



The Banter

Issue 2 – December



The Newsletter of Keith Grammar School, School Road, Keith, Moray, AB55 5GS

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Message from the Head Teacher...

We've made it to the school holidays and it will be a welcome break for staff and pupils to unwind. This term, as with last, has been unlike any other challenge we have faced before. There have been many highs and lows experienced by all associated with our school and whilst not everything has been straight forward and gone as we'd have wanted, there have been many successes to celebrate.

In the build up to Christmas this year we have missed the usual celebrations, dances and preparations that go with the season. Instead we are responding to the daily challenges we continue to face while dealing with the pandemic. I know for many the Christmas day celebrations will be a scaled-down event and my hope for our community and families is that we look out for one another and we come back to school safe and healthy. Despite the lack of festive celebrations in school, our focus must remain on the wellbeing of our young people and my hope is that we continue to take a sensible and cautious approach during the holiday period.

There is much to do to get ready for the new session and all staff have been working tirelessly to prepare as best they can in an ever changing context. On our return from the Christmas break we will continue to work hard and focus on respect across the school as one of our key aims. Next term we will be setting out our new Vision Statement for all we wish to achieve as a school and how we aim to do this. We are reviewing our School Expectations as part of this process so that we provide the best conditions for our young people to learn and achieve.

We are continuing to carefully plan our road to recovery with particular emphasis on the pupils who are undertaking their National Qualifications. With the cancellation of the exam diet we want to reassure pupils in the Senior Phase that work is ongoing to ensure we have quality evidence to support our judgements on their progress. Our pupils must give themselves every chance for success by attending regularly and giving every lesson their very best, a challenge I am sure they can rise to.

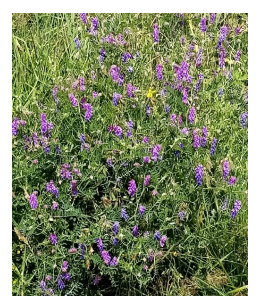
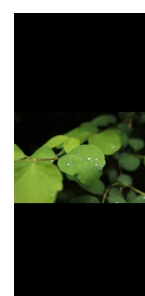
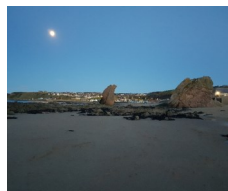
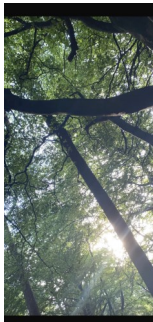
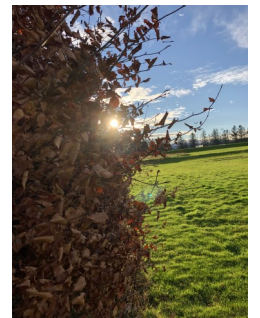
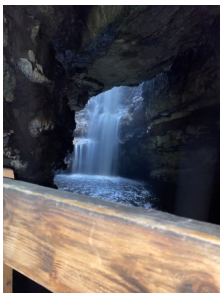
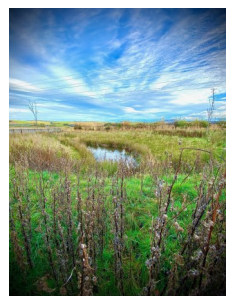
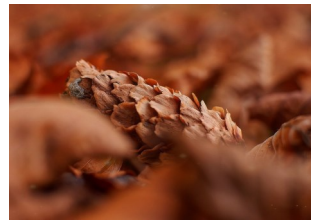
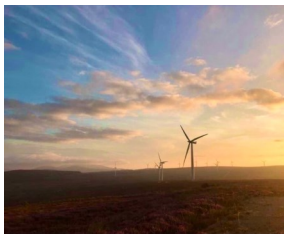
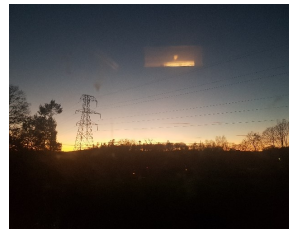
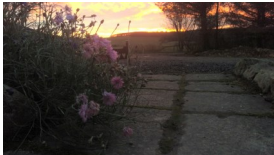
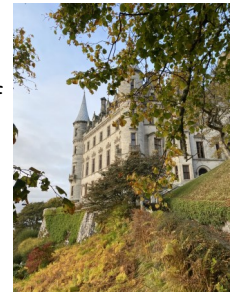
With a term under my belt as Head Teacher at Keith Grammar School, I need to say a special thank you to every member of staff who works in school. Teaching staff, non-teaching staff, our admin team, facilities team, catering and cleaning team and wider partners; everyone has pulled together and worked so well for the common purpose of improving the experience for our young people. I cannot thank my colleagues enough for their hard work, resilience, tenacity and dedication over this period and I already feel privileged to work with such an amazing team of people.

I would like to wish all young people, staff and parents and carers, time and space for rest, recovery and renewal. May I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and my best wishes for 2021.

Alan Bruce

Young Photographer Competition

A number of Keith Grammar pupils have entered this year's Rotary Club of Keith Young Photographer Competition. The Theme is 'Wild Nature'



Wheelie good fun with Outfit Moray

A group of pupils have been taking part in Bikeability sessions led by Outfit Moray over the last few weeks. They braved the sometimes icy cold conditions to take part in obstacle courses, jumps and learn to ride a range of adapted bikes for those with disabilities. Some have learned to cycle for the first time and others have grown in confidence. They are currently working towards their Bikeability level 1 award and hope to continue with this in the spring.

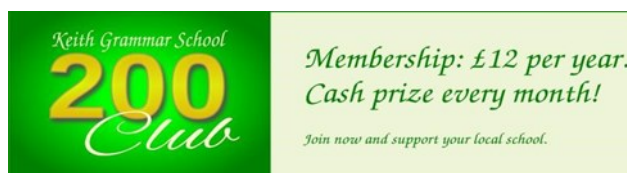


The tandem was a great hit! Mr Smith was a whizz on the front.





During these challenging times it is even more difficult to organise fundraisers, therefore, we would ask you all to play your part in raising funds which will benefit ALL KGS pupils.



We are re-launching the 200 Club which runs from March 2021 through to February 2022. Last year 203 tickets were sold which was fantastic and we thank everyone who joined! Let's see if we can beat last year's total and maybe even have to re-name it the 250 club!

It costs £1 per monthly draw. Each member is given a number. A number is drawn at random and the lucky person wins half of the money raised. The other half is for KGSPC funds. **Therefore, if there are 200 members the monthly prize is £100.**

To join the 200 Club you must be over 16 years old. **It costs £12 per ticket which enters you for 12 monthly draws!**

The easiest way to join is to set up a Direct Debit using the link:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/my/keithgrammar/kgs-parent-council/parent-council-fundraising/>

You can order tickets now and the payment will be taken off in February or March 2021.

If you'd prefer to pay with cash or cheque (made payable to KGS Parent Council) then please send payment to school office with your name, address, email and telephone number in a sealed envelope addressed 'KGSPC 200 CLUB'.

The closing date for purchasing tickets is Monday 22nd February 2021.



RAG BAG

Ongoing Fundraiser – please donate at any time!

We participate in the Rag Bag textile recycling scheme which provides regular fundraising and raises awareness about recycling.

Please bring good quality clean Men's, Ladies and Children's clothing, belts, bags and paired shoes (tied together) in a securely tied plastic bag to our outdoor textile bank. It is located in the fenced off area in the Community Centre car park where the Community Centre links with KGS.

Sadly, almost one in four of Scotland's children are officially recognised as living in poverty and yet these numbers are expected to rise! Children living in poverty have less access to food, clothing and healthy living conditions and overall less access at a chance to succeed. It is found that children in poverty with families earning low income are less likely to perform well at school compared to those who come from a family who earns an average income or more. Studies show that there are strong links between the experience of child poverty and poor mental health.

Some studies suggest that children living in low-income households are nearly three times as likely to suffer mental health problems as their more affluent peers. So we thought...“what can WE do to help?” Here at KGS we wanted to help give back this Christmas by producing our own food bank calendar. Each day of December has a specific food product or essential item that would hugely benefit the lives of families living in poverty this Christmas. Anyone could donate and help make a change by delivering at least one of the listed items to us ready to donate to our local food banks by simply handing in any donations to our school office. Our community have risen to the challenge and been incredibly generous this Christmas. A big thank you to everyone who helped make this project a success!



Our amazing school community have done a great job donating their old and unwanted shoes to Clarks Shoe Share. Our shoe mountain will be handed in when covid restrictions allow. Thanks to Keith Primary, Bottriphne, Newmill Primary and all those who donated



These hardy fiddlers gave us a few tunes for St Andrew's Day at interval. The Prefect Charity Group have been collecting for Moray Food Plus and wish to thank everyone who has donated.

Good, Clean, Fun at KGS - supporting our Community Foodbank.

Here are our Busy Bees giving up their own time to help their local area.

Recently, a selection of our pupils have given their time generously to learn the art of making soap, whilst developing their knowledge and skills of the packaging and labelling process.

A big, heartfelt, thank you all, yet again showing that KGS cares.



Library News

Virtually Live!

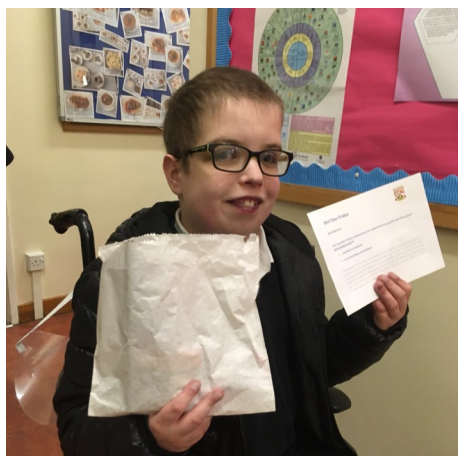
Edinburgh based author Danny Weston appeared Virtually Live at Keith Grammar School as part of Book Week Scotland celebrations in November. Danny recorded an exclusive video for KGS introducing some of his new books, reading extracts from books and answering questions that pupils submitted in advance of the event. The video was shown to S2 pupils in their English classes, preceded by an introduction by KGS Librarian Mr Leitch. "The virtually live video has proved a hit with the S2 pupils, and they have enjoyed hearing their names and questions read out as part of the event." said Mr Leitch who also commented that "I hope next year I'll be able to bring the real Danny Weston to Keith Grammar School!" The virtual visit was able to take place thanks to funding from Scottish Book Trust Live Literature initiative and the Keith Grammar School Parent Council.

Danny Weston has written six gripping novels aimed at teenagers, including Inchtinn, The Scarecrow and The Piper, which won the Scottish Children's Book Award in 2016. He also write under his real name Philip Caveney and lives in Edinburgh.

You can find out more about Danny/ Philip at his website: <https://www.philip-caveney.co.uk/>



Hot Chocolate Friday



Hot Chocolate Friday awards were given out to pupils who were nominated for being Ready, Respectful and Safe.

Well Done!



News from the Modern Languages department

Senior Wider Achievements

The Modern Languages department are delighted to be supporting a number of senior pupils to complete qualifications in language related subjects that we do not usually offer as our core languages of French, German, Spanish and Scots.

Sophie Riddoch and Abi Young (S5) have been studying towards a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) qualification this year. Sophie writes: "I chose to do the TEFL course because when I leave school I would like to teach English as a foreign language in Germany. This course has taught me so many things about the English language that I didn't even know and has also taught me how to persevere more. Since I had my 5 other subjects to study for I had to find ways to fit in my TEFL course and how to make sure that I balance out the work that I'm doing. In the future I hope to put the knowledge and skills I've learned from the TEFL course into action in Germany".

Bent Michielsen who sat Higher German last session in S4 achieving an A grade award, has been completing an online Dutch language qualification this year. Bent writes: I've been completing a Dutch course to improve my Dutch fluency. I am originally from the Netherlands, but I moved to Scotland when I was one. My parents taught me Dutch as my first language, but I slowly lost the ability up until I decided I wanted to study in the Netherlands. My mum knew a school, so we applied, and I started the course!

The main thing that was required to improve was on my writing. I am close to being fluent in speaking but I never had to read or write in Dutch. I was given an intake test that assessed my writing level and an interview to assess my speaking level. After that we scheduled the lessons, twice weekly. My teacher started with the basics of writing (plurals, capitalising etc.) and we moved onto the present tense. I progressed from A1 to B2 during my lessons. In between my lessons, my teacher would set me homework ranging from writing a piece to completing exercises on the schools online learning platform. We would then go over these during the lessons.

BGE French – Partnerships with schools in France and Germany

We are delighted to see so much enthusiasm from our S2 and S3 classes who all wrote letters in French and German for their respective partner schools in France and Germany.

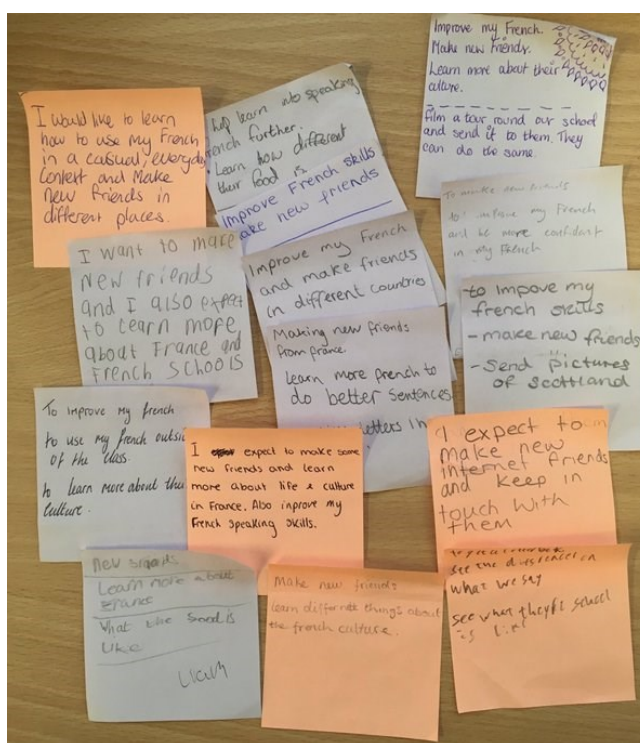
S3 French sent two letters written in French already to their new partner school located in *Villeparisis* (Paris region) and will be answering their second letters in January. Furthermore, as both of the programs for S3 - KGS and *Villeparisis* are similar, both classes have also been working on questions for each of the topics in the target languages. We hope to be able to use these new aspects of our partnership after the holidays.

We have also started a new partnership with our S2 French classes and a French school located in *La Seyne-sur-mer*, in Provence with who hopefully we would be able to organise an exchange in the future. We are really pleased to see our young linguists so enthusiastic to write to their new penpals. S2 French have finished their very first letters in French which was sent about a month ago with some Christmas decorations. French pupils were “extremely pleased” to receive them that they decided to answer us back with the Feast of the three Kings “la fête des rois” as a background of their letters. This is celebrated every year on the 6th of January in France and Belgium.

S2 and S3 German classes have been corresponding with our partner school in *Kronach* in northern Bavaria. Unfortunately due to COVID our annual exchange visit from *Kronach* to *Keith* which normally takes place in September was not possible this session, but it is hoped that they can visit again in 2021 and we are planning a potential return visit to Germany in 2022.

S2 have written their initial letters and Christmas cards to penpals in *Kronach*. S3 have responded to letters received on our return to school this session after setting up of penpals last year. S3 have been exchanging ideas about the German and Scottish school systems.

Please follow our twitter account for more regular updates on the Modern Languages Department
@keithmodlangs



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Date 14th December 2020

Our Ref SW/KT

Enquiries to Susan Webb
Extension 58478
Direct Line 01224 558478

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work over this last term to reduce the risk of COVID-19 within our school communities. Life has certainly been different for our children since they returned to school, but I know from feedback that the positive benefits to their health and wellbeing of being in school has outweighed the sacrifices we have had to make to keep them safe. We have been working closely with schools since they re-opened in August and have overall been very impressed by the control measures that are in place across Grampian. This has meant that, when cases have been in school, the numbers of close contacts have been much smaller than if no measures were in place, and the vast majority of schools have been able to stay open. Thank you to staff, pupils and parents/carers for adapting to the new measures so well.

We still need your help. Over the last two months we have seen a rise in the number of new cases of COVID-19 in the Grampian area. The team have worked hard to identify possible sources of the infection and appropriate action that we can take to break the chain of transmission and reduce further spread. However, at this time we are unable to connect 45% of cases to any of our current clusters, suggesting that we now have widespread community transmission. We need you to continue to help us reduce the spread. As parents and carers, particularly during the Christmas holidays, we ask that you ensure that you and your children follow the guidance that has been shared below. Try to avoid trips to public places like shops and hospitality and only meet up with others in person if absolutely necessary.

Christmas 23 – 27 December

You can form a 'bubble' with up to 2 other households (max. 8 people; children under 12 years do not count towards the overall number). This is to help alleviate loneliness over this period and should only be done if you feel it's necessary.

Christmas Tips:

Keep Small: the larger the group the greater the risk of someone carrying the virus without realising. If you are outside the virus will get dispersed in the fresh air and would be less of a problem! The experts say if you double the number of people getting together you get a fourfold increase in the risk of infection. Increasing the number of households that meet also increases the risk – the fewer the safer.

Don't Share: COVID can survive on surfaces for up to several hours so passing wine or food can pass the virus on too. Break with tradition and if you do need to meet up ask guests to bring their own food and drink.

Pardon: So, experts tell us that when you have to project your voice people spray more droplets which can carry the virus. Remember to keep the noise down and don't sing!

Speed: experts tell us that the longer you stay the greater the risk – a quick visit is safer than lingering over dinner.

Ventilation: The risk can be four times greater without proper ventilation – so if you are going to meet up – wear another layer and open the window.

To help you follow what is right for your area the following website sets out the level system and what needs to happen: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/>. Parent Club is another very useful resource and has various sections explaining when you can meet up with other households, which types of sports and other activities you can do and which of the measures apply to children:

<https://www.parentclub.scot/topics/coronavirus/new-restrictions>.

I attach with this letter a summary of some of the key points.

Thank you once again for your continued efforts to ensure schools remain open and as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely



Susan Webb

Director of Public Health

NHS Grampian

| Level | Socialising in each other's homes | Socialising outdoors | Hospitality (e.g. cafes, restaurants) | Sport/Exercise | Transport |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|--|
| 0 Nearly normal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 people from 3 households indoors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 people from 5 households outdoors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 people from 3 households. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sport and exercise allowed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk, cycle where possible. Avoid car sharing. Wear mask if in shared transport, & open windows. |
| 1 Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No in-home socialising with other households. This includes children (some exceptions apply) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 people from 3 households outdoors. Children under 12 don't count towards total number of people or households. 12-17 years olds: 8 people from 8 households. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 people from 2 households. Children under 12 don't count towards the total number of people but must be from the 2 households. 12-17 years olds: same rules apply as for adults. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults and children can play organised non-contact sport indoors but only those under 18 can play contact sports indoors. Adults and children can play organised contact and non-contact sports outdoors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above |
| 2 High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No in-home socialising with other households. This includes children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 people from 2 households outdoors. Children under 12 don't count towards total number of people or households. 12-17 years olds: 6 people from 6 households. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above |
| 3 Very High | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Level 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people under 18 can take part in organised outdoors and indoors contact sports but not adults. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above |
| 4 Lockdown | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Level 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor non-contact sport/exercise only for adults and children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No public transport |

Vision, Values & Aims @ KGS

Throughout the course of the past year, we have been reviewing the Vision, Values and Aims of Keith Grammar School. At the heart of this process has been our student voice group. They have consulted with pupils, parents and staff through a variety of means.

Lots of feedback and views have been collated, and we are now in a position where we would like to finalise things. The following 3 value words have stood out from the consultation:

Ready
Respectful
Safe

These values have been a feature of our work at Keith Grammar in the past, but also encompass the majority of the views from all our stakeholders. Should you have any further comment about these values, then please get in touch with Mr Pirie at the school, via the school email address.

Furthermore, we have identified the following options for Vision Statements for Keith Grammar school:

“Working as a community to achieve excellent pathways for all”

“We are an ambitious and thriving learning community, shaping successful futures”

Should you have a preference, please vote using the link below:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oyzTzM4Wj0KVQTctawUZKW3BgaYnJ1BmI9_KXqG0GBUNUEzRFRZRURLNk45TVJaQVIMMkZSNzIBVC4u

The student voice group will meet again to collate the final views, as well defining exactly what we mean by our values, therefore creating our aims. Our young people will also get the chance to create the design in terms of how our Vision, Values and Aims are presented to all stakeholders.

Thank you for contributing to this process. Please get in touch with Mr. Pirie if you have any feedback at all.

| Day/Date: | Details: |
|---|--------------------|
| Monday 21st December—Monday 4th January | Christmas Holidays |
| Tuesday 5th January 2021 | New Term |
| Friday 5th February—Monday 8th February | Mid Term Break |

Scottish Child Payment

£40 every four weeks to help with the costs of having a child.



mygov.scot

 **0800 182 2222**

If you have a child who will be under six on 15 February 2021 and you get certain benefits or tax credits, you could be due £40 every four weeks per child once Scottish Child Payment starts.

To help us deal with demand, we are taking applications now. This way we can make sure we have all the information and evidence we need. This will help us to quickly make our decision on your application once the benefit starts. We will then start making payments from the end of February 2021.

When you apply for Scottish Child Payment, you can also apply for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods at the same time and on the same form.

Check if you are eligible and apply now at mygov.scot/benefits or by calling 0800 182 2222.