



# Elgin High School

## PARENT NEWSLETTER

**October 2016**



### Introduction

In 2003, shortly after being appointed as Head Teacher I wrote in Pigeon Post (the school magazine): *“Over the last six years [while Depute Head at Keith Grammar School] I have visited Elgin High School regularly to attend meetings. On those visits many things impressed me. Not just the canteen meals (which have the reputation of being amongst the best in Moray) and the welcome of the office staff, but the atmosphere amongst the pupils and staff was always impressive. The way people conducted themselves in the classrooms and in the corridors gave the impression that here is a good school with a positive atmosphere. I am looking forward to joining you in August.”* Thirteen years later I believe that these characteristics are still true. Certainly the queues for chicken pie are testimony to the continued triumphs of the canteen staff. The welcome given by the office staff was recognised by the Director of Education and Social Care in his prize giving speech. Over the last few weeks visitors to the school, such as the Scholar Trainer and YPI Coordinator, have given unsolicited tributes to the conduct of pupils and the positive atmosphere.

Yet this is only part of the life of Elgin High School. In putting together a presentation of reflections for the Parent Council I looked through thousands of photographs, old diary entries and countless minutes of meetings. It was exciting to be reminded of so many activities, events and more particularly, faces of pupils who have passed through the school. There are too many to list here. However, the successes, the raised expectations and triumphs remain as having had an impact on lives. I have also had the privilege of speaking to many former pupils over the last few months. The stories of their achievements since leaving school have also been an encouragement. So too the conversations with current students have been inspirational as they plan and prepare for life after Elgin High School. Here is the heart of Elgin High School that 13 years ago I was looking forward to being part of.

May I conclude with two paragraphs from my letter of resignation written in March to the Director?

*Last Wednesday [the turf cutting ceremony for the new build] we reached a particular milestone in the life of Elgin High School. I am pleased to have played a role in helping to ensure that the pupils, parents and staff will soon have first class facilities which match their aspirations and potential. Now, I believe, is the time for someone else to take the school forward and to use the opportunities provided by such investment to enable the school community to achieve even greater successes and achievements in the future.*



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*I have enjoyed the last thirteen years – even with the many challenges provided by the ever changing and increasing expectations placed on schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While there is always more that could have been achieved, I believe I can leave Elgin High School as a forward looking and successful school. For this I must pay tribute to my colleagues – teachers and support staff – who work tirelessly for the pupils. I am confident that their outstanding personal and professional qualities will ensure the continued success of the school. I am also grateful for the support and encouragement that I have received from the parents and wider community. However, in addition, I must mention the pupil body. It has been a privilege to work with them and to see so many achieve such a wide range of successes.*

It has indeed been a privilege to be Head Teacher of Elgin High School and I can only finish by wishing everyone well for the future and thanking you for your support which has allowed us to be a community that is “working together for success”.



**Andrew Simpson**  
Head Teacher

*“Working together for success”*



Since the last newsletter, the following appointments have been made:

Miss Corinne Robson will take over as Acting Principal Teacher of English when Miss Louise Upton goes on maternity leave in November.

Mrs Debbie McDonald will take on the role of acting Depute Head Teacher in October. She will take on Mr Hugh McCulloch’s position when he becomes Head Teacher. The interview process for the permanent replacement for Mr McCulloch should be completed by the October holiday. It is anticipated that the successful candidate will be in post from January.





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*"Thanks a  
Latte, Andy!"*

Saturday 24th September saw a very successful coffee morning held in Elgin High School. In addition to enjoying fresh pancakes, bacon rolls and burgers were also available. The Social Enterprise groups ran a series of stalls alongside home bakes and other sales tables. Musicians entertained the visitors with a wide variety of musical numbers.



The morning was also an opportunity for Mr Andy Simpson, retiring Head Teacher, to say farewell to past pupils and parents as well as members of the community.

The morning raised £1102.53 for the partnership between Elgin High School and Mukonchi Secondary School in Zambia.



*International  
Schools Award*

In September, the British Council announced that Elgin High School had successfully achieved the International Schools Award. This is an achievement that is recognized across the UK. It recognizes the commitment of the school to delivering global citizenship. As well as the partnership with Mukonchi Secondary School, the award was gained because of work in many departments. These included the library links with Elgin High School in Oregon, USA. The work done in Religious and Moral Education with Holocaust Education was also a key feature of the submission. The collaboration between the Geography and Home Economics departments on Fair Trade was another highlight. Increasingly underpinning much of the life of the school is the progress being made towards gaining the Level 1 Rights Respecting Schools Award (we already have committed status). All these and several other projects demonstrated the commitment of the school to global education and we are delighted to have the recognition from the British Council.





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Well done to everyone for the support with the new uniform code. We have received countless compliments from many people including members of the local community as well as visitors to the school. Your continued support is much appreciated.

ALLOWED:	✓	NOT ALLOWED:	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Trousers or Skirt</li> <li>• Black Jumper / Cardigan</li> <li>• White Collared Shirt / Blouse</li> <li>• Black Footwear</li> <li>• School Tie (mandatory from August 2016)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leggings / Jeans</li> <li>• Hoodies – any colours</li> <li>• Black Collared Shirts</li> <li>• Polo Shirts</li> <li>• T-Shirts</li> <li>• Non-Black Footwear</li> </ul>	



Sadly, due to ill health, Zigi Shipper, Holocaust survivor, was unable to visit Elgin in September. Zigi has an amazing story to tell of his survival through the period of the Second World War and in particular the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

He sends his greetings to everyone in Elgin and hopes that it will be possible to come north before too long. In return, we have extended our best wishes to him.



The annual Parent Forum took place at the end of September. Andy Simpson gave an illustrated talk reflecting on his thirteen years as Head Teacher of Elgin High School. A number of parents also agreed to join the Parent Council. The office bearers for the year are:

- Chair - Calum McKenzie
- Vice Chair - (Vacant)
- Secretary - Mary Dow
- Treasurer - Kirsty Anderson

Anyone who wants to contact the Parent Council members can do so through the school office. The next meeting will be at 7.00pm on Monday 31st October.

Any parent interested in finding out more, or being involved, will be very welcome.



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### Roald Dahl 100 Day

The centenary of Roald Dahl's birth was marked in whizzcracking style at Elgin High School. Pupils and staff filled dream jars with thoughts and musings.



Wonka bars and golden tickets were awarded to winning pupils, Josh Parkinson and Kayleigh Howie for their inspired dreams especially the one about being a Dream Jar Competition Winner. Mr Simpson, Head Teacher, was more than thrilled to win the staff category.



A lunchtime quiz on gobblefunk words and Roald Dahl books was won by Miss Bissett's team and all the hopscotchy nonsense was accompanied with suitable treats from the local Grubber.



### New Build

Anyone who has walked past the area or seen the pictures on Facebook or the Blog (that is accessible from the school website) will be aware of the rapid progress being made on the construction of the new build. The roof is now on the PE block and the steel frame for the main teaching building has been completed. Work is going well and everything is still on target for completion in October 2017.



There was recently a very positive meeting between the Principal Teachers of a number of departments and the contractors. They identified several possible educational projects that can be done over the next few months. This will allow pupils to learn directly from the processes that are leading to their new school building. More details will follow soon.





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### International Day of Languages

Monday 26th September saw the International Day of Languages celebrated in Elgin High School. The Modern Languages department organised a day of events involving many other subject areas. At a series of assemblies all pupils watched a video produced by S2 and S3 pupils explaining the importance of learning languages. Throughout the day pupils had tasters of Mandarin (including calligraphy), Norwegian and other languages. The Canteen staff organised Chinese food for lunch. A quiz took place in the library where teams competed to show off their knowledge of languages and skills with chopsticks. History presented special lessons on the Great Wall of China, Maths held a Japanese quiz and treasure hunt, English looked at the origin of words, Home Economics cooked international food and in PE, the Chinese national sport Jianzi was played. Congratulations to Mrs Elvines, Principal Teacher of Modern Languages for organising such a full day of activities.



### The Library At Lunchtimes

There are lots of things going on in the Library at lunchtimes this term. S6 pupils organised a Library Lunchtime Quiz on Friday 26th August with rounds on Scotland and Zambia to test our Zambia visitors and ourselves. Mrs Elvines (Principal Teacher Modern Languages) and her team of Zambian and Scottish pupils emerged victorious by the narrowest of margins.



The Library Club meets during Thursday lunchtimes for all sorts of word games, debates, book chat and biscuits. Robbie Cameron and Owen Lilley gave a library talk on Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events.



Elgin High School Library won £500 from the Siobhan Dowd Trust to spend in a local independent book shop. Our Reading Champions' first job was to take charge of the shopping list. Lots more to come next term including Book Week Scotland, Grampian Children's Book Award and Scottish Teen Club.



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### communications

Every effort is made to keep parents and the community informed of the life of Elgin High School. These include:

Facebook: Elgin High School, Moray  
Website: [www.elginhigh.moray.sch.uk](http://www.elginhigh.moray.sch.uk)  
Twitter:

@AndySimpsonHT	@ Elgin High SchoolModLangs
@HistoryDept Elgin High School	@ Elgin High SchoolChemdep
@ Elgin High School_PEdept	@ModStuds Elgin High School
@ Elgin High SchoolMathsDept	@TheLibraryat Elgin High School
@ Elgin High SchoolEnglishDept	@ Elgin High SchoolScienceRocks

Mr McCulloch will be starting his Twitter account in October!

### Outside classroom Activities

Included with this newsletter are details of the wide range of opportunities available to pupils outside the classroom. Full details are announced through the Daily Bulletin. While staff can offer a wide range of choices, we recognise that pupils will have many other interests. Therefore the school has built up contacts with local groups who through the availability and access to specialist equipment, trained leaders or even greater numbers can offer other opportunities. These include: sporting, musical, drama and many other areas of life. If any parents would like details of contacts, please do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's Guidance Teacher. We are keen to promote involvement in Community Groups and also celebrate achievements.

Open Days - details of these can be found on the University websites. They were also listed in the April Newsletter (see the Elgin High School website for a copy).





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### **October**

- 4 Staff versus Pupils football match for Tickled Pink charity  
S1 Parents Evening – Subjects
- 7 Tickled Pink Charity Day (wear something pink  
with your uniform)  
3.20pm Holidays
- 24 New Term
- 26 S1 Parents Evening – Guidance
- 27 S1 Future Chef Competition  
S1 Parents Evening – Guidance

### **November**

- 2 School Talent Show  
S5 Safe Drive Stay Alive event day in Aberdeen
- 3 S4 Parents Evening – Subjects
- 9 S1 STEM Day
- 10 West Schools Careers Fair – Town Hall
- 11 Children in Need Charity Day
- 14-15 In Service days
- 22 S5/6 Parents Evening – Subjects
- 24 S6, S4/S5 Leavers Parents Evening

### **December**

- 1 S3 Reports issued
- 14 S1-S3 Christmas Dance
- 15 S4-S6 Christmas Dance
- 22 3.20pm Holidays



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Outside Classroom Activities				
Activity	Who?	When?	Where?	Staff
Badaguish Challenge	S2 – S6	21-23 April 2017	Aviemore	Mr Johnston
Badminton	Girls	To be confirmed	Games hall	PE staff
Basketball	All pupils	Thursdays 3.20pm-5.00pm	Games hall	Mr Morrison
Book Club	S1 – S3	Thursday lunchtimes	Library	Mrs McLean
Chess Club	All pupils – pupil ran	Friday lunchtimes	Library	Mrs McLean
Duke of Edinburgh Award	S3/4/5/6	Monday & Thursday lunchtimes	Z8	Mrs Highmore
Football	Girls only	Tuesday lunchtimes	Games hall	Miss McCulloch
Football	Senior boys	To be confirmed	Games hall	Mr Morrison
Grampian Children's Book Award Club	S1 – S3	Some Tuesday lunchtimes	Library	Mrs Harding
ICT	All pupils	Tuesdays 3.30pm	Z4	Mr Strain
Lunchtime Activities	All pupils	Every lunchtime	Games hall	PE staff
Netball	All pupils	? 3.20pm – 5.00pm	Games hall	Miss McCulloch
Rugby Internationals	All pupils	To be announced	Murrayfield	Mr Morrison
Sci-Fi Club	All pupils	Thursdays 1.10pm	Y5	Miss Bissett

Surfing	All pupils	Subject to weather (Post Easter)	Lossiemouth	Mr Morrison /Mr Trybis
Table Tennis	Senior pupils and staff	Tuesdays 3.30pm-4.45pm	Small gym	Mr MacLeod, Mr Phillips, Mr Cameron
Tennis	All pupils	To be announced	Duff Avenue	Mr Cameron
Vocal Groups	All pupils	Wednesdays 1.10pm	Music room 2	Mrs Harper, Mrs Whitton
War Hammer Club	All pupils	Fridays lunchtimes	Z6	Mr Brady

- Full details of all activities will be in the Daily Bulletin
- Subject departments will be offering study/revision clubs to senior pupils. Individual teachers will let their classes know when these are starting and when they will take place
- A number of departments will organize trips relevant to pupils taking their subject (e.g. Drama theatre visits, History visits to local sites, and Geography field trips)
- The school has links with a large number of clubs and activities in the Elgin area. Anyone interested in finding out more about these opportunities should speak to their Guidance Teacher