

EIS Council September 2020

The first meeting of the EIS national Council for this school year took place on Friday 25th September. The meeting was dominated by continuing concerns over COVID-19 and the need to keep teachers and pupils safe from the risk of infection.

Council members approved a series of COVID action points that the EIS will take forward, through all appropriate forums, as a matter of urgency. These include:

- Seeking clear articulation from the Scottish Government of the triggers that would require local or national school closures, and/or a move to a blended or remote learning model of education.
- To demand contingency planning for staff previously shielding in the context of rising levels of infection.
- To continue and intensify the EIS campaign for smaller class sizes, which are essential to enable physical distancing to help keep staff and pupils safe.
- A renewed call for concrete physical distancing measures facilitated through expansion of the school estate and the employment of additional teachers.
- To call for clear guidelines from Scottish Government on ventilation and heating in classrooms.
- To demand stronger guidance and support for ASN pupils and staff, including those in ASN settings.
- A renewed campaign on tackling the impact of poverty on educational experience.
- To express a lack of confidence in the SQA handling of the 2020 accreditation process and in the current planning for 2021.

In addition to agreeing the list of action points, Council also approved a Motion which highlighted grave concern over the rising number of coronavirus cases across Scotland and, in particular, those in schools and educational settings, and called on the EIS to campaign to secure a wider range of mitigations to protect pupils and staff in schools.

Scottish Government Children and Young People Infographics

The Scottish Government is putting together weekly infographics providing a snapshot of current COVID-related data in relation to children and young people, and their associated workforce, such as the number of tests and positive cases reported, and the attendance and absence of both children and staff in childcare and school settings. You can view the latest infographic at www.eis.org.uk/Coronavirus/Infographic

Action for Reps and Branch Secretaries: Please make members aware of the weekly infographics.

Care for Colleagues Posters

Please find enclosed with this bulletin posters encouraging staff to maintain social distancing and wear a mask when around their colleagues, particularly in staff rooms.

Action for Reps and Branch Secretaries: Please display the enclosed posters in your establishment.

Return to School

The EIS recently conducted a survey of reps regarding the level of health and safety mitigations and teachers' experiences and concerns returning to full time teaching during Coronavirus. The results of the survey are available in the Covid-19 section of the EIS website.

You can also find updated Health & Safety advice on Risk Assessments and schools reopening, and a full recording of the stage two Health & Safety training.

Action for Reps: Please make use of the COVID-19 resources available on the EIS website. www.eis.org.uk/Health-And-Safety/COVID19

Guidance on the Reopening of Campuses

At the last minute, the Scottish Government decided to merge guidance documents about the safe opening of campuses and accommodation blocks for the FE & HE sectors, into one document. We were given limited time to comment on this document but had been involved in writing some of the pre-existing guidance that has been incorporated into this version. You can download the guidance from the Scottish Government publications web page on which there is also a helpful Risk Assessment Tool.

They have now also produced a sector advice card which lists all the relevant pieces of guidance for industries which might affect Colleges and Universities. You can find it at <http://bitly.ws/9P67>

Action for Branch Secretaries: Please make members aware of the latest guidance documents.

Probationer Teachers

Probationers that did not join as student members are eligible to join the EIS as full members and this is FREE for up to 16 months from the start of their probation.

Action for Reps: Please approach any probationers in your school and encourage them to join for free by visiting the Probationer section of the EIS website.

Gwen Mayor Trust

The Gwen Mayor Memorial Trust was established following the tragic events in Dunblane Primary School on 13 March 1996, when teacher Gwen Mayor lost her life along with 16 pupils. The purpose of the Trust is "to advance education by providing financial support for projects in connection with the arts, culture, music or sport submitted to the Trustees by primary schools or departments in Scotland."

Applications are now invited from primary schools and departments in Scotland. Proposed projects should fall within the purpose of the fund as set out above. Requests for full or partial funding of projects will be considered.

If you are interested in applying for funding please contact Karen Nicholson (knicholson@eis.org.uk) for an application form.

Action for Reps in primary schools and primary departments only: Please pass this information on to your Headteacher.

Updating Member Details

If you have new colleagues in your school who are EIS members, they should update their school base or personal contact details on the myEIS section of the website. Remind them to log on using their EIS number. It is quick and simple to set up a password. Alternatively, as a Rep you should have access to member lists for your school and you can update details on their behalf.

Action for Reps: Visit www.eis.org.uk/Account/EISLogin to update member details.

TUC Training Courses for Reps

We normally offer a four-day face-to-face TUC training course for new reps, with a two-day session followed by a break of a month or so and then another two-day session. This training has been cancelled due to the pandemic, but we are looking to modify it for online delivery in November (for two days), concluding in January (for another two days).

Action for Reps: If you are interested in attending this online reps training course then please register an interest with Jennifer Cook (JCook@eis.org.uk).

Contact your EIS Organiser

If you would like advice on rep training or building your branch, please contact your EIS Organiser. You can find their contact details on the EIS website.