am and 6:00pm.

The School's mission, vision and values should direct our decision making. They are therefore known as the 'guiding statements'. We last reviewed them in 2014; since then the School has undergone many changes: we have introduced programmes like IGCSEs and French CNED, and we now have a lot more local students.

Last Semester, the Head of School put out a survey asking staff, parents and students to comment on our guiding statements.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February, I would like to meet with parents to look at this feedback and to ask, 'what is essential that we keep?' 'What needs to change?'

We will meet at 9.15am, and this will be repeated at 6:00pm for those who cannot make it during the day. Both will be in the High School Multi-Purpose rooms

You can find the school's mission, vision and values at the website at, <https://www.isa.aberdeen.sch.uk/pages/about/isa-overview/values-vision-mission>.

As we returned to school in a new calendar year, the Principals and I started to think in more earnest about the new school year. Winter is the season for employing the teachers we need for Summer 2020.

In November, we asked staff about their intentions for 2020-21; is anyone thinking of moving on? - while also looking at what next year's timetable might look like, and who could teach what.

At ISA, we are lucky; our staff stay for a long time. Turnover is very low. However, student numbers are rising; we are fine at the moment, but need to make sure we are ready for continuing changes, so we will look for a couple more teachers.

A school can never be any better than the teachers it employs. Getting the right people isn't an incidental part of a school leader's job; it is essential. We have to start with a clear idea of what we are looking for.

First the law. All teachers in Scotland are required to be registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). This means they need a degree and a recognised teaching qualification. They also need a police check here (known as a PVG check - Protection of Vulnerable Groups) which covers Scotland, the UK and 18 partner countries, as well as police checks from other countries they have worked in. In addition, we phone references from previous employers to make sure no concerns are overlooked.

Of course, these are the minimum requirements; our mission statement aspires to "excellence in education." We want our specialist teachers to be passionate about their subject; all our teachers to be student focused; and to have thought deeply about how children learn; to be able to communicate and engage; to believe that every child can progress in a full range of aptitudes and skills, and to have strategies to make that progress a reality. They must ensure "a safe and caring learning environment."

We are also an international school, with values such as respect and diversity. We expect our students to become global citizens. We need teachers who don't merely accept our values and ambitions, but will actively promote them.

There is a lot to think about, and why it is a bit of process. We can't just place an ad in the local paper or on our website and expect to get the breadth of applications we need to make the right choice. We also use international recruitment agencies that screen candidates and provide confidential references with standard questionnaires on a range of attributes. We follow up with two rounds of interviews with different people to get a range of perspectives. If they are coming from abroad (many of our candidates will be currently working in other international schools), we might use Skype or meet them at a job fair in London, which will be held this weekend.

Recruitment is an investment of time, money and thought that is essential to maintain ISA's tradition of care, opportunity and excellence in changing times.

Best regards,

**Nicholas Little**  
Head of School

## ▶ **From the MS/HS Principal**

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**Dear Middle/High School Parents,**

Over the past few days we have endeavoured to have the children reflect on the role digital media plays in their lives. I hope they have found the sessions in our Digital Citizenship Week helpful and it gave them something to think about. Our Middle School students have been introduced to iDEA, and this is a programme that you might like to encourage them to continue to work

through. It leads to a series of formal awards that recognise their effort and learning. The digital citizenship website remains open all year and you are welcome to access the resources for parents any time: <https://sites.google.com/a/isa247.org.uk/isa-digital-citizenship/resources>

Sadly, with increased levels of screen time for teenagers, we hear of less and less reading for pleasure taking place. Reading (beyond a 33-character Tweet) gives children a massive headstart across all their subjects in terms of extending vocabulary, thinking creatively, and processing ideas quickly. I would encourage our parents to continue to promote and model reading as a form of relaxation at home, whilst travelling or on holiday.

Planning for our G9-11 Activities Week continues, including an exciting series of activities for the students who choose to stay in Aberdeen. Students are expected to be a part of this fantastic opportunity to develop interpersonal skills, show independence, think critically, reflect, strengthen or develop friendships, experience different environments, build an open mind, improve communication skills, and move out of their comfort zone. Many of our graduates' favourite memories of ISA involve activity weeks, and I am sure it will be an enriching experience for your child too.

This weekend is the first of two IB language immersion workshops at ISA, and this will be a huge boost for students ahead of their upcoming orals. Language learning has a significant role in the School's strategic plan, with the aim that students graduating from ISA will be proficient in their acquired language. As well as developing international mindedness, this will be a valuable lifelong skill for our students to carry long after their time at ISA.

**Angus Carmichael**  
MS/HS Principal

## ► **From the Elementary Principal**

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Dear Parents,

### • **Halfway**

Believe it or not, we are now officially midway through our school year. As a teacher, I always feel that these next few months are some of the most productive for our students. In their classrooms, they are comfortable with their routines, at ease in their relationships with both classmates and teachers, and hopefully confident that they can succeed in the ISA learning environment. On 24th January, mid-year progress reports, our feedback to students and parents, will become available via the PowerSchool portal for the first time. This method of reporting is part of the School's effort to go as paperless as possible with our communication. That being said, for this second reporting period, as a way of transitioning the change, parents will also receive a paper copy. **FROM THE THIRD QUARTER ALL PAPER COPIES OF REPORTS WILL ONLY BE MAILED BY SPECIAL REQUEST.**

### • **Health & Safety**

As a school, we always place Health & Safety at the top of our meeting agendas. Each week, the Administration reviews all of the reported incidents that happened over the previous week. The highest percentage of accidents at school occurs during physical activities, especially PE and recess.

We can't guarantee children won't have accidents, not if they are to exercise and learn the important skills associated with play and the use of free time. We can, however, assure parents that we take children's safety very seriously at ISA. We regularly review our provisions for safety, both as a staff and with our students. The role is a very active one, and in the classroom and on the playground we continue to talk to students about how to play safely and the importance of

communication in remaining safe. In the Elementary School, this means routinely reviewing recess rules and encouraging positive interactions between students (including how to handle conflicts that may occur). As a further measure, I try to emphasise current issues of concern in Monday morning assemblies. At this time of year, a safety focus has been made about the importance of washing hands to avoid illness. We appreciate and recognise that parent support is essential if we are to maintain optimum safety conditions at our school, and always welcome any comments regarding student health and safety.

Best regards,

**Don Newbury,**  
Elementary Principal

## ▶ **From the Fine Arts Department**

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### **ATTENTION ALL BUDDING MUSICIANS.....**

If you are interested in performing with the Elementary School Band on 16th March, please stop by Kent Walter's room to collect your music!  
Join us and have some fun!!!

We have a lot of great concerts, activities exhibitions and performances for everyone this semester! Please watch the THISTLE and the digital display board outside The Queen Elizabeth Theatre for all the events!

**The Fine Arts Team: Lisa, Catherine, Nicolina, Javier & Kent**

## ▶ **From the Library**

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Over the holiday we moved to a new library system, which we are excited to start using. You can see our lovely new library catalogue at <http://isalibrary.follettdestiny.com> - we hope that you will find this easier to use than our previous one.

We are currently in the process of clearing all the books currently checked out in the old system. If you or your children have any library books from before the holiday, please bring them into the Library – you can either return them if you're finished with them, or we can then check them out to you again in the new system.

**Josie Crimp**  
Librarian

## ▶ **From the School Nurse**

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I hope you are all back into the swing of things.

This week, I just wanted to give a little reminder to you all with regards to our little friend, the head louse.

As usual, head lice are always on the go; don't panic, as this is an extremely common occurrence in schools. The best way to know if your child or you have head lice is to comb through your hair

when wet. If you find any then you can go to your local pharmacy and buy one of the proprietary brand treatments or ask for a “Bug Busting Kit”, all of which can be supplied on the minor illness system. There is no need to attend at your GP surgery for head lice.

If your child does have head lice then it is best to treat the whole family and, also, if you could advise the School, as this is our only way of knowing how many cases there are. There is an excellent website that you can access to give you more information: <http://www.chc.org/homedir/faq.cfm>

So, now I have you all itching (me too!), have a great weekend and see you all next week.



**Karen  
School Nurse**

## **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

*Thistle Talk is a great way to find out what is going on in the school, but you can get a lot more from our social media sites. Log into us at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-school-aberdeen> and <https://www.facebook.com/InternationalSchoolAberdeen/> and get the stories behind the stories.*

# NEWS FROM YOUR PTO

JAN 17  
2020



ISA Parent Teacher Organisation



pto@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk

## WINTER FAMILY SOCIAL

Come join us for some great activities, entertainment, food and prizes at the Winter Family Social. We will be doing tokens for games or an unlimited wristband for £5. Lunch will be served by the HS Prom Committee and the HS Jazz band will be performing. Please bring some money for lunch, and IB bake sale. All funds raised are for the HS Prom Committee.

**SATURDAY FEB 1**  
**12:30-2:30 PM**

WINTER  
FAMILY  
SOCIAL



TEACHER  
TREATS

## TEACHER TREATS

To thank our wonderful teachers and staff each month, the parents provide a selection of portable breakfast and brunch items for them to enjoy. See schedule for dates for this semester:  
JAN 23 - G9 and G5  
FEB 12 - G4 and G3  
MAR 26 - STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCH  
APR 23 - G1 and G2  
MAY 28 - PRE-K and K

## SPIRIT WEAR PROMO ISA TARTAN SCARF

This 100% Scottish Lambs' wool scarf is warm, chunky and soft. Perfect for the chilly winter days. Now priced at just £12, so buy one while stocks last. Just as an addition to your winter gear, but it also makes a great graduation present! Spirit wear is on sale every Wednesday in the street between 2:30 and 4:30 PM or email [spiritwearisa@gmail.com](mailto:spiritwearisa@gmail.com).

£12



## ISA OPEN MORNING

Friday  
January 24th  
9:00 AM

PTO  
BOARD  
MEETING



## NEXT PTO MEETING

Monday  
February 3  
10.15 AM  
St Andrew's  
meeting room

# PTO ADVERTS PAGE

JAN 17  
2020

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 PTO via  
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