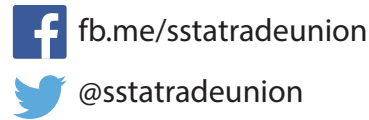




Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association

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



fb.me/sstatradeunion

@sstatradeunion

t: 0131 313 7300
e: info@ssta.org.uk

NEWSLETTER OF THE SCOTTISH SECONDARY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION - JANUARY 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

In normal circumstances, I would welcome you all to a Happy New Year after a well-deserved Christmas break. That message still holds true however for this academic session it is not a case of "out with the old and in with the new" and for the beginning of 2021 our working lives have had to adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

Following an unprecedented year in 2020, Scottish Education and in particular within the secondary sector, we probably thought we left behind the damaging effects of Covid-19 behind us. In reality, we are continually facing school closures, remote teaching and the cancellation of SQA exams. We are all too familiar with the difficult repercussions of such events.

Whatever the effect this insidious virus has on the delivery of educating our young people, it highlights the important role of the teacher. Teaching within the class supersedes above all other mechanisms to enhance learning, and in the longer term, we will have to question the support structure for teachers and learners.

Presently, with the high transmission rate of the new variant of the Corona virus spreading across our nation, the risk associated with reopening schools is of major concern. It would not be too prudent to address the mechanism of reopening schools to provide a safe working environment. Still, as essential key workers, the safest option would be for all staff and vulnerable people to be vaccinated as soon as possible, so that we can all return to our schools and get the job of educating young people carried out more effectively.

I wish you all well for 2021 and the prospect of a brighter future.

John Guidi
SSTA President



John Guidi, President

SSTA PRESIDENT 2019-2021 - JOHN GUIDI

John Guidi is a Physics Chartered teacher at Mearns Castle High School and has been actively involved with the SSTA for over twenty years.

As well as being President, John is also the Renfrew Area Secretary as well as East Renfrewshire District Secretary. His work and experience for the SSTA includes membership of the Education Committee and Council.

Election of President and Vice-President - 2021-2023

I wish to advise members that the Association received one nomination each for the positions of SSTA President and Vice-President. I therefore can confirm that Catherine Nicol and been elected as the next President and that Stuart Hunter has been elected as the next Vice-President. Catherine and Stuart will take up their positions at the end of the SSTA Annual Congress in May 2021.

Catherine is the current Vice-President, Convener of the Salaries and Conditions of Service Committee and the North Ayrshire District Secretary as well as being a member of SSTA National Executive for a number of years.

Stuart is a member of the SSTA National Executive and has held a number of positions within the Association over a number of years and until recently was the SSTA District Secretary in West Lothian.

Seamus Searson
General Secretary



Catherine Nicol
SSTA President 2021–2023

Catherine said “In these testing times, teachers deserve a strong voice. As SSTA President I will ensure that the voice of Secondary teachers is heard and respected. I have twenty years of experience as a Chemistry teacher. Excessive workload is having a detrimental effect on the health, pay and conditions of teachers. I am fully

committed to advocating for teachers at both local and National levels. Furthermore, I have a wealth of experience as a member of the Executive, Education and Salaries Committees. We all agree that teachers need the tools to do the job. I strongly believe that it is vital that teachers are fully-supported with high quality resources. I will ensure that, when education policy is being formulated, I will speak up for teachers and demand that decisions reflect their concerns. As your President I will “Get it Right for Every Secondary Teacher”.

Stuart said “I am deeply honoured to be nominated for such an important position. The SSTA is the voice of secondary teachers. That is the mission statement that attracted me to the SSTA as I embarked on my teaching career. For over 20 years I have been actively involved at school, district and national level. I have never underestimated these roles

and continue to be humbled in the confidence shown to me to represent and support all members and to assist in having their voices heard. 2020 has seen unprecedented demands on teachers. Schools, Local Authorities, the Education Secretary and appointed agencies must hear and act on the voice of every single member of the SSTA. As Vice President, it will be my mission to ensure that the voice of every teacher is heard and listened to”.



Stuart Hunter
SSTA Vice-President 2021–2023

SNCT – Teachers Pay Claim 2021

On behalf of the SNCT Teachers’ Panel, I intimate the pay claim for all teachers and associated professionals governed by SNCT terms and conditions for 2021.

The 2021 SNCT pay claim reflects the on-going commitment and professionalism of teachers and associated professionals, which has been brought into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the on-going need to continue the restoration of the pay of teachers and associated professionals.

Therefore, a range of 3%-5% is the financial scope of the claim, depending on other measures and benefits also being considered as part of the pay and reward package, in particular those measures aimed at tackling excessive workload.

The Teachers’ Panel believes that the need to provide adequate support and reward for teachers as frontline and key workers should be recognised within the 2021 pay award. The Panel wishes to expedite negotiations, through Extended Joint Chairs, with the aim of reaching a settlement for implementation in April 2021.

Secretary to SNCT Teachers’ Panel

In these "Interesting Times" many people are now seriously considering retirement and wondering how and when they will be able to afford retire.

- ✓ How will I be able to meet my bills?
- ✓ How do I get the best from my pension?
- ✓ How do I make my money last?

L-Life Ltd, in conjunction with the SSTA, would like to invite you to a **free** virtual workshop concentrating on the decisions you will/are being faced with at retirement.



The workshop will run for **1 hour** and look at:-

- ✓ The Teachers' Pension Scheme – how it works and the options that you have including Phased Retirement and Winding Down
- ✓ How you can top up your pensions in preparation for retirement
- ✓ How to apply for your pension
- ✓ Money management & investment choices

The workshop has been arranged with the permission of the Scottish Secondary Teachers Association and is open to all members who are thinking about retirement.



Retirement Workshops

Tuesday 19th January 2021
17:00 – 18:00

Thursday 21st January 2021
17:00 – 18:00

Monday 1st February 2021
17:00 – 18:00

Wednesday 3rd February 2021
17:00 – 18:00

To book a place go to:

www.ssta.org.uk/retire-workshops

and choose the workshop you would like to attend and complete the registration form.

Life Ltd.

Life-Long Investment and
Financial Expertise

Parent Evenings

The education system is under severe pressure at present due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the focus of all schools and teachers must be on teaching and learning. Schools should be deferring all 'normal' school activities at this time including parent evenings. However, some schools are unable to accept the reality of the situation and organising parent evenings. As a consequence the SSTA offers the following advice:

- Teachers should feedback to parents on learner progress within the time available in the school's working time agreement. This can take any agreed format.
- Parents' evenings are not under a Headteachers sole control: they are a matter for negotiation as part of school Working Time Agreement discussions. Such discussions should follow advice given by the LNCT.
- There is no contractual obligation to undertake virtual parents' evenings if they have not been negotiated as part of the WTA.
- The introduction of a virtual approach represents a new working practice and merits full consultation in line with the SNCT Code of Practice on Collegiality.
- Teachers cannot be obliged to undertake remote meetings with parents using their own equipment or from home.
- Teachers are reminded of the Scottish Government instruction 'Stay at Home'

2021 SUBSCRIPTION FEES

The General Treasurer informed Council that subscriptions would be frozen at 2020 values.

The reduced annual subscription for 2021 for full-time members on a permanent contact will be £175.45 and £87.78 for part time, temporary, job-share, supply and retired members, if their fees are paid by annual direct debit or cheque by 31 January 2021. This saving is clearly of advantage to members and is only available to those who pay before the end of January.

Members who have elected to pay their subscription by annual cheque are reminded that these should be forwarded by 31 January 2021, directly to the Association offices.

The rates for 2021 are as follows:

- Full-time Permanent members £175.45 if paid annually by 31 January 2021, or £191.40 if paid afterwards; £15.95 per month if paid by monthly direct debit.
- Part-time, job-share, temporary, supply and retired members: £87.78 if paid annually by 31 January 2021 or £95.76 if paid afterwards; £7.98 per month if paid by monthly direct debit.

Members who pay annually by cheque are encouraged to transfer to annual Direct Debit. Paying by Direct Debit guarantees that the payment will be taken in time to obtain the discounted subscription. Direct debit instructions can be completed online or download from the website at www.ssta.org.uk/ddi or by contacting the office at info@ssta.org.uk

Members on permanent contracts (1.0 – 0.81 FTE) pay the full subscription rate. Members on Part-time contracts (0.8 FTE and below), Temporary or Supply contracts and retired members pay the reduced subscription rate.

Members who have changed contracts recently or believe they may be paying the wrong subscription rate should contact the SSTA office by emailing info@ssta.org.uk or complete an [update of details form](#) on website.

Are you paying too much tax?

Since launching our professional tax review service last year, hundreds of members have taken advantage of the service and the results so far are eye-opening!

We launched the service after we saw evidence indicating over 50% of taxpayers in the teaching profession have been given the wrong tax code by HMRC causing them to pay too much tax.

The problem is caused because HMRC relies on you checking your tax code and informing them if they give you the wrong code.

The review, provided by leading PAYE tax specialists, The Tax Refund Company, identifies any errors that caused members to pay too much tax and helps them get their money back.

Since launching the service, it turns out significantly more than 50% of SSTA members appear to have been given the wrong tax codes!

So far, 67% of SSTA members using the service have been given the wrong tax code and paid too much tax. The average amount HMRC has given back is £175.51 each, although some members have had over £2,500 back!

If you haven't used the service yet, please bear in mind there is no charge for this review. If you have paid the correct amount of tax, the review is FREE.

If the review concludes you have paid too much tax, The Tax Refund Company will correspond with HMRC to try and recover your money. Where they are successful, there is a fee of £38 for amounts up to £100 or 38p per £1 where the amount recovered is over £100.

This fee only relates to money you overpaid in up to 4 previous tax years. Any money you overpaid in the current tax year will be included as part of the review and recovered free of charge. In the rare event it looks like you have underpaid, only you will be informed, not HMRC. However, for complete peace of mind, if you receive an unexpected tax bill as a direct result of using this service, The Tax Refund Company will pay the bill for you. (T&C's apply)

To take advantage of this new service, please go to www.sstatax.co.uk In a matter of minutes you will find out if you could have paid too much tax and if so, you will be able to register for a full review.

Please note – HMRC has a deadline for handing back overpaid tax so if you want to avoid losing money you could get back, you should consider reviewing your tax affairs as soon as possible.

THE TAX REFUND COMPANY

SSTA Social Media Channels

You can follow the SSTA on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for updates on current issues and campaigns, publication of advice notes and information on training events.



fb.me/sstatradeunion



@sstatradeunion



@sstatradeunion

SSTA Legal Services cover more than you think



Call 0800 081 2207
Visit TalkToThompsons.com

Are you and your family prepared for the future?

We all know that we should have a Will but statistics show that less than 50% of Scottish adults have one. It is difficult but it is not morbid. It is just about ensuring that your wishes are expressed and followed and it is about ensuring that your family are properly catered for. But a Will is only one of three key legal documents that experts advise everyone should have these days for the future protection of their family.

The three documents are a Will, a Power of Attorney and an advanced Directive. Our legal partners, Thompsons Solicitors, will explain the importance of these three documents and answer any questions that you may have.

The SSTA's best kept secret – complete legal services for you and your family

You will know that if you have an employment issue you will have the full support of the SSTA's legal service. You may know that if you have an accident at work you will also receive expert legal support for free. But there is so much more to the legal support you and your family receive as an SSTA member.

In fact, our aim is to provide a complete package of free or discounted legal services so that we can be your one stop shop for every legal issue you may have.

Our legal partners will describe the full range of legal services and support available to you as an SSTA member, how you may access them and some of our success stories over the years.