



The Educational  
Institute of Scotland

## Newsletter to all EIS members in Scottish Borders October 2010

At the Executive Committee meeting on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October it was decided that a short newsletter should be sent to all members with advice and information about various current issues.

### STUC DEMONSTRATION (SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER 2010 – EDINBURGH)

Several members have emailed me to ask about the arrangements for this event. Hopefully, as Edinburgh is more easily reached from Scottish Borders there will be good representation from our region at this protest march. The Executive Committee have decided not to hire buses as we did for the Glasgow march and rally in March 2010. Instead we propose to contribute towards the costs incurred by protesters travelling to Edinburgh by car or public transport. The details of this have yet to be worked out but some method of validation will be required for expenses to be claimed. We judged that most people would prefer to travel independently or with a group from their own school. We have located the Borders' banner and so we will be able to march together.

The assembly point for the demonstration is **East Market Street** at around 11.00am. We will then move off at about 11.30am to **Market Street** and then via the **Mound** to **Princes Street Gardens**. The rally will be held at **the Ross Bandstand** in the gardens.

Please contact me if you require further information or check out the Borders EIS website at [www.borderseis.org.uk](http://www.borderseis.org.uk)

### ELECTRONIC PAYSLIPS

A number of members have contacted me about the difficulties encountered in viewing electronic payslips. There are several issues to be resolved around this and we have taken our concerns both to the LNCT and to the JCG. We were informed by Dee MacLean, Human Resources, that teachers who have not accessed their details on-line have received a paper copy of their pay slip in the usual way for September. We are assured that it is possible to access payslips and, if the procedure is followed, to view them on a personal computer. Teacher Unions were not present at the meeting where this system was approved by other Trade Unions and so it is not accurate for SBC staff to claim that the EIS agreed to this. It was presented as a cost saving exercise and has been introduced in other Regions. I believe that support staff in schools are also having problems with access and adjustments may have to be made. Please be aware that attendance records are also available on this system and that promoted staff that conduct return-to-work interviews have access to those. This is a concern that we will be taking to HR and our advice would be to state 'medical reason' only when asked on a self-certification form for reason for absence.

## VIOLENT INCIDENTS

At the JCG meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010 we were presented with the statistics for reported violent incidents in Borders' schools. These are listed for calendar years and already the figures for 2010 in Primary schools is more than half of the total for 2009. At the JCG meeting Jackie Swanston said that all head teachers had agreed that they would talk to staff on the first in-service day back in August about reporting violent incidents. We have yet to find a school where this was done. The teachers' side of the JCG remains convinced that these incidents are under-reported, in part because of the complexity of the form. I would welcome any feed back on this issue, especially about difficulties in reporting.

## RISK ASSESSMENT (Advice from EIS Council – May 2010)

Members are reminded that there is no contractual requirement on unpromoted teachers to undertake risk assessments or to sign off on risk assessments. The list of duties, SNCT Handbook, Part 2, paragraph 2.2 does not include this. For promoted post holders such a requirement may be specified in the remit of a promoted post. Under the provisions of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Agreement the remits of all posts are devolved to LNCTs for agreement. The remit of some promoted posts may include the undertaking of risk assessments. However the Council must ensure that all risk assessors are provided with sufficient training to ensure that they meet the legal requirement of being 'a competent person'. There must also be sufficient time and resources for the assessment to be carried out appropriately. All teachers may be required to provide information and assistance in the risk assessment procedure and should be consulted during the process. If you are being asked to take on risk assessment responsibilities and don't believe it is part of your job/remit or have not been allocated sufficient time or training for this task then contact me with the details.

## SEEMIS

The Executive committee is concerned about workload issues surrounding the procedures of reporting on pupils' progress. We intend to raise this at the next LNCT meeting in November and would welcome feedback from members on the use of SEEMIS, the reliability of the system and any demands for increased reporting.

## CLASS SIZE

There have been a few instances reported of practical classes in Secondary Schools in excess of the statutory maximum of 20. Members are reminded that this maximum is contractual. Management who ask teachers to take more than 20 in a practical class (as listed in the SNCT Handbook, Part 2, Appendix 2.9) and teachers who agree are in breach of contract. In the case of an incident in such a class SBC's insurance would be null and void and teachers might find themselves personally liable (unlikely but possible).

Kay Miller, Secretary.