

eis ABERDEEN EIS NEWSLETTER

The Educational
Institute of Scotland

November 2002

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YOU are the EIS

Making your voice count!

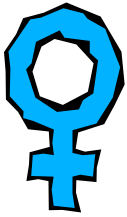
Every year the EIS holds its AGM, where motions are sent in by Local Associations to be debated. At the National AGM this year, Aberdeen Local Association, had two successful motions: One concerning INCLUSION of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in mainstream schools and the need to retain off-site provision for pupils with Social and Emotional Behaviour Difficulties (SEBD). The success of this motion means that the EIS Nationally must look again at its policy on the inclusion of SEBD pupils into mainstream, and pursue the issues of resources and training of staff.

The other motion was concerning pay rises for music instructors. The results of this motion are detailed in an article on page 6 of this Newsletter.

As a member of the EIS your views and opinions are important and one way of being heard and being active in the Union is to put forward motions or even ideas for motions to your Local Association. Shortly you will be invited through your school representative to send in your proposals for the Local Association AGM in February and I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you as an individual or as a school to think about possible motions that would address issues in our education system and send them in when requested.

YOUR Local Association needs your views and is ready to help **YOU** make a difference.

Susan Wood
LA President



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In March I attended a Conference on 'Education and Sexual Orientation' in Stirling. The conference was organised by the EIS Equal Opportunities Committee and members of the EIS Lesbian & Gay Network led several sessions. A large part of the conference was taken up with discussion of 'What is Good Practice' and 'What can we do in schools?'

The school experience of many gay and lesbian pupils and teachers is particularly unhappy and stressful. If they are open about their sexual orientation they are subjected to homophobic bullying, if they are not open they internalise the negative messages they receive and this can lead to despair and even suicide. The first step in tackling homophobia in schools is to recognise that it exists and can be as dangerous as other forms of discrimination. Staff attitudes as well as pupil attitudes will have to change. Staff are rarely accused of being openly homophobic but the careless use of words such as 'sissy', 'Jessie' or 'Big Girls Blouse' can be perceived as giving approval to the condemnation of young people when they do not behave within the stereotypes society has created for them. Homophobic bullying should be dealt with in the same way as other forms of bullying

such as sexism and racism and should be referred to in a school's anti-bullying policy. Negative and hostile attitudes towards homosexuality have devastating effects on young people and we in education can play a major part in challenging myths and prejudices. So, the next time you hear the presently common insult 'Gay boy' being directed at someone in the corridor don't just ignore it, challenge it and make it clear that you find it unacceptable.

EIS LESBIAN AND GAY NETWORK

This network holds meetings throughout the year for informal discussions and support. All lesbian and gay members of the EIS are welcome to attend. If you cannot attend but want to be kept informed of the meetings and receive the newsletter, you can join the confidential mailing list. Mail is posted to your home address. You can contact the network through the EIS National Officer [Education and Equalities] Veronica Rankin on 0131 225 6244 or vrankin@eis.org.uk

By Lynda Carnie
EIS Equal Opportunities Officer

SCHOOL REPS

Please photocopy any part of this newsletter which might be useful to the EIS members in your school.

If any member would like to write an article for possible inclusion in the next newsletter, please contact the assistant secretary. Contacts are on the back page of this issue.

CONTAINMENT • INCLUSION

The commitment to Social Inclusion is a step towards tolerance, understanding and integration. Society can only benefit from this, and where better to begin than in schools. The inclusion of Special Education into mainstream classes has been underway for many years. Where there has been training and support, there has been success, and off-site units for more specialised support have a vital part to play. The classroom teacher does the mainstream education; the SEN specialists consult, monitor, support and evaluate. This sounds like good sense.

The inclusion of Socially, Emotionally and Behaviourally Disturbed pupils puts many teachers in the position of dealing with pupils who cannot cope with life. Pupils who come to school already angry, bent on confrontation with anyone in authority, pupils who want more than their share of attention and will do anything to get it, and those whose confidence is so low they would rather disrupt than tackle what school has to offer, because they have learned that they are quite good at being “bad”.

Schools have been containing such pupils for years. The 6-day exclusion sanction helps nobody on any long-term basis. The referral process is painfully slow and by the time anything potentially helpful is set up, the efforts of mainstream education have been wasted. Unless specialised support is provided in a good model off-site unit, these pupils will flounder in the mainstream class.

Inclusion is not the same as containment. Containment is possible for those who will respond to good behaviour sanctions and rewards. It doesn't take long for a teacher to separate the bloody-minded from those who have genuine social difficulties that

would benefit from early referral and treatment. The mainstream teacher can spot the symptoms better than anybody, but the diagnosis and therapy need appropriately trained staff.

Learning Support teachers already have a duty to pupils in mainstream who need support in accessing the curriculum. At present pupils with SEN needs in learning, but have no behaviour problems, are experiencing a diminution of support.

The cost of paying only lip service to inclusion of SEBD is huge in terms of pupil and teacher stress, curriculum limitations and the likelihood of those “lost” children who will turn to crime. Like most improvements in education, inclusion will be expensive. Funding must be released to train dedicated SEBD staff for school bases and off-site units.

Evelyn Provatos, Class Teacher.



PARTY !

Bill Ross, Local Association secretary for the past 9 years, retired in the summer.

A retirement “do” has been organised for Friday 22nd November in the Palm Court Hotel.

Please seek out your EIS rep and order your ticket for this event.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Violence and Incident Forms

You should know that the Scottish Executive Education Dept (SEED) now require extra information to be recorded when you report an incident of violence (full details are in all schools). This has meant that there is now one form for violent incidents and another for all other incidents e.g. vandalism. Please ensure that all incidents are recorded on the correct form.

It is important to know that SEED define violence as:

“any incident in which any employee of a school is seriously abused, is threatened or is assaulted by a pupil, parent, member of the public or any other persons in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment. This includes physical attack and threatening behaviour, with or without a weapon, and intentional damage to personal property”.

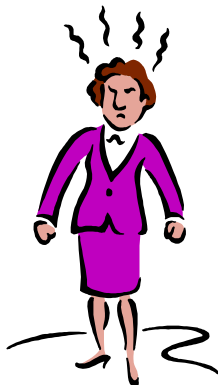
The new ‘violence’ form is in all other ways identical to the other form, and the requirement for anyone reporting an incident to receive a copy of the form, within 10 **working** days, detailing action taken remains.

Assaults

It is not acceptable that any school’s staff should feel that threatening behaviour from others is a normal part of the job. Please complain vigorously to management if you feel that action taken is not suitable or sufficient. Children of all ages can surprise us with their reactions to things and, as teachers, we are often kind and forgiving, but this mustn’t mean that we put ourselves and others at further risk of injury by failing to report the incident.

Assaults in city schools are rare, but do happen. Please report them.

The Education H&S Committee will be looking at a breakdown of the assault figures soon and I’d welcome any written comments you may have.



Long-standing, Unresolved H&S Issues

Resolution of H&S problems in schools should be a chance for co-operation and not confrontation. You may

not always get all you would want, but if genuine efforts are being made then you may be prepared to waitbut not forever. If there are serious, long-standing, unresolved H&S concerns in your school, then consider contacting me. I may not be able to help at all, but you never know.....

Yearly H&S Inspections

These are still important, but the main thrust of H&S should be risk assessments and staff being aware of their H&S responsibilities and reporting problems to management as they arise. You may wish to consider producing and using simple pro-forma, available to all staff, to report these concerns. Suggested format:

- Name of reportee
- Details of concern
- Suggestion to solve problem
- Action taken

Form to be returned to reportee.

School H&S Committees

Post McCrone, when we should be more co-operative and 'collegiate', there is clearly a place for H&S Committees in all schools. These need not take up much time. They are an opportunity to discuss H&S and show commitment from management and trade unions to trying to resolve H&S problems.

Not enough time?.....Include one or two H&S Committees in the school calendar agreed during McCrone negotiations in May/June and you are more likely to make them happen. Raising H&S awareness makes schools a little bit safer.

School Security

There is a review of this being carried out just now. Schools cannot be made totally safe and secure (sounds like a discussion topic for SYS English!). In all aspects of H&S one should always think about what is 'reasonable', 'practicable' and 'acceptable'. However, if there are aspects of your school's security system that give you real cause for concern, then tell management and ask them to contact Charlie Topp (Facilities, Education Dept). Security systems can be improved if staff point out the deficiencies. Issues raised will help the review to target limited cash in the right directions.

H&S Self Audit

To make all staff more aware of their H&S responsibilities, like it or not, it is important to carry them out at the most appropriate level and place. This does not mean that the Council can remove all support. Use the new procedures to highlight what the school perceives to be shortfalls in resources and training. Ask the H&S Dept staff for assistance if needed. Make the system work for you. It can be argued that H&S should be a first priority in schools and one where all staff should wish to be fully involved.

Rob Peaker
EIS Health & Safety Officer

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Interim Aberdeen City Local Association Secretary

Following the retirement of Bill Ross in June 2002, Aberdeen City EIS Executive appointed me, Roddy Robertson, to take over as interim Local Association Secretary until March 2003, when this post, along with all the other official positions of the Local Association, comes up for annual election. My contact details can be found on the back page of this Newsletter.

I have already become aware that some members seeking advice have not got in touch with me during the working day, either because I have been unavailable; or because it can be difficult at school to find time to telephone; or perhaps because there is no private place from which a confidential call can be made. I appreciate also the consideration shown by those of you who are reluctant to ring me at home. However, you should not hesitate to do so. My answering machine keeps domestic disruption to a minimum, and I find it convenient to try and set aside a part of the evening to respond to messages.

Bill Ross

In a recent letter to school representatives, I made mention of the tremendous debt owed to our former Secretary by Aberdeen City EIS members. I would like to repeat that tribute here.

Bill Ross was (and still is) a member of the EIS for 33 years. He held positions at every level of the Institute from school representative to National Executive member over these years, and for the last decade, until his recent retirement, he served as Aberdeen City Local Secretary. Throughout his career, Bill was a tireless champion of the rights of Aberdeen teachers in all sectors. He was a skilled administrator, organiser and negotiator; and he successfully pursued innumerable cases on behalf of individual

members with tact, tenacity and dedication. I am sure that you will join with me in wishing him a long, fulfilling and well-deserved retirement.

Arthur Lennox

LA members will be saddened to hear of the recent death, at the age of 75, of Arthur Lennox, another former LA Secretary of many years' standing, who was a prominent EIS figure at National level during the 70s and 80s, and who attained the office of National President. As was reported in the local press, "countless numbers of EIS members he helped over the years will remember him with affection and a profound sense of loss." An obituary of Arthur will appear in the next edition of the Scottish Educational Journal, the Institute's national publication.

Notice of Local Association Meeting

The next meeting of Aberdeen Local Association EIS will take place on

Monday, 25th November, 2002, in Aberdeen Grammar School Lecture Theatre, at 7.15pm.

The first item of business will be the financial AGM, at which our treasurer, Grant Bruce, presents the details of the Local Association's annual income and expenditure to the membership for approval. Other items will include CPD, "Winding Down" and Classroom Observation. Your school representative will have received a copy of a detailed agenda. I would urge everyone to make an effort to attend and would hope to see at least one member from every establishment.

.....Continued on page 7 **L**

Musical Notes

At the AGM in Dundee, a motion presented by Aberdeen Local Association to “instruct the Executive Council to continue to seek matching pay increases for music instructors in the event of teacher pay rises,” was carried by a large majority after having been amended to include advisers and educational psychologists.

Another motion presented by South Lanarkshire Association “That this AGM instruct Executive Council to establish a short-life ad hoc group to consider how the needs of music instructors can best be served” was remitted to the Executive Council. It was argued that the EIS Music Instructors’ National Network formed in February

2002 would serve the purpose of looking specifically at the needs of music instructors, but the proposer felt that more input was required than could be afforded by this body.

Regarding Conditions of Service, North Lanarkshire’s motion “to call upon all local authorities and college boards of management to ensure that all educational establishments have safe, secure and healthy working environments” will also be welcomed by music instructors, because in schools where teaching accommodation is in short supply, the needs of music instructors often appear low on the list of priorities, and this has implications for the health and welfare of these staff as well as for the delivery of the service.

Caroline Tariq, Music Instructor

Payslip Errors

I would like to end my first Secretary’s Report by offering some very simple and straightforward advice, which echoes that given to all employees of Aberdeen City Council in every salary slip they receive. It is as follows:

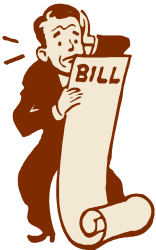
“You are expected to check your payroll to ensure the payment is correct. All unusual amounts should be reported without delay to the payroll section (tel: 664165) for clarification.”

It is important to follow this advice, not only to avoid being underpaid, but because in cases of over-payment, the Authority will always demand full re-imburement, as it is deemed to be the employee’s responsibility to check that payment is correct. It is not as unusual as one might think for employees to get themselves into serious financial difficulty by having failed to report over-payments which have in time accumulated into very considerable sums of money.

It can also happen (although fortunately, not often) that an



employee reports a suspected over-payment to the authority, is told that there has been no mistake and accepts this reassurance, only to be informed at a later date that he/she had been right all along and must now repay the money.



I would therefore recommend that members who think they might have been over-paid do the following:

- **when telephoning the payroll section, ask for the name of the person you are speaking to;**
- **ask for confirmation in writing of the information given;**
- **if you still have any doubts about the validity of this written confirmation, get in touch with myself, so that I can double-check the details of your case with the Authority, before you spend the money.**

Roderick Robertson
LA Secretary

If you require assistance you should in the first instance contact your school EIS Representative. If she/he is unable to answer your enquiry you should contact the LA secretary, Roddy Robertson (who may wish to contact the local area officer for further advice.) If he is unavailable please do not hesitate to contact any of the officials listed below. We are always pleased to help with advice, support and information.

LA Secretary: Roddy Robertson
OFFICE: Summerhill Centre, Stronsay Drive
Aberdeen, AB15 6JA
Tel: 01224 346375
Fax: 01224 346374
Email: rrobertson@eis.org.uk
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Aberdeen AB11 6XN
Tel: 01224 575565

Assistant Secretary: Evelyn Provatos
Tel: School 633363
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 Treasurer: Grant Bruce
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Home: 316158
EMail GBruceEIS@aol.com

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 Health & Safety Officer: Rob Peaker
Tel: School 310184
Home: 01569 731197
EMail RPeakerEIS@aol.com

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 Equal Opportunities Officer: Lynda Carnie
Tel: School 820887
EMail lccarnie@aol.com

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 EIS Area Officer: Stuart Topp
1 Ardross Street

We hope that you found this newsletter of use. We intend to produce one each term and would welcome comments from members about issues raised in this edition, what you would like us to include in future issues and ideas about other ways of communicating with members

We would also welcome contributions for inclusion in future issues.

Please contact any of the LA officials listed on this page if you require more information on any of the issues addressed in this newsletter.

The Aberdeen Local Association Website can be found at:

www.eis-aberdeen.org.uk