



Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
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NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION - DECEMBER 2015

Delivering a Quality Education Service in Difficult Times

SSTA is determined to try and provide a quality education service but cuts in Education budgets will have long term-term impact on the futures of our young people.

Maintaining Teacher Numbers

The SSTA welcomed the decision of the Scottish Government to maintain teacher numbers until 2017. Teachers are an essential element in delivering a quality education system and making a difference for all young people. However, local authorities have expressed the view that this decision restricts the ability of local authorities to use the money elsewhere. They also say teachers have been unfairly protected over other education colleagues in a climate of austerity.

Teachers have seen little increase in salaries, have suffered from increased pension contributions and increased workloads due not only to new qualifications and Curriculum for Excellence, but in covering teacher vacancies and absences due to the lack of supply teachers. This together with the reduction in several support areas that surround a teacher's role is impacting hugely on the teacher's ability to concentrate fully on the learning and teaching of young people.

The teacher plays a very important part in the education system and undermining their role and attempting to divide education staff using 'maintaining teacher numbers'

as the reason for other posts being lost is unfair and dishonest.

Teacher Recruitment

Teacher recruitment is an increasing problem across Scotland and will have a damaging impact upon students and teachers in the long-term. Teachers are 'papering over the cracks' and trying to keep the system afloat. All available teacher time is being used to continue the service. Many teachers with management and specialist roles in the school are being used to cover classes due to the lack of supply, particularly subject-specific supply. This is not good use of their time.

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These teachers are being abused by the education system.

Local Authorities should work together and develop a programme of employing all new teachers after they complete their probation period and assist in finding permanent positions across authorities. Unfortunately, some schools have a regular series of probationary teachers covering the same vacancy which impacts on other teacher workload. To address the supply teacher shortage local authorities should establish a national teacher supply register to

utilise the available supply teachers and restore pay levels to the normal teacher level, This would go some way to show supply teachers they are a valued and necessary part of the education system.

The failure to promptly provide supply teachers and fill vacancies is often seen as an attempt by local authorities to save money. However, this is a false economy as where teacher workload and stress increase teacher absence increases also.

School Budgets

School budgets have already been reduced to a point where there is nowhere else to either cut staff or resource budgets within schools. Maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all involved or to deliver the improvements to which we all aspire is at risk. The reduction in support staff such as administration and pupil support is having a detrimental knock-on effect on teaching. The pressure on school budgets is resulting in problems in resourcing new qualifications to carry out activities expected by local authorities/school management teams and SQA. Working Time Agreements in schools do not have sufficient time available to deliver all that is required.

Many schools are now operating at or below a legal minimum level of provision, for example large numbers of pupils being supervised

The Voice of Scottish Secondary Teachers

together when there is insufficient cover; this is negatively impacting on staff welfare and pupils' learning experience.

Shared and Integrated Services

There appears to be little progress on shared and integrated services to reduce costs when a sensible review of functions and responsibilities across authorities could be productive. It would be preferable for local authorities to be encouraged to address this issue taking into account the local contexts. Measures to secure newly qualified teachers and a national supply register would relieve some pressures in authorities and schools

Attainment Gap and Testing

Schools have always attempted to maximise the life chances of all their young people but schools need the resources and support to tackle the underlying problems.

The SSTA has argued for additional resources to support the young people currently 'at risk' in secondary schools. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts the support for those young people is the first place to be cut.

The SSTA has urged that a review and streamlining of the new qualification regime is carried out in an attempt to reduce teacher workload and refocus teacher time on teaching our young people.

The SSTA has concerns over the introduction of standardised tests at S3 as they could deflect teachers away from teaching and learning. This adds to potentially creating an environment of competition between schools whereas there is a need for all schools to collaborate to meet the needs of all young people across a local authority.

Teachers have always worked hard to give the young people the best but there is a need for Government to accept that not all priorities can be achieved. The Government needs to work with its teachers, give a lead to schools and be realistic in managing its aspirations in difficult financial times.

Congress 2016

WHY NOT TAKE PART?

- WHEN:** Friday 20th & Saturday 21st May 2016
- WHERE:** Crieff Hydro, Crieff
- WHO:** Members can be nominated at their local district meeting
- HOW:** Speak to your District Secretary or contact Head office on 0131 313 7300
- COST:** FREE Please speak to Head Office for information on prices for spouses & family

Membership subscriptions

The General Treasurer informed Council that subscriptions would increase from April 2016 by 10 pence per month for full-time members and by 5 pence per month for part-time, temporary, job-share or supply contracts and retired members.

The reduced annual subscription for 2016 for full-time members will be £168.00 and £84.00 for part-time, temporary, job-share, supply and retired members, if their fees

are paid by annual direct debit or cheque by 31 January 2016. This saving is clearly of advantage to members and is only available to those who pay before the end of January.

The rates for 2016 are as follows:

Full-time members

£168.00 if paid annually by 31 January 2016, or £183.30 if paid afterwards;

£15.20 per month January to March,

£15.30 per month from April 2016, when paid by monthly direct debit.

Retired, part-time, job-share, temporary or supply members:

£84.00 if paid annually by 31 January 2016, or £91.65 if paid afterwards; £7.60 per month January to March and then £7.65 per month from April, when paid by monthly direct debit.

Full details of subscriptions rates can be found at www.ssta.org.uk/subs2016

TAX RELIEF ON SUBSCRIPTION FEES TO PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

Two-thirds of the annual subscription payable to the Association is allowable for income tax relief. Section 343, Part 5, Chapter 2 of the Income tax (Earning and Pensions) Act 2003. Further information on how to make a claim can be found on the HMRC website www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/relief-subs.htm.

National Executive Committee Members 2015-2017



*Back Row: Fiona Dalziel, Depute General Secretary; Janine McCullough, South Lanarkshire; Elaine Henderson, Aberdeenshire; Gordon West, Aberdeenshire; James How, City of Glasgow; Seamus Searson, General Secretary;
Front Row: Stuart Hunter, West Lothian; Euan Duncan, North Ayrshire; Catherine Nicol, North Ayrshire; Ward McCormick, East Ayrshire; Alan Taylor, North Lanarkshire.
Absent from Picture Anne O'Kane, Fife*

SSTA Districts/Areas and Committees

There is a lot of great work going on in Districts and Areas – please try and get along to a meeting soon. It's your opportunity to hear about how the Association works together to support its members and participate in friendly discussions about matters of concern to Secondary teachers. It's also an opportunity to submit motions for debate at Council or Congress – some motions can really make a difference! If you're not sure where or when meetings are due to take place, or if you'd like to attend a meeting nearer to home, please contact Head Office.

The Association's committees are vital in keeping the union wheels turning. They carry out a lot of valuable work 'behind the scenes' in a range of diverse

areas: discussing salaries and conditions of service negotiations and policy, thinking about education developments and giving advice, considering transferred (denominational) schools, supporting senior managers, keeping a watchful eye on equalities issues, acting on decisions of Council and Congress, and collaborating on other issues. Many thanks to the committed conveners and members who contribute their time and talents to support the Association's aims and objectives.

If you are interested in getting involved Contact your District Secretary or Head Office. By email at: info@ssta.org.uk or by telephone on 0131 313 7300.



<http://theredcardscotland.org/home>
for excellent teaching materials

SSTA PRESIDENT Euan Duncan



Coming from a family background in teaching, I guess you could say that teaching runs in my blood. Three of my grandparents were teachers, my mother is a teacher (now retired), and I am married to a teacher. After graduating I worked for a bank for a while, but the pull to become a teacher was too great. Studying for a PGCE at the University of Paisley in Ayr (what was Craigie College), I started out as an RE teacher in 1994.

I was pulled into active involvement in the SSTA about 15 years ago when the school rep was seconded to a post out of school and I agreed to 'look after' the rep's job temporarily. Her job became permanent and after a while I found myself elected as District Secretary. Next steps were election to Salaries

Committee, National Executive, and then Convener of Salaries. With 3 school-age children, I'd been looking forward to serving out my time as Vice President before considering whether to stand for President, but things moved rather faster than expected.

Becoming SSTA President has been a tremendous honour and I am looking forward to continuing to serve members in a new way. To be honest, there are still mornings when I waken up and ask myself if it is actually really happening and not just one of those strange half-waking dreams!

The last few weeks have been very busy, partly as I was finding my feet and partly because it took a little while to discuss how my role of President was going to fit in alongside my 'proper' job as PT Pastoral Support at Kilwinning Academy in North Ayrshire. Fortunately my school, employer, and family have been very supportive, enabling me to undertake a range of duties representing members at events and meetings throughout and beyond Scotland. It can be tricky fitting everything into the available time, and I really appreciate the help and advice I've received from everybody in the SSTA offices, even with my last-minute requests.

I've always tended to view my

work with members as a kind of extension of my Pastoral role with pupils, listening, supporting and acting as advocate sometimes. In my early years as a member I hadn't quite appreciated the depth of the Association's involvement at the heart of education in Scotland. The SSTA has a significant part to play in Scottish educational developments, and the coming months are going to bring some interesting challenges. We are all watching to see what direction the National Improvement Framework takes, particularly in relation to national standardised assessment. We continue to be concerned with workload and the impact it has on teachers' health and wellbeing. Continuing budget reductions are a massive concern. There is a need to work towards restoring deeply eroded salaries. Some employers are still working out their approach to Named Person legislation. And, at another level, we all need to be concerned with the UK Government's Trade Union Bill which seeks to undermine everything the SSTA and other unions stand for.

I'm looking forward to meeting more members over the next few months. I'm very keen to encourage people to become more active with the Association, even in small ways, to share the load. We are all the SSTA, and if we speak with one voice we will be heard!

Flexible Working

At a time of teacher shortages employers should look favourably at all requests for flexible working. A refusal can often lead to teachers with caring responsibilities having no option but to leave the profession altogether. These teachers have so much to offer and a forward thinking employer can maintain these teachers in the service for the benefit of all young people and reduce the teacher shortage.

If you are the parent of a child, then

you have the right to ask for flexible working if your child is under 17 or under 18 and disabled. If you are caring for an adult, you also have the right to ask for flexible working.

You must also have worked for your employer for at least 26 weeks and must be responsible for your child on a day to day basis. Flexible working can include working part time and job sharing. Although you have the right to ask to work flexibly, your employer doesn't

have to agree to it. However, they must give your request serious consideration and have a good business reason if they decide not to agree. In refusing the decision you are entitled to be provided with a copy of the business case. You can make one request to work flexibly each year. This must be in writing. You should say how you think the change in your working pattern will affect your role in the school and how this might work in practice.

The Importance of the SSTA School Representative

To the ordinary members of the SSTA in schools, the most important activists within the SSTA tend to be their school Representatives. They are the people that, in times of trouble, members turn to for immediate answers and usually because of the training offered and the wealth of information contained on the website, most low level school issues can be sorted at a local level. Advice from the District Secretary or Head Office can also be drawn upon.

Generally speaking, in schools with good employee relations, the Headteacher realises the value and standing of the position of school Representative and sees the role as a crucial link between management and staff. When controversial issues arrive in the staffroom, the Reps, wearing their union hats, are drivers who steer a path to resolution.

Being a Rep means that they are the direct link between your school and Head Office. They are the person tasked with recruiting new members of staff into the union and keeping Head Office updated regarding staff changes. The Rep is responsible for disseminating information that comes from Head Office to the SSTA members in the school, handling the initial stages of complaints and the individual grievances of members.

As well as representing members individually and collectively, they ensure the implementation of national and local agreements.

While this may seem a daunting task, potential Reps should remember that most schools have accredited school Reps who both enjoy and manage the job without difficulty. The SSTA realises and appreciates the incredible role carried out by school Reps and therefore keeps the support system for Reps to the fore of its agenda. This translates to accredited school Reps having agreed protections and facilities, in the workplace, to carry out their role.

School Reps are entitled to:

- Time off with pay for duties as school Representative i.e. to undertake representation, consultation, negotiation;
- Use of a centrally located, assessable notice board;
- Provision of a room on school premises for SSTA meetings;
- Reasonable use of a school computer, duplicating and photocopying equipment;
- Access to documents and school policies from the Local Authority concerned with pay, conditions of service.

However, one of the most rewarding aspects of union membership at a school is the union meeting held on school premises. This provides union members with an open forum to be heard in a less formal manner than staff meetings and it is a perfect environment for Reps to gauge the collective feelings regarding whole staff issues. It is here that decisions affecting members can be aired and acted upon. All accredited Reps are entitled to time within the normal pupil day for union business. Please check with the local authority agreement for allocation of time. A School Representative also has an entitlement to attend training courses to enable them to perform the role effectively and efficiently.

The logo for the Scottish School Teachers' Association (SSTA) features the letters 'SSTA' in a white, serif font, centered within a blue rectangular box. A thin white horizontal line is positioned below the letters.

The School Representative handbook and other useful information for Rep's are available to download from the members section of the SSTA website.

www.ssta.org.uk/schoolreps

Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers - How it works

The Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) is a tripartite body comprising members from teaching organisations, Local Authorities, and the Scottish Government. The Committee's remit is to consider salaries and conditions of service for teachers and all teacher unions are represented on the teachers' side.

An agreement can only be reached when all three sides of the body agree and it is incumbent upon all members to promote and support the application of such agreements. It is therefore expected that all parties will act in a collectively responsible way to protect a national negotiating procedure that protects national pay and conditions for all teachers in Scotland. Unfortunately, that is not the case for all teachers across the United Kingdom and for any of the parties to undermine the SNCT would be a dangerous path to follow.

Bi- or Tri- Courses (views from the classroom)

Don't refer to this situation as bi- or tri-level. That makes people think it's like Standard Grade and its ok. It is not the same it is bi- or tri- COURSE. It is like trying to teach Physics and Chemistry or Engineering Science in one room at the same time. There is some common material but they are different COURSES.

I have bi-level higher and national 5 this year. Teaching is proving challenging to meet timelines and is reliant on pupils being reasonable independent learners. You also need to be very organised to allow for teaching one group for a bit whilst another do something then teaching them whilst the others do things.

I always am exhausted after the double period with this class and at times feel disappointed that I can't help them as much as I would like as I can't do two things at once. If I had a choice I wouldn't do it this way. I am doing some flipped learning with kids but it is hard when they aren't used to this and would be difficult for them if lots of classes were flipped. I have tried and failed at int2 and higher before. Also done n3/ 4/5 which I feel is easier although it ends up being more 5 and a bit of 4 and assessments for 3 rather than a quality Nat 4 class.

The courses were not designed to be taught together. They should not be taught together. They cannot be taught together if we are to meet the learning needs of all pupils. And yet we are routinely being expected to do this.

I simply cannot conceive of

teaching N4/5 (or N3/4/5) in a single year - probably on 4 periods per week. But that looks likely next year. This year, I have a bi-level N5/Higher class. All the pupils are nice with no behavioural issues, but several of the N5s have done no physics before. Two or three of the Highers came in a grade Cs. Not one of the Highers is an obvious A grade candidate. All of them need all of my time and energy - none of them get it. I am failing every pupil in the class every day of the week. It hurts.

I feel like I'm not doing the best teaching for them, and it does take a lot of effort to plan lessons to move each group forward with their learning. Luckily we have 6 periods a week this year, so there is some breathing space in the Nat 5 course. I've been told that next year we will only have 5 periods a week to allow for pupils to sit 6 highers, I really can't see that benefitting the children. I also had a Nat 3/4/5 class.

What concerns me along with the issues already mentioned is that my NAT 5 students see how difficult and unsatisfactory the situation is, get fed up and opt out of doing Higher.

I whole-heartedly agree. I feel completely inadequate as a head of department who is meant to be constantly seeking to raise attainment while supporting staff. How do I support staff in this impossible situation? How can we reduce or even maintain the gap at its current level when bi/tri-course classes offer the greatest disadvantage to those who are

struggling already? Those who are well motivated and supported may just manage to do enough to counter the damage caused by this situation. The others will not.

The fact is most pupils do not enter N5 from N4. They come from level 3 BGE with a few level 4 outcomes into national 5 and their level of prior learning is insufficient without taking this into account.

Also a big inequity throughout Scotland is the differing curriculum structures ranging from 6 to 9 nationals and the different levels of personalisation or choice in s1, s2, s3, s4 (delete as per your situation). Pupils in schools sitting 6 are being compared by Insight to schools sitting 9. Time allocations are vastly different. It would be great if the SQA results could be broken down with time allocations for physics from S3 and S4 and even with it a 2 or 1 year course. I believe that most/all? schools cover level 3 outcomes by end of S2, but what happens next can be vastly different.

This year however, we have separate Nat 4 and Nat 5 classes. It is a dream- well no, it is how it should be! My Nat 4 who need the support get my undivided attention and we have time to focus on building a solid basis for moving on. I am optimistic that a lot of my Nat 4's will actually make excellent Nat 5 candidates next year and perhaps even higher the year after. It is proper progression. Over in the Nat 5 classes they get my undivided attention too and 3rd year into teaching it- I've got my stride and it's not as stressful. Ultimately, I am seeing the MASSIVE benefits

to my students from having them in separate classes and I can't even imagine teaching Nat 5/higher. I can't imagine it, because it shouldn't be done.

The Scottish Government are investing significantly in STEM subjects in order to address a shortfall of scientists and engineers. If we cannot provide an enjoyable and meaningful learning experience in these subjects, what chance do we have of encouraging further uptake in this field?

Last term I attended a meeting held by SQA and we were invited to comment on the arrangements. I raised the possibility of nesting N3 within N4 within N5. I was told that the

courses had been "designed" to cover different ground and this was not possible. I explained that we had to teach mixed course classes and that this was disadvantaging our pupils as it was not possible to teach two very different courses simultaneously. The response took me rather by surprise. We were told that the implementation of the curriculum was not the concern of SQA but rather that of the council. It is not reasonable to expect our national examining body to ignore the practical aspects of teaching.

This is the situation I see developing, whereby staff have

little option and feel duty bound to spend extra time outwith the normal class time just to get their kids through their courses.

This is a completely unacceptable burden on staff and pupils and is obviously going to increase workload and stress levels.

The SSTA is currently engaging with the SQA to bring about major reductions within the new qualification regime and combat the latest development that may make the secondary teacher's job unachievable. The SSTA will engage at all levels to prevent another imposition on an already overworked and underpaid secondary teacher workforce.

Education Panel meeting SQA



Late in October members of the Education Panel had another meeting with the SQA, in their ongoing dialogue of raising issues from members. The Association was represented by Ruth French, the Convener of the SSTA Education Panel, James Cowans the Minute Secretary of the SSTA Education Panel and Iain Glennie, Professional Officer.

The discussion was wide ranging covering many issues including issues from the 2105 diet, the

assessment burden on teachers delivering the new qualifications, and issues regarding the verification of courses which have no external examination. The problems in schools delivering multi course classes, with qualification not designed for this was also covered.

A presentation by Gill Stewart the Director of Qualifications Development and Jean Blair the Director of Operations was extremely informative and covered many aspects of the delivery of the 2105 diet. Also present were Janet Brown SQA's Chief Executive and Ronnie Summers the Head of Qualifications Development, CfE.

A meeting early next year is already being planned, and members who wish to highlight any issues, or good practice should contact the office and those causing the most concern will be put forward via the education Panel for the next agenda.

Ruth French
Education Committee Convener

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of Secondary
Teachers



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www.ssta.org.uk/join

GIRFEC UPDATE

GIRFEC still continues to be one of our priority areas. Therefore we would like to update you on the following.

1. Consultation of the Children's and Young Peoples Bill has now ended. The outcome of this is as follows.

- ASN committee have met with the governments GIRFEC team to raise the issues staff have identified in the recent survey.
- We are now engaged in talks with the GIRFEC team to help develop a shared understanding of the training

needs and the time required for the tasks of the Named Person.

- Issues of time for task of the Named Person should be being discussed at LNCT meetings.

2. The objection by some organisations about the role of the Named Persons has been overruled by the Scottish Court system. However these organisations are now taking their objection to the role of the Named Person to the Court of Appeal. The SSTA fully supports the role of the Named Person.

3. Consultation about the GIRFEC complaints producer. Part 4 The Named Person process and Part 5 the Childs Plan is now complete. Our response to this document has been sent to all schools in the form of an advice note and can be found on the SSTA web site

4. Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Revised Draft Statutory Guidance for Part 4, 5 and 18 and now available to view on our web-site, www.ssta.org.uk

Liz Hunter, Professional Officer

Pre Retirement Seminars

These seminars are designed to give guidance to members who are considering retiring in the next few years. Members are advised to gain information that will assist in planning the next step in their future.

Members interested in attending a seminar should contact head office to reserve a place or complete the on-line registration form at www.ssta.org.uk/retirementseminars

Tel: 0131 313 7300 Email: info@ssta.org.uk

Date	Timing	City	Location
Thursday 7 January	17:00-19:30	Glasgow	Mercure Hotel City Centre
Tuesday 12 January	17:00-19:30	Edinburgh	SSTA Head Office
Thursday 14 January	17:00-19:30	Galashiels	Kingsknowes Hotel
Tuesday 19 January	17:00-19:30	Fort William	Moorings Hotel
Wednesday 20 January	17:00-19:30	Inverness	Best Western Palace
Tuesday 26 January	17:00-19:30	Dundee	Best Western Invercarse
Thursday 28 January	17:00-19:30	Aberdeen	Northern Hotel
Tuesday 2 February	17:00 – 19:30	Troon	Marine Hotel
Thursday 4 February	17:00 – 19:30	Dumfries	Cairndale Hotel
Tuesday 9 February	17:00- 19:30	Glasgow	Mercure Hotel City Centre
Thursday 11 February	17:00-19:30	Edinburgh	SSTA Head Office

Pay and Conditions of Service Agreement 2015 - 2017



The SNCT meeting on 26 October 2015 approved a number of proposals:

- **Pay** – a 1.5% uplift from 1 April 2015 and a 1% uplift in pay from 1 April 2016.
- **Supply** – An evaluation and review of the impact of the recommendations of the supply working group will be concluded by January 2016 with a view to addressing any ongoing issues in the delivery of supply teaching. A number of councils (more than 50%) are already paying the full supply rate from the first day. A letter will go out shortly to confirm to councils that this is permissible within the current agreement.
- **Workload** – A statement and principles for managing teacher workload agreed. The document will be circulated widely so that all negotiations for Working Time Agreements will take the substance into consideration.
- **Teacher numbers** The Scottish Government will maintain its commitment to teacher numbers for the entirety of the period covered by the proposed pay deal with the details to be determined through discussion.

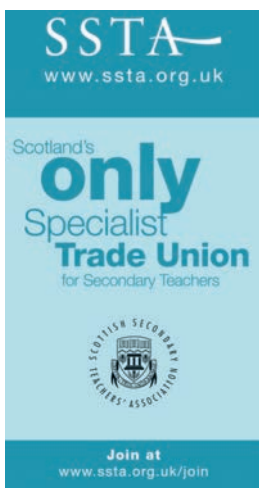
Full details of the agreement can be found in the SNCT Handbook on the SNCT website.

The SSTA has accepted the Pay Agreement and will work towards ensuring all elements of the agreement are implemented.

Catherine Nicol
Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee Convener

Christmas/New Year Closure of the SSTA Office

Members are asked to note that the Association office will close at 12noon on Tuesday 22 December and will re-open for normal business after New Year on Wednesday 6 January 2016 at 9am. An emergency service will be in operation during the holiday period.



We are here to help YOU!

If you have any problems then please do not hesitate to contact us at:

Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
14 West End Place
EDINBURGH
EH11 2ED

By email at: info@ssta.org.uk

By telephone on 0131 313 7300

Kill the Bill!

After challenging public sector workers for years with stagnating wages, higher pensions contributions and massive cuts in resources, the UK Government is now proposing further attacks on public sector employees. It proposes to do this using the Trade Union Bill, which is presently passing through parliament.

Debilitating Unions

The UK Government wants to reduce the ability of unions to represent members by making it harder for unions to operate. It aims to make unions:

- spend more time on needless paperwork,
- spend less time helping people in the workplace.

It wants to:

- make it much more difficult for employees to take industrial action,
- make it easier for employers to break strikes (e.g. by employing supply staff),
- prevent unions from running political campaigns.

What have unions ever done for me?

Since the beginning of the trade union movement people have realised the benefits of working together and speaking with one voice to improve working conditions.

In Scottish schools this has led to high quality learning environments for the whole learning community, for example:

- agreed maximum class sizes,
- proportionality between teaching time and marking/preparation time,

- efforts to secure recruitment and retention of teachers along with security of employment,
- stakeholder involvement in curriculum developments,
- a fully degree-qualified teaching profession with opportunities for professional development.

Although there is always work to be done to improve things, Scottish teachers have benefited from:

- workload agreements,
- agreed pay increments,
- nationally negotiated and agreed payscales,
- holiday leave, family leave and sick pay,
- support with disciplinary and sickness absence issues,
- challenges to unfair treatment,
- safer working environments.

Making things worse

If the UK Government succeeds in making it harder for unions to operate then the SSTA believes we will see a rise in disputes and more serious disciplinary actions by employers. It also means that unions will find it harder to negotiate over pay, safety at work, and training. In time there is the potential for our eroded pay to reduce further, class sizes to increase, workload to cease to be controlled, and for the education of future generations of youngsters to suffer as 'cost saving measures' continue to mount up.

Withholding labour is a basic human right; the European Convention on Human Rights protects the right to form trade unions to protect workers' interests. Without the right to be able to take industrial action, as a last resort, it would be much harder for unions to negotiate over pay and working conditions.

TU Bill: not fit for purpose

If successful, this Bill will fundamentally shift the balance of power towards government and employers. Interestingly, the Convention on Scottish Local Authorities (a main grouping of teacher employers) has pledged to "stand shoulder to shoulder with their Trade Union colleagues against the UK Government's Trade Union Bill," thus demonstrating the value they place on good quality communication and negotiation with Trade Unions. The Labour Party has stated its opposition to the Bill and the SNP plans to move an amendment that the TU Bill should not apply to workers in Scotland – though it is uncertain whether this will succeed. The Regulatory Policy Committee, an independent government body which verifies the costs and savings of policies, has described three major strands of the Bill (ballot thresholds, hiring agency staff during strikes, picket restrictions) as 'not fit for purpose'.

What next?

Now is the time for SSTA members to voice their opposition to a Bill which is not fit for purpose and which will damage our ability to negotiate for and on behalf of members. It is not simply a matter for the General Secretary or Council, but for every member who cares about the right to defend their working conditions. If the Bill becomes law then it will be impossible to reclaim our present rights.

- Raise awareness in the staffroom,
- sign an online petition,
- write to your councillors,
- write to your MP,
- write to your MSP,
- tell people about the Bill and what it means for us and future generations of workers,

- attend a rally or meeting to show your support,
- encourage non-union colleagues to join a STUC affiliated union; the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers recognises SSTA, EIS, NASUWT and Voice.

<https://www.facebook.com/NoTradeUnionBill>

Trade Union Bill summary

Ballots for Industrial Action: For Education, minimum 50% turnout, 40% of all those entitled to vote must vote in favour of industrial action. Abstentions treated as no votes.

Time limits for strike mandates: At present, provided industrial action starts within four weeks of a ballot, the mandate remains valid as long as the dispute continues. TU Bill proposals mean that if the action goes on for more than four months, regardless of whether employers enter into meaningful negotiations, an expensive re-ballot would be required. Trade unions would have to give 14 days' notice of any industrial action (7 days more than at present).

Certification Officer: The certification officer would be given significant new powers, including the ability to investigate trade unions on their own volition, to seize records from offices/workplace branches, to monitor all political expenditure over £2000, and they would have the ability to fine unions up to £20,000. The CO would have to be notified of planned use of social media in support of disputes. Trade unions would have to pay for this extended role.

Restricting rights to picket: Trade unions would have to appoint a picket supervisor, who would have to provide their contact details to the police, have a letter of authority to produce to the police or 'any person who reasonably asks to see it', and must wear an armband, badge or other item to identify them. There are wide proposals to restrict picketing under consultation, which could include criminal sanctions and significant financial penalties.

Political fund (for information only: constitutionally, the SSTA does not maintain a Political Fund - this proposal does not affect SSTA members): Unions which maintain a political fund must ballot members every 10 years for it to continue and members

are automatically signed up. The Bill will mean that only those who opt-in will be able to contribute, with a requirement to revalidate this decision every 5 years.

Facility time: The government will require public sector employers to publish trade union facilities expenditure, how many employees are trade union officials and a detailed breakdown of how money has been spent on trade union activities e.g. health and safety, grievance and disciplinary procedures etc. The government gives itself power to impose regulations on restricting agreed facility time, which would override any contractual or collective agreements.

Agency workers: This is not part of the Trade Union Bill, but part of a consultation the government intends to run alongside the Bill's passage through Parliament, which they will use to scrap the ban on using agency workers to replace striking workers.



Online Safety - Teachers Beware

By now I'm sure most teachers are aware of the potential and pitfalls of social media. Attitudes towards it seem to vary between 'don't touch it with a bargepole' to 'what's all the fuss about'. By and large, if you're in the first group, you probably shouldn't. If you're in the second group you're probably tech-savvy and have either thought carefully about how to use social media and have fine-tuned your security settings, or perhaps get carried away by the latest features and think of security as a bit of a drag.

Whatever you think of social media, they are important to us as teachers - as a driver of social attitudes and opinion formers in all aspects of society, present and future.

What we present to the social media is an important aspect of our image as a profession.

The Guidelines

The GTCS has given clear guidelines for the use of social media by teachers. Their basic

message is to keep a professional distance between yourself and pupils or parents.

- Firmly decline student-initiated 'friend' requests and do not instigate any yourself.
- Maintain a formal and professional tone in communicating with pupils.
- Do not exchange private text, phone numbers, personal e-mail addresses or photos of a personal nature with pupils;
- Manage your privacy settings and keep them under review.
- Be aware that potential employers may try and view your online social media profiles;
- Do not criticise your employer on social media;
- Assume that information you post can be accessed and altered;
- Use strong passwords and change them regularly. Protect your mobile phone with a PIN.
- If you are the victim of cyber bullying or are uncomfortable with comments, photos or posts made by pupils about you, bring

the matter to the attention of your employer using the proper procedures.

As the GTCS Codes state, teachers are individuals with private lives. However, off-duty conduct matters and may have bearing on professional life. Therefore sound judgement and due care should be exercised as conduct which may not directly relate to pupils may be relevant to a teacher's fitness to teach. (This includes those dodgy photos of you and your mates at that party which went online for a laugh...)

Your school or local authority should have guidelines which are equally clear about teachers' use of social media - if you can't find them, please ask your school rep or management team for a copy.

See links on SSTA Website:

Neil Sinclair, H&S Panel

Preventing Violence in Schools

What can we do to lower the risk of being a victim of a violent incident?

- **Report all incidents-** if all incidents are not reported how can we expect our school or authority to do anything to prevent them? Relevant forms are in school and, once completed, should be forwarded to the local authority. Ensure this happens!
- **Treat all incidents seriously-** they may include verbal abuse, physical harassment (including racial, sexual), physical assault, intimidation, damage to property or threats. You may not be upset but they may pick on another more vulnerable target next time.
- **Support all staff-** insist on good

systems in schools to deal with such incidents, these may involve



counselling or further training. Staff should never be isolated and made to face the perpetrator in class until it has been satisfactorily resolved.

- **Record immediately** exactly what happened and get statements from

any independent witnesses as soon as possible.

- **Seek help** from your union rep or the professional officers at head office if matters are not dealt with satisfactorily.
- **Insist on your right to a violence free workplace** most councils have a policy that they have agreed to and this includes all employees. Read your council's/ school's violent incident policy, make sure you are aware of your rights.
- **Behaviour Policy** - ensure your school has a suitable behaviour policy and that it is adhered to by all staff.

Sue Edwards, H&S Panel Convener

Health and Safety For All

Many people assume that collectivism, safety there is no such thing as a years. Because of Section 69 of the which is at the heart of the trade union “minor incident” or an accident that Enterprise Act it is now more difficult movement, is only about the many is “too small to bother about”. There to succeed in claims in relation to standing together to protect the few. are many examples over the years workplace accidents but it is not That is true, to be sure. Collectivism of a claim being advanced in relation impossible. In the post Section 69 is, however, a two way street. It is to a modest injury which forces an Enterprise Act world evidence is the also about individuals taking a stand employer to improve workplace key to success. for the collective benefits of their safety and which can clearly be entire workplace. There is no better shown to have prevented far more Evidence is everything. example of this than in the context of serious accidents in the future. health and safety.

We know trade union workplaces examples of cases where a member evidence as possible, as quickly as are safer workplaces but why is has not pursued a claim because possible. that? Ask yourself also, what is they considered their injury to be too the single, and by far the most, minor and where there has been a The best evidence, is evidence effective lever available to workplace subsequent far more serious injury to obtained immediately after representatives to improve workplace a co-worker. any accident. That will include safety. photographs of the hazard, statements from the injured party and any witnesses. You should keep that information on a file to pass on to the

It is certainly not reporting matters safety reps can do. There are 2 things that workplace statements from the injured party and any witnesses. You should keep that information on a file to pass on to the to the Health and Safety Executive; and the gentle art of persuasion Firstly, whenever you hear about a union lawyer if a claim is advanced. through appealing to employers’ colleague being injured you must You must also ensure that the hearts and minds (sadly all too positively promote the importance of accident report is completed. While often an oxymoron) is simply too pursuing a claim; both for the purpose doing that you should look back gentle. Employers all however have of obtaining the fair and just redress through the accident report to find out one Achilles heel; and, if you hit an to which the member is entitled in law if there have been similar accidents employer hard enough and often but also by explaining the importance in the past reported to the employer. enough in the place where it truly of advancing a claim in relation to hurts, you will force them to improve wider workplace safety. Encouraging members to take a stand systems and make things safer. when they are injured and assisting

And where does it hurt? In their as much evidence as possible. The evidence about the accident will drive pocket. Tory Government have introduced improvements in workplace safety. sweeping anti-trade union legislation Trade union workplaces are safer And how do you hit them in their over the last 6 years. Chief among workplaces and SSTA schools will be pocket? Through advancing them is section 69 of the Enterprise the safest of all.” compensation claims and proceeding and Regulatory Reform Act which with litigation in relation to every effectively repealed the entire workplace accident. health and safety legislation that previously served to protect our

Accordingly, in the context of workers and turned the clock back on collectivism and improving workplace health and safety by more than 100

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Keeping yourself safe in the school environment

As we know, schools are a very busy environment with users who have a variety of needs. As teachers, there are some simple steps we can follow to look after our personal possessions, confidential information and help us to avoid difficult situations.

Personal Possessions and Information

- Take care of your personal valuables at work by ensuring you keep them locked away in a drawer or cupboard.
- Keep keys to drawers/cupboards that contain your personal belongings or confidential materials on your person.
- Personal information about yourself and pupils (paper copies) should also be kept in a locked drawer or cupboard.
- Information of a confidential nature (paper copies) should be shredded when no longer required. Otherwise, these should be kept locked in a drawer or cupboard.

One-To-One With Pupils

On occasions, we can find ourselves in a one-to-one situation with a pupil. In such a situation, try to use an “open door” policy. An open door means that other staff passing in the corridor, or who are in adjacent rooms, can observe/hear events in the classroom where the one-to-one is taking place.

- Detentions are often supervised at the end of the day when there are fewer people in the building. When supervising detentions it would be ideal to have another member of staff present in the same room. If this is not possible or practical, an “open door” policy means pupils may be aware of the presence of other members of staff in the building.
- A single pupil in detention may also be moved into the corridor, within your sight, which may allow you to use your time productively within a classroom. The pupil is in a more public area and you are not alone in the room with the pupil.

Pupils with Risk Assessments

- Keep yourself informed of any pupils with Risk Assessments, even those you don't actually teach. You may encounter them when supervising for an absentee colleague.
- Know which strategies should/should not be applied to pupils with a Risk Assessment and which member of staff to contact if a situation arises.
- If a Risk Assessment has been carried out and it states a pupil should have support in class, then the pupil should not attend class without adequate support.

Challenging pupils

Do everything to avoid any allegation of inappropriate physical contact with a pupil in order to keep yourself safe. Remember – if a pupil wishes to leave the class, stand aside and let them leave. If there is a fight do not intervene physically. Call for support.

*Joan de Cecco
H&S Panel Member*

UPDATE YOUR DETAILS TO ENTER A PRIZE DRAW

All members who check their personal details will be entered into a free draw.

We will be writing out to members shortly with the details of the information we hold for you. To ensure that we can reach as many members as possible in the most efficient way, I should be grateful if you could check that the personal details that we hold for you are correct. It is also very helpful if you would be able to provide a personal and school email address if you haven't already done so.

You can inform us of any amendments on our website at www.ssta.org.uk/updatedetails or by emailing info@ssta.org.uk.

It is vital for the Association to hold full and up-to-date information about your membership in order to serve you properly at all times. This is particularly important if your circumstances have changed recently. Please ensure you supply an up to date email address so that the association can keep you informed of all developments. Your details are not supplied to any other party in any circumstances, unless you have given your prior consent.

All members who check their details will be automatically entered into a free draw for a tablet computer.

STATEMENT TO MEMBERS

STATEMENT TO MEMBERS ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH THE UNION'S ANNUAL RETURN FOR PERIOD ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2014 AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 32A OF TRADE UNION AND LABOUR RELATIONS (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1992

Income and Expenditure

The total income of the union for the period was £1,222,151. This amount included payments of £1,047,726 in respect of membership of the union. The union's total expenditure for the period was £1,153,217. The union does not maintain a political fund.

Salary paid to and other benefits provided to the General Secretary, President and members of the Executive

Total salary of £241,617 and benefits of £ 19,557 paid in respect of three people holding office, of general secretary within the period and is not the sum paid to one individual

Irregularity statement

A member who is concerned that some irregularity may be occurring, or have occurred, in the conduct of the financial affairs of the union may take steps with a view to investigating further, obtaining clarification and, if necessary, securing regularisation of that conduct.

The member may raise any such concern with one or more of the following as appropriate to the officials of the union, the trustees of the property of the union, the auditor or auditors of the union, the Certification Officer (who is an independent officer appointed by the Secretary of State) and the police.

Where a member believes that the financial affairs of the union have been or are being conducted in breach of the law or in breach of the rules of the union and contemplates bringing civil proceedings against the union or responsible officials or trustees, he should consider

obtaining independent legal advice.

Auditor's report

Independent auditors' report

to the members of SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

We have audited the accounts of Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association for the year ended 31 December 2014 which comprise the Cash Flow Statement, Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Respective responsibilities of the Finance Committee and Auditors

As explained more fully in the Statement of Finance Committee's Responsibilities, the Finance Committee members are responsible for the preparation of the accounts and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. We have been appointed under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992 and report in accordance with regulations made under this Act. Our responsibility is to audit and express an opinion on the accounts in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland). Those standards require us to comply with the Auditing Practices Board's (APB's) Ethical Standards for Auditors.

Scope of audit of accounts

A description of the scope of an audit of accounts is provided on the APB's website at www.frc.org.uk/apb/scope/private.cfm.

Opinion on the accounts

As described in note 5, the association

has not fully disclosed the effects on the financial statements of an employment dispute. In our opinion, except for this matter, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the association's affairs as at 31 December 2014 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992; and
- the information given in the Finance Committee's Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.
- Matters on which we are required to report by exception
- We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act 1992 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:
- the association has not kept adequate accounting records; or
- returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the accounts are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Stephen Grant, Senior Statutory Auditor for and on behalf of Tindell, Grant & Co, Statutory Auditors 6 Munro Road, Springkerse Stirling FK7 7UU

Tindell, Grant & Co. is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

SSTA – the Union for all Secondary Teachers

The SSTA strongly believes that schools should be led and managed by teachers.

Head Teachers and other Senior Managers should be teachers, first and foremost, who have faced the same challenges over the years as their colleagues, to whom they now offer leadership and support. It is important to teachers at all levels to continue to share the same Conditions of Service and to apply the same professional values.

The SSTA firmly believes that teachers who move into senior manager positions have no reason to join any other organisation to receive the support and advice that they will continue to need. Our senior manager colleagues benefit from the same direct representation by well-trained and experienced Professional Officers as any other member when faced with a difficult or career-threatening moment.

We see dangers to the Profession and hence to children's education from anything that appears to promote Leadership and Management as important for its own sake rather than as a service to staff and pupils in promoting their welfare and facilitating excellent Learning and Teaching.

We also see leadership in schools as being a continuum, with Head Teachers and senior managers who are grounded in their profession being more likely to motivate and inspire all staff to recognise and apply their own leadership skills. For this reason, the SSTA has for many years benefited from the work of its Senior Managers Advisory Panel. The Panel brings the experience and concerns of school senior managers to the

attention of our decision-making bodies and has produced advice notes for senior manager members and members aspiring to senior management positions, covering issues such as Managing Staff Absence, Managing Stress in the Workplace and Professional Update.



On the one hand these documents give advice to senior manager members on how they should benefit personally and how they should protect themselves by managing their own workload. From the Advice Note on Professional Update: "It is important for you as a Senior Manager to derive the same benefit as other staff from the on-going PRD process within Professional Update." On the other hand, senior manager members are reminded that they are

teachers, just like the colleagues that they manage, many of whom will be fellow SSTA members. The Advice Note on Professional Update states: "Bearing this in mind, an empathetic and sensitive manager can ensure that the Duty of Care towards staff is properly implemented and problems are mitigated or avoided altogether."

The SSTA has a proud history of promoting a united profession and continues to do so by offering a secure and supportive home to all secondary teachers at all stages in their professional careers.

SSTA members are only one phone call away from support and advice.

Senior Managers Advisory Panel

General Teaching Council Scotland Elections 2016

The GTCS elections are taking place in 2016 and members are encouraged to participate in the election process. All voting will be online only. Teachers need to register to vote by 9 December at www.gtcs.org.uk/mygtcs and ensure that the GTCS have an up to date email address and check/change election category.

The Ballot materials will be issued on 13 January with the election closing on 5 February. Results to be published on 10 February 2016.