



24 January 2020

Important Dates

January

- 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 Parent Coffee with the Head of School, 8:15am in The Street
- 31 Grades 11 & 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

February

- 1 PTO Winter Family Social, 12:30-2:30pm
- 3 Parent Conversation with Head of School about ISA's Guiding Statements: 9:15am & 6:00pm, in the HS MPRs
- 3 PTO Meeting, 10:15am
- 3-7 MS/HS Spirit Week
- 3-7 Grade 10 Interviews with David Chapman
- 6 MS/HS Parent Coffee, 8:30am
- 6 MS Friendship Concert, 9:20am in The QET

▶ From the Head of School

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 3rd 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>.

School Closure

At the end of last October, I wrote to remind you of our procedures for school closure in case of snow. I commented that “the temperatures are starting to feel like winter” and that it was best to be prepared even though snow wasn't immediately forecast.

In the last couple of weeks, the temperatures are starting to feel like spring. Still no snow is forecast. Nevertheless, if you have lived in Aberdeen long enough to remember the 'Beast from the East' in February 2018, you know that an end to winter is still not guaranteed and the weather can suddenly turn.

It is worth giving a reminder of what happens if the school has to close on a normal day, especially for the families who have joined the ISA community since last autumn.

On the morning of the closure, we send out a text message and put a message on our website. Northsound 1 Radio (FM 96.9 MW 10.35) also read lists of school closures. We can't guarantee there will be anyone in school to answer the phone, and won't call families individually - so it is important to check these sources.

If there is bad weather but we think the school can still open. One of three things will happen:

- Normal bus routes
- Alternative bus routes (taking into account local conditions). In which case our Transport Coordinator, Ron Falconer, will contact affected families.
- A late start without buses, with families making their own way into school. Parents would need to check our website for updates.

If school is closed during the school day, we will contact families. Children of families who can't be reached will be kept at school. It will take some time to recall the buses to ISA so parents are welcome to pick up students.

As I mentioned in October, a school closure is not an easy decision to make. It doesn't take much snow to disrupt Aberdeen roads, and the view in what part of the city is quite different to another. I liaise with Ron Falconer and our bus companies (Peace and Allan & Black) to make the best decision possible with all the available information.

Hopefully, the mild weather will continue and there will be no need to make any difficult decision.

Best regards,

Nicholas Little
Head of School

▶ From the MS/HS Principal

Dear Middle/High School Parents,

The second semester is very much in full swing and there is a lot to look forward to. The MS basketball tournament is only a fortnight away, and the event incorporates a Fun Night that includes our visiting athletes. I hope as many of our MS students as possible will look to be involved and get to know some of our visitors from international schools in the region, whether it is by playing, spectating or hosting.

Next week is a busy one for our Grade 10 students as they start to look ahead to Grade 11. In addition to undertaking psychometric tests, students will hear from subject teachers during lunch breaks to give an insight into what our IB courses might be like. This year, we introduced Psychology as a Group Three subject, and I am pleased to share that from next August we will be able to offer Computer Science in Group Four. We now have a very wide choice of subjects available for a school of our size. However, I should highlight that there are limitations and not all combinations will be possible. I have been working closely with our Counsellor to ensure we accommodate as many students as possible and meet the expectations of college admissions teams.

The IBDP isn't the only route after Grade 10 and our Counsellor guides students in developing alternative pathways. These could be here at ISA in the form of individual IB Courses or modified programmes. We have NESCol visiting this week to talk about local options for our students, and a workshop today on CV writing will hopefully encourage students to start looking for work experience to help inform their decisions about the future.

A major strength of our school is its sense of community, and I hope you will be able to attend the PTO's Winter Social on Saturday, 1st February. This is a fun, school-wide event and a great way to engage with life at the school.

Angus Carmichael
MS/HS Principal

▶ From the Elementary Principal

Dear Parents,

• Differentiation

- Working on being an active listener
- Identifying the biggest and smallest numbers and reviewing concepts of one more and one less
- Work on fluency and expression
- Show good sportsmanship
- Explore and discuss contrast and pattern in art
- Reread passages to obtain greater understanding
- Writing benefits from careful planning, a step-by-step approach with constant proofreading, especially to check on whether your details are supporting the main idea you have chosen.

The comments above are taken from the current mid-year progress reports all parents will be receiving. Each example is typical of a 'next steps' approach to learning. In order to move each child forward, every subject teacher identifies areas for improvement so that progress can be

achieved in an ambitious manner. This approach to learning is also commonly referred to as **'Differentiated Instruction'**.

I thought it would be worthwhile to share what Differentiated Instruction (DI) is and is not. Much of what is considered effective practice for DI is found in the writings of **Carol Ann Tomlinson**, an American educator, author and speaker.

She has identified 7 effective practices to achieve DI. These are lofty approaches, but at ISA they are considered essential principles to promote ambitious learning.

***1. Differentiated instruction IS pro-active.**

In a differentiated classroom, the teacher assumes that different learners have differing needs and proactively plans lessons that provide a variety of ways to “get at” and express learning. Effective differentiation is typically designed to be robust enough to engage and challenge the full range of learners in the classroom.

2. Differentiated instruction IS more qualitative than quantitative.

Differentiating instruction does not mean giving some students more work to do, and others less. For example, a teacher might assign two book reports to advanced readers and only one to struggling readers. Or a struggling math student might have to complete only computation problems while advanced math students complete the computation problems plus a few word problems.

Although such approaches to differentiation may seem reasonable, they are typically ineffective. One book report may be too demanding for a struggling learner. A student who has already demonstrated mastery of one math skill is ready to begin work with a subsequent skill. Simply adjusting the quantity of an assignment will generally be less effective than altering the nature of the assignment.

3. Differentiated instruction IS rooted in assessment.

Teachers who understand that teaching and learning approaches must be a good match for students look for every opportunity to know their students better. They see conversations with individuals, classroom discussions, student work, observation, and formal assessment as ways to keep gaining insight into what works for each learner. What they learn becomes a catalyst for crafting instruction in ways that help every student make the most of his or her potential and talents.

In a differentiated classroom, assessment is no longer predominantly something that happens at the end of a unit to determine “who got it”. Diagnostic pre-assessment routinely takes place as a unit begins. Throughout the unit, the teacher assesses students’ developing readiness levels, interests, and approaches to learning and then designs learning experiences based on the latest, best understanding of students’ needs. Culminating products, or other means of “final” or summative assessment, take many forms, with the goal of finding a way for each student to most successfully share what he or she has learned over the course of the unit.

4. Differentiated instruction IS taking multiple approaches to content, process, and product.

In all classrooms, teachers deal with at least three curricular elements: (1) content—input, what students learn; (2) process—how students go about making sense of ideas and information; and (3) product—output, or how students demonstrate what they have learned.

By differentiating these three elements, teachers offer different approaches to what students learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate what they’ve learned. What the different approaches have in common is that they are crafted to encourage all students’

growth with established learning goals and to advance the learning of both the class as a whole and individual learners

5. **Differentiated instruction is student centered.**

Differentiated classrooms operate on the premise that learning experiences are most effective when they are engaging, relevant, and interesting to students. A corollary to that premise is that all students will not always find the same avenues to learning equally engaging, relevant, and interesting. Further, differentiated instruction acknowledges that later knowledge, skill, and understandings must be built on previous knowledge, skill, and understandings—and that not all students possess the same learning foundations at the outset of a given investigation.

Teachers who differentiate instruction in academically diverse classrooms seek to provide appropriately challenging learning experiences for all their students. These teachers realise that sometimes a task that lacks challenge for some learners is frustratingly complex to others.

6. **Differentiated instruction IS a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.**

There are times in all classrooms when whole-class instruction is an effective and efficient choice. It's useful for establishing common understandings, for example, and provides the opportunity for shared discussion and review that can build a sense of community.

A differentiated classroom is marked by a repeated rhythm of whole-class preparation, review, and sharing, followed by opportunity for individual or small-group exploration, extension, and production.

7. **Differentiated instruction IS “organic” and dynamic.**

In a differentiated classroom, teaching is evolutionary. Students and teachers are learners together. While teachers may know more about the subject matter at hand, they are continuously learning about how their students learn. Ongoing collaboration with students is necessary to refine learning opportunities so they're effective for each student. Teachers monitor the match between learner and learning and make adjustments as warranted.

**Source: Adapted from How to Differentiate Instruction in Academically Diverse Classrooms, 3rd Edition, by Carol Ann Tomlinson, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. ©2017 by ASCD. All rights reserved.*

• **A Message from the Healthy Lifestyle Committee.**

After a month of discussing healthy habits, the Elementary School looks forward to celebrating our annual Healthy Lifestyle week. We can't wait for all the fun we have in store next week!

Eat a Rainbow!

The theme of this year's Healthy Lifestyle week is to *Eat A Rainbow*. This will be highlighted by classroom teachers and in a special assembly this coming Monday. The aim is to have students think more about what they are putting on their plate at lunchtimes. We will talk about nutrition and the value of having a variety of different food types in your diet.

Eat a Rainbow Selfies!

We welcome students to bring in a photo of them eating amazingly colourful fruit. We will have a 'rainbow themed' display of these photos down by the cafeteria. Students are welcome to bring in these photos between now and 31st January.

Grade 3, 4 and 5 Great Swim Challenge.

As part of our healthy eating and wellbeing week, the grade 3, 4 and 5 students will be completing a **Great Swim Challenge** in their swimming lessons. Each grade, including some staff, will be swimming (using floats, noodles, flippers or body board, too, if they wish!) as many widths or lengths as they can in 30 minutes, which will then equate to air /swim miles! We will then see how far each grade has managed to travel from Aberdeen!

Grade 5 – Monday, 27th January – 1:20pm

Grade 4 – Tuesday, 28th January - 1:20pm

Grade 3 – Wednesday, 29th January - 8:30am

ALL GRADES

ISA Fit Kids – Friday, 31st January 2020

On Friday, 31st January from 1:10-2:55pm, Elementary School students will be participating in our annual ISA Fit Kids event. Students will be exploring ways to lead a healthy lifestyle through various physical and well-being activities. This event will be a great way to get the students moving and thinking about what makes a healthy lifestyle, all while working together. We ask that your child dresses in appropriate P.E. clothing (i.e. no dresses or skirts) and P.E. shoes that will allow them to participate in these various indoor physical activities, such as yoga or basketball. Thank you so much for your support!

Limbers

Students complete morning warm ups between 8:00am-8.10am.

The efforts to encourage a healthy lifestyle continue for a month in the hope that the extended discussions will contribute to the establishment of healthy habits such as considering the importance of exercise and making sensible food choices.

Best regards,

Don Newbury,
Elementary Principal

► From the Fine Arts Department

The Friendship Concert

Thursday, 6th February

9:20am

The Queen Elizabeth Theatre

Enjoy some music and tableau presented by the ISA Middle School Band & Drama students!



The Scottish Opera
with the Grade 4 & 5 Chorus
Monday, 10th February
2:10pm
The Queen Elizabeth Theatre

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

► From the MS Student Council

Middle and High School Spirit Week kicks off this year on Monday, 3rd February, and we hope students and teachers take part in it!! Middle School students will be able to win points for their houses.

These are the themes chosen by the Student Councils and the NHS:

Matching Monday (twin)
Tropical Tuesday
White-out Wednesday
Throwback Thursday (historical figure/character)
Fitness Friday

On Friday, 7th February, there will be a Middle School Fun Night to celebrate the MS Basketball tournament. Loads of food, fun and games at the gym (£5 if you're not hosting). Come and meet students from London, Norway and local schools. See you all there.

RECYCLING FOR A GOOD CAUSE ...

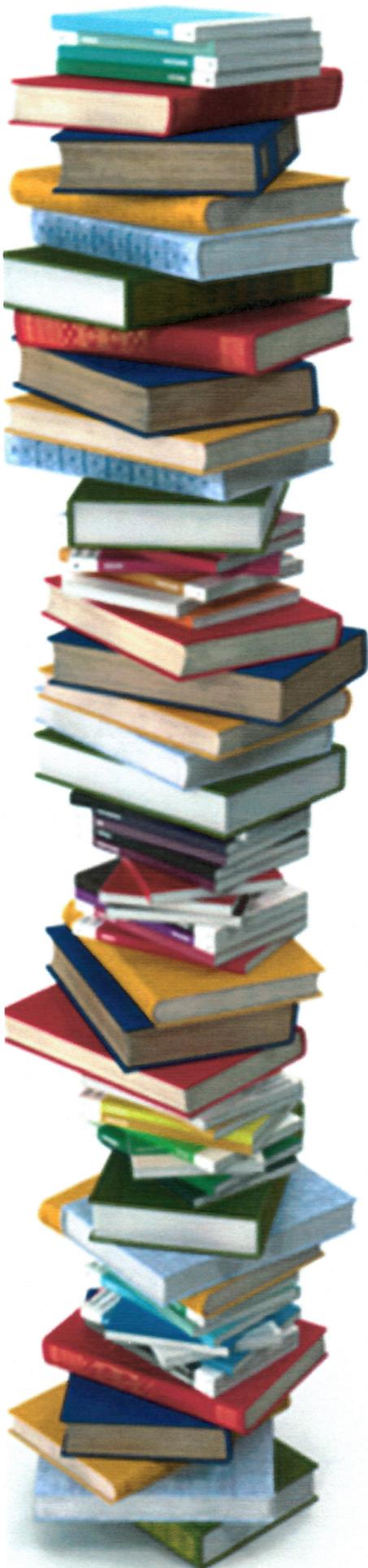
USED POSTAGE STAMPS

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

Thisle 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.



ARE BOOKS AND DVDS CLUTTERING YOUR HOUSE?

High School Environmental Club will be holding a thrift store during the Winter Social (1st February).

But, we need your help! If you have any books or DVDs, you no longer use, please bring them to school and deposit them in the box placed at reception.

You will be giving a second life to those items, and encouraging less wasteful consumption. And not only that: the money raised from those items will all go to a charity.

NEWS
FROM
YOUR
PTO

JAN 24
2019



ISA Parent Teacher
Organisation



pto@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk

ISA PTO MURDER MYSTERY DINNER PARTY

On Saturday March 14th, 2020, we will be holding our Annual Fundraising Event; a 3-course Murder Mystery Dinner Party at the 5-star Marcliffe Hotel. All proceeds support the ISA PTO. Please note this event is for adults only. Tickets, priced at £60 will go on sale next week!

14
MARCH
2020
7:00PM

TICKET SALE 27-30 January

Visit us in 'The Street' between 2:30-3:30 PM to get your tickets. Or email pto@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk, specifying the number of tickets (or a table of 12) and any dietary requirements. The more, the merrier, so please extend this invite to friends and family.

#1 CUISINE

Your first reason to join the event, is the fact you will be served a delicious 3-course meal prepared by an award-winning team of a 5-star hotel restaurant. Ranked number 6 in the list of best European restaurants in Aberdeen according to Tripadvisor.

#2 FUNDRAISING

We will auction a list of items, kindly offered to us by businesses in Aberdeen or ISA staff members. All proceeds can fund the enrichment programme. The PTO seeks to support as many worthwhile activities as reasonably possible. [READ MORE](#)

#3 ENTERTAINMENT

It's the night before the wedding of Laird Hamish Strathsporan and Tiffany Banks. As secrets are revealed, things quickly turn sour. Will Tiffany make it down the aisle? Will this wedding be the death of her? Join us to find out...

WINTER FAMILY SOCIAL

Saturday
February 1st
12:30-2:30 PM

PTO
BOARD
MEETING

NEXT PTO MEETING

Monday
February 3
10.15 AM
St Andrew's
meeting room

PTO ADVERTS PAGE

JAN 24
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 email pto.advertising@gmail.com or pto@isa.aberdeen.sch.uk.



The Marcliffe Hotel

The Marcliffe is a luxurious, relaxed and ultra-elegant five-star country hotel set in its own picturesque grounds on the outskirts of the historic city of Aberdeen. It offers a range of superb facilities, which has earned it membership of the coveted Small Luxury Hotels of the World.

www.marcliffe.com

Disclaimer: ISA PTO disclaims liability for loss or damage or any nature and extent resulting in directly or indirectly, from any use of the information and advertising presented on the PTO Facebook page and notices. ISA PTO advertisers operate their own web-pages and social media accounts and may not claim or imply affiliation or endorsement with ISA or ISA PTO. ISA PTO are not responsible for any content found on the websites that are hyper-linked to other public, or private organisations, nor do we guarantee the accuracy of any linked information. ISA advertisers do not represent the views of ISA or ISA PTO.