

Welcome to The Gordon Schools

Rector's Introduction

The Gordon Schools is a non-denominational, comprehensive Aberdeenshire secondary school, providing educational opportunities for pupils aged 11 to 18 years old. Our School has a rich and successful history stretching back over 175 years when the Duchess of Gordon combined four local schools and the famous north-east architect Archibald Simpson designed the original buildings, providing a striking and distinctive landmark archway. We draw from fourteen local primary schools located in an area of sixteen miles around the town of Huntly in the north east of Scotland. Our current school roll stands at around 735 pupils.

The School is strongly tied to the heart of the local community. Involvement with local organisations and businesses is increasingly integral to providing a rich educational context for learning. We value the input of parents and carers who are very much encouraged to become involved in the life of The Gordon Schools. We work in partnership with our Parent Council who support the school in guiding our educational direction and with valuable fund-raising. We always welcome positive and constructive ways of improving links between pupils' home lives and our School.

We aim to continually develop and improve quality learning and teaching experiences at The Gordon Schools. Building on prior learning is always important at every transition in a child's learning from age 3 through to 18. We have high expectations of our pupils, encouraging each one to attain the best they possibly can at every stage through a journey of life-long learning. We invest in high quality professional development and training for all colleagues to ensure that the young people attending The Gordon Schools have the best learning opportunities. The quality of pupils' learning is monitored closely by their teachers as well as senior and promoted colleagues. Pastoral and support mechanisms are in place for all pupils to ensure that individual and collective achievements are valued and encouraged.

There are many distinctive features of The Gordon Schools, including regular assemblies, our uniform, School shows and concerts, opportunities for sporting and healthy activities, charitable fundraising and an annual celebration of our achievements and prize winners. Complementing our broad formal curriculum, we offer a broad range of extra-curricular experiences including a wide range of sports, music and arts experiences, with many of our pupils going on to represent the School and even the country in a variety of ways. Our ethos is one of a caring and friendly learning community, where all pupils and visitors alike feel valued and can contribute to a happy and healthy sustainable future. We nurture our pupils to be resilient and have a responsible approach to life, promoting positive behaviour in all of our young people.

As recently appointed Rector of The Gordon Schools, I am proud to be leading our School as we build on its great history and are committed to moving forward and embracing modern and relevant learning experiences for everyone involved. I hope that you find this handbook a valuable and useful resource in discovering more about what The Gordon Schools offers.



Phil Gaiter

Vision and Values

Our Vision Statement is to be reviewed, consulted upon, agreed and re-launched during Session 2016-17. This will be a wide-ranging process involving pupils, School colleagues, parents/carers, partners, former pupils and our wider community. The end result is intended to be a living vision together with a set of values which will underpin everything we do and guide us in our future aspirations and actions. We look forward to welcoming you into our School to share your views about how this will look and feel as we move forward during the year.

Our future vision and values will build on the key purposes of a Curriculum for Excellence, which are to enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. These are also known as the four capacities for learning.

Building and Layout

Huntly is situated adjacent to the A96 Aberdeen-Elgin-Inverness Road, north west of Aberdeen. Proceeding from the town square by Castle Street, visitors will be struck by the impressive view which opens out at the top of the town, featuring an area of mature trees in which The Gordon Schools' buildings are set, known as 'The Avenue'.

We are often asked, "Why The Gordon Schools and not just School?" In 1839 the last Duchess of Gordon, known as the 'Good Duchess', erected a building in the town of Huntly as a memorial to her late husband. She invited the four major local schools to occupy it and The Gordon Schools was born.

This building still stands today as part of our present accommodation. It was renovated a number of years ago and is now a striking home for those learning Music, Drama and Home Economics. The Gordon Schools celebrated 175 years of continuous education in Huntly in 2014 and has grown steadily over the years in a succession of stages, with buildings linked by a network of corridors. We have a large assembly hall, gymnasium, and games hall, together with well-equipped and pleasant classrooms. We are fortunate in having our playing fields on the same site as the school and doubly fortunate in having access to the grounds of the local Cricket and Rugby Clubs adjacent to the school. We also have the local Authority's modern swimming pool on-site and use this as part of our Physical Education curriculum. All of these facilities feature strongly in our extra-curricular programmes.



The Gordon Schools' Crest

At the top of the school crest, two yellow boars' heads on an azure background represent the Gordon family. Two lion's heads on a gold background are linked with Badenoch. Two red crescents on a gold background link with Seton. Two fraises, or strawberry flowers, on an azure background represent Fraser. The Gordon family owned Badenoch, Seton and Fraser lands and these four names are remembered in the names of our House system. A red chevron with silver stars carries the link with the Brodie Arms, the 5th Duke of Gordon having married Elizabeth

Brodie. The colours black and gold relate to the Barry Arms of Strathbogie. The green lime leaves represent our Linden trees. The grey tower represents the tower of the Simpson Building, the original building dating from 1839. The motto *In Fas Constans* derives from *Bydand*, which appears on the armorial bearings of the Gordon family. Both mean *Steadfast* or *Abiding*.

Former Pupils' Association

Anyone who has attended The Gordon Schools for any length of time, any member or former member of staff is eligible to choose this way of keeping in touch with the School and former school-mates, and ensuring that the spirit of the School lives on. The Association also holds occasional social functions open only to members and their partners. "Old Boys and Girls!" from all over the world have attended.

The Former pupils' Association also involves itself in fund-raising for the School and charity. The Association publishes an annual magazine, called 'The School Road', which is sent to former pupils all over the world. The Association holds bursaries and bequests in trust. These are allocated to pupils and former pupils by the committee of the Association, in consultation with the Rector and Guidance team. Staff in The Gordon Schools are delighted to have the support and backing of such a positive organisation and we strongly encourage our school leavers to take up membership of the Former Pupils Association.

Website link: www.thegordonschoolsfpa.co.uk

School Uniform

An overwhelming majority of parents gave their full backing to the wearing of school uniform on a daily basis and for 'Dress Code'. We believe that how pupils dress is important. We also believe that wearing our School uniform makes for a positive approach to school life. We encourage all pupils to be smart in appearance by wearing school uniform each and every day. Below are our reasons.

Firstly, wearing The Gordon Schools' uniform each day asks a lot of pupils. It encourages self-respect, self-confidence and a constructive attitude to learning. This cannot happen by itself of course, but it can contribute to overall ethos. Secondly, it helps to create a sense of equity for the best of reasons. If everyone is dressed in a similar way, then pupils and their families are protected from the excesses and expenses of current fashion and associated peer pressure around this. Thirdly, it encourages a sense of identification and belonging to our School community, with all members helping and supporting each other, sharing and participating in successes. Fourthly, and finally, it presents a positive image of our School to the wider community, with pupils acting as public ambassadors on behalf of The Gordon Schools.

Communications

A School Calendar is available online to all parents/carers each session. School information and good news stories are regularly tweeted and also posted on our Website, to keep parents, carers and the wider communities informed of pupil successes, Parents' Meetings, events, community ventures, and such like. The 'Huntly Express' gives generous regular coverage to School news and pupil achievements, in addition, provides the 'Chit Chat' column devoted to The Gordon Schools. Parents are, of course, advised also by letter and text of all important events and matters. Serious matters may be referred to the Rector or any member of Senior Leadership Team, however, parents and pupils should usually take any concerns initially to the school through the relevant Principal Teacher of Guidance. Further contact details are available on the School website: <http://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>

Our School Day

08:55 – 09:05am: Registration	12:05 – 1:00pm: Period 4
09:05 – 10:05am: Period 1	1:00 – 2:00pm: Lunch
10:05 – 10:55am: Period 2	2:00 – 2:50pm: Period 5
10:55 – 11:15am: Interval	2:50 – 3:45pm: Period 6
11:15 – 12:05pm: Period 3	3:45pm: Close of School

Attendance and Punctuality

Good attendance and punctuality will help to foster better learning and attainment.

All parents/carers of children of school age have a duty to provide education suitable to age, ability and aptitude. As part of an Aberdeenshire's approach to the management of pupil absences, we use a system called Groupcall, which allows us to contact parents/carers more quickly and efficiently to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Groupcall gives us the ability to send text messages to parent/carer's mobile phones or make automated telephone calls to parent /carers via telephone numbers supplied to the School. The system is primarily used to seek clarification on why a child is absent from School.

Parents should note that the majority of holidays taken during term time are categorised as an *unauthorised absence*. Under exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher can authorise a family holiday during term time, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

Improving attendance is vital for our School. There is a direct link between good attendance and good attainment. Parents/carers are asked to ensure that pupils come to School on time each and every day. Late-coming seriously disrupts learning in classes and is dealt with as part of the Aberdeenshire Council Attendance Policy. Every effort will be made, with parental co-operation, to encourage good habits of punctuality in pupils. Latecomers should report to the Reception in order to register and subsequently report to a member of the Senior Leadership Team at morning interval to review the reason for their lateness. Again, good punctuality is just as important as good attendance, in helping make for a settled start to daily learning.

Term Dates for Session 2017-2018

Autumn Term 2017 Term 1

In-service day Monday 21 August 2017
School starts for pupils Tuesday 16 August 2017
Last day of Term Friday 13 October 2017

Winter Term 2017 Term 2

School restarts Monday 30 October 2017
In-service days 13 & 14 November 2017
Last day of term Friday 22 December 2017

Spring term 2018 Term 3

School restarts Monday 8 January 2018
Mid-term holiday Monday 12 February 2018
In-service days 13 & 14 February 2018
Last day of Term Thursday 29 March 2018

Summer Term 2018 Term 4

School restarts Monday 16 April 2018
May Day holiday Monday 7 May 2018
Last day of session Friday 6 July 2018

There will in addition be two occasional day holidays as agreed with our Parent Council and Cluster schools (Friday 9 February and Monday 4 June 2018).

Mathematics

Mrs K Burnett, Faculty Head
Mr S Forrest
Dr P Hopwood
Mrs S McGowan
Mr A Murdoch
Mrs K Taylor (Part-time)
Mr G Ingram (Part-time)

Mr K Linfoot
Ms N Hughes

Aberdeenshire ICT
Aberdeenshire ICT

Assemblies

Pupils attend regular weekly Assemblies in their year groups to celebrate pupil achievements, seek and offer feedback to pupils on areas of School improvement, cover key moral and other important issues and communicate key messages to pupils. Guest speakers may also feature and pupils sometimes present to their peers on areas that they feel are important or relevant for young people.

Religious Observance

The Gordon Schools welcomes and values pupils from all faith backgrounds. We are a non-denominational School and have close links with Churches in the extended Huntly community. Situated in a predominantly Christian community, at Christmas, our school participates in services held by local Ministers and, where appropriate, encourages presentations by religious groups and charities. The Gideons present First Year pupils with a copy of the New Testament each year. The Scottish Executive has issued new guidelines for Religious Observance which further assist in the spiritual development of all members of our school community.

Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

From first to fourth year, pupils have one period a week during which they learn about six major world religions - Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Our learners also consider key questions relating to life and have a general introduction into morality, moral issues and philosophical thinking. The subject area makes an important contribution to equal opportunities and citizenship in the School by encouraging pupils to acquire a good knowledge of different religious beliefs and practices so they can develop respect for and empathy with people whose cultures and way of life are different from our own. The study of key questions, and of morality as a subject area in its own right, is intended to help pupils not only in the development of their critical thinking but also in their personal and social development and offers skills for life.

Physical Education

Within the Health and Well-being Faculty, the subject area of Physical Education in The Gordon Schools offers a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities to foster both sporting competition as well as healthy living and enjoyment. From team games to co-operative activities, from competitive situations to shared learning, both indoors and outdoors, involving boys and girls, programmes are as exciting as they are varied. Our Games Hall and Gymnasium, our grassed playing fields, an all-weather pitch and our local swimming pool provide a fine blend of facilities matched with the best of learning and teaching. The Scottish Government stipulate that all pupils experience two periods of Physical Education each week.

Health and Well-being across our Whole-School

Our School does all it can to make sure that pupils are active, healthy and enjoy good fitness. When pupils are unwell we make every effort to ensure that pupils' needs are catered for. Our aim is to show care and concern for the welfare of each and every pupil.

The School regularly reviews all of its procedures relating to health provision and medical matters to take account of Aberdeenshire Council policy. Forms dealing with the administration of medication are issued annually. All members of staff are issued with advice on medical matters. This includes a confidential list of pupils who have a long-term medical condition. No medication can be administered to a pupil under the age of sixteen years without the written consent of a parent or carer. It should be noted that school staff are unable to issue paracetamol or other non-prescribed medication to pupils.

First Aid is provided during most of the day by our School Nursing Assistant. The school based Community Support Health Worker works alongside the Nursing Assistant, the School Doctor and other health professionals to support pupils. Advice on such matters as head lice and dysentery is available from our Community Support Health Worker.

The School Medical Officer visits our School on a regular basis and sees pupils with any medical, emotional or behavioural problems that may be affecting their educational progress. The School Nurse is involved in vaccinations, testing pupils' colour vision in first year and carries out an interview with all second year pupils, referring any concerns to the School Doctor.

The School Health Service adheres to National recommendations. A BCG immunisation to protect against TB is offered in second year by the School Health Team. Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio boosters are offered in third or fourth year by the School Health Team, if not given by the GP. Other review examinations and appointments are arranged as necessary by the School Doctor. Information for parents is available in the leaflet Health Service for School Age Children issued by the School Health Service to all pupils in first year.

The School has some equipped to accommodate pupils who have physical disabilities, with ramps at all entrances. There is a lift to give access to the three-storey main school building.

Curriculum for Excellence in The Gordon Schools

The Scottish *Curriculum for Excellence* programme has been introduced to raise standards of learning for all 3 to 18 year olds. It aims to help prepare children with the knowledge and skills needed in a fast changing world, with the key outcome being to ensure your child develops the skills, knowledge and understanding to be successful now and in future life.

What is the Curriculum?

Curriculum for Excellence takes a much broader view of the curriculum than previously and includes four main elements.

Curriculum areas and subjects	These are the ways in which learning is organised and delivered in classes e.g. Maths, English, Science, Expressive Arts, etc.
Interdisciplinary Learning	There is much more 'joined up' learning between and across subjects and curriculum areas. This makes learning more relevant and realistic.
Ethos and life of the school	Within the school a positive ethos and atmosphere supports learning in its widest sense and supports the development of the four capacities. Within the school a positive ethos and atmosphere supports learning in its widest sense, supporting the development of the four capacities.
Opportunities for personal achievement	Both within the classroom and beyond we aim to provide opportunities which encourage challenge, satisfaction, motivation and resilience.

Curriculum Areas and Subjects

These form the main part of pupil timetables. There are eight curriculum areas in the secondary curriculum. Each contains a range of subject areas. Pupils in secondary school are building on their study of these curriculum areas from primary school.

The 8 Curriculum Areas	
Expressive Arts	Religious and Moral Education
Health and Wellbeing	Sciences
Languages and Literacy	Social Studies
Mathematics and Numeracy	Technologies

Each of the eight curriculum areas is built upon 'Experiences and Outcomes', around which teachers plan learning with classes. Within the new curriculum all teachers will focus on Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing. These 3 areas develop skills that underpin and support success in all other areas of learning. The secondary curriculum is divided into two main stages as shown below:

S1-S3	Broad General Education	All pupils follow a common course which includes study across all eight curriculum areas. This builds on learning from primary school. Pupils will have increasing opportunities to achieve and study in depth as they progress through their Broad General Education. In third year pupils will have the opportunity for some personalisation and depth in their curriculum.
S4-S6	Senior Phase	For each year in the Senior Phase, pupils will choose courses for qualifications. These will include the SQA National courses at the appropriate level, as well as the option of Highers and Advanced Highers.

Transition from Primary to Secondary School

The majority of pupils in The Gordon Schools come from our Cluster Primary Schools:

Cairney School	Clatt School	Drumblade School	Forgue School	Gartly School
Glass School	Gordon Primary	Insch School*	Kennethmont School	Largue School
Lumsden School**	Premnay School*	Rhynie School	Oyne School*	

* Dual-zoned for The Gordon Schools and Inverurie Academy

** Dual-zoned for The Gordon Schools and Alford Academy

To assist in the transition from Primary to Secondary, we liaise with our Cluster Primary Schools throughout the session. All of our Head Teachers meets regularly to co-ordinate developments.

Two Open Information Evenings for Parents and Carers of pupils in Primary 7 are each school session. There are opportunities to meet Senior Leaders, Guidance Teachers and pupils from the School.

A series of visits by secondary colleagues to our Cluster Primary Schools in the summer term is followed by a week-long Transition Experience for Primary 7 pupils to The Gordon Schools in June. The visits are organised by members of the Senior Leadership team and Guidance teachers. An easy-to-follow Welcome Booklet is prepared, giving advice, facts and information. To make the transition as smooth as possible and to lessen the impact of change, pupils meet new teaching staff in settled groups. They have an opportunity to learn about our curriculum, to meet a range of subject teachers and to see the range of new facilities and buildings. If required, in addition a small group of pupils meet on a regular basis during the summer term to support them in a more extended transition.

During the 5-day Transition Week, a second Parents' Information Evening is held. The aim of all of this is to make sure that transition is as smooth as possible. Senior pupils also act as *Buddies* to support first year pupils as they settle in to School in August.

Families of pupils enrolling out-with transition time meet with one of the Depute Rectors. Time is made available to provide families with a guided tour and to provide advice and information about School life.

House Arrangements and Guidance Colleagues

When pupils enrol at The Gordon Schools they are allocated to a House. This way of dividing pupils into four groupings, Badenoch, Fraser, Gordon and Seton, links pupils, from first to sixth year, with others in their families, under the care and direction of a member of the Guidance team. Along with a Guidance teacher, pupils also have a register Teacher who takes the class first thing each day. Our Register Teachers takes an interest in all pupils in their Tutor group and gets to know them.

Guidance Team and Home-School Communications

Our Guidance teachers provide the link between home and School. Although all teachers in the school have responsibility for pupil welfare, it is our Guidance colleagues who are in a position to have a complete picture of pupil progress during their secondary school years. They provide support and guidance of a personal nature, assisting pupils to make well-considered decisions. Guidance teachers see all their pupils on a weekly basis when teaching Personal and Social Education and conduct routine interviews with pupils during each stage of their school career.

Guidance colleagues meet regularly with members of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss all aspects of pupil welfare. There are also regular meetings to co-ordinate Additional Support for Learning. The progress and welfare of pupils experiencing specific difficulties are reviewed at these times.

Guidance teachers are also the link between the school and outside agencies, such as: Universities, Further Education Establishments, Skills Development Scotland, Children's Hearings, Psychological Services, Work Experience agencies, Health & School Medical Service, Social Work Department, Cluster Primary Schools and Community Health & Development.

Whenever there is concern about the well-being of pupils, Guidance teachers contact Parents/Carers by telephone, e-mail or by letter. In return, Parents/Carers are asked to inform the appropriate member of the Guidance team of any circumstances that might affect a pupil's progress at School. Colleagues in The Gordon Schools value this sense of partnership between home and school. Should you wish to meet with a Guidance teacher an appointment should be made through the School Office. The telephone number is 01466 792181. Parents are also encouraged to contact the Rector or members of the Senior Leadership Team; if there is something causing real concern do not hesitate to get in touch. Someone will help. We are all concerned and will try to assist.

Personal and Social Education (P.S.E)

The letters P.S.E. stand for Personal and Social Education. All teachers in The Gordon Schools are concerned with and contribute to the health and well-being of our pupils. In addition there is a structured P.S.E. programme that is available to all pupils and is built into the timetable. The Guidance Team delivers this programme for years S1 to S6. Their aim is to build up a supportive relationship with each group and, through their personal knowledge of the members of the group, help them to make progress in their social, academic and personal development over their time in School and to prepare for life out-with School.

In The Gordon Schools our P.S.E. programme consists of a variety of themes and topics that have been designed so that the content matches the level of maturity of the pupils. In each year of our programme there are common themes that we regard as important throughout a young person's development to adulthood. These include: developing personal qualifications and skills; developing personal relationships; reviewing progress; developing learning and study skills; skills of decision-making and problem-solving; careers education; health education and; caring for oneself and others.

Progression and Skills Development Scotland

Skills Development Scotland provides careers guidance services to schools. All pupils in S4, S5 and S6 can request an individual interview with the Careers Adviser. Individual interviews are timetabled throughout the year. Parents/Carers are welcome to come to the interview or to discuss with the Careers Adviser the summary of guidance Career Plan that is given to each pupil following their interview.

The input of Skills Development Scotland is negotiated with school colleagues to best meet the needs of pupils in the available time. Pupils can continue to gain access to help offered by Skills Development Scotland after they have left school. Careers Advisers can assist them to reconsider career ideas, after the publication of examination results or following a period of employment or further education.

Assessment and Reporting to Parents/Carers

Teachers undertake on-going continuous formative assessment to ensure that learning activities are meeting the needs of their pupils and extending and developing learning. Assessment information is used to track pupils' progress, inform planning, direct future learning and teaching activities and for reporting purposes. The overall purpose of assessment is to support learning. Colleagues at The Gordon Schools use a variety of formative assessment techniques in teaching the children how they can improve upon their current levels of work. This applies to all pupils, regardless of ability and ensures that opportunities to progress and achieve are fair and inclusive. Assessment in the Broad General Education continues to be based on the Curriculum for Excellence level system used throughout primary school. Assessment in the Senior Phase is based mainly on the range of SQA National Qualifications.

As in all Aberdeenshire schools, baseline assessment tests are used to contribute to an overall measure of ability that strongly predicts subsequent achievement. These results can be used to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, inform teaching and learning, identify able pupils and help identify pupils with a range of additional support needs.

Reporting on pupil progress is an important link in communication between School and home. Formal reporting is carried out at different times of the session and takes the form of either an Interim Tracking Report or a Full Written Report. Parents are invited at any time of our School year to contact Guidance staff in school, should an informal report be required on the progress of their daughter or son. Guidance staff may find it necessary to contact parents regarding progress out-with normal, formal reporting times. It is the strength of our system that communication between school and home is straightforward and welcomed.

Commitment to Improving Attainment

We are working hard as a School to help our pupils to achieve more. Excellent quality learning and teaching is at the heart of attainment and achievement. We carefully monitor each pupil's progress and ensure that the needs of pupils are central to all that we do. In-service training and professional development of staff also focus on ways of providing high quality learning for young people. Praise slips are issued by teachers to recognise pupil achievement. We have subject support study classes and Easter revision sessions.

Home Learning & Homework

In The Gordon Schools we believe that an organised approach to home learning and revision can contribute to academic progress. Although different subjects have different methods and requirements, it is important that parents/carers and pupils should have some general guidelines on the nature of learning at home and revision expected of pupils at the various stages of their School career. Please note that home learning (homework) is a privilege and is not enforceable by TGS on occasions when it is not completed.

Specific tasks and regular revision both help pupils to deepen their understanding of subjects. They help build on learning done in class. They develop and reinforce important habits of self-discipline and self-study. Working on our own is something we all have to do. Generally, the amount of time required for homework and revision will build up as pupils move through school, but for all pupils some weeks will be busier than others, as they revise for assessments or study for national examinations.

A wide range of faculties organise lunchtime advice sessions for pupils, to help them with their coursework and assignments. The school Library is open at intervals and lunchtimes and for senior pupils at study times.

It is vital that parents/carers help their daughter/son to develop good study habits. At home, a warm, quiet part of the house should be made available, if possible, for homework and revision, where youngsters can study without interference or interruption. Care should be taken to ensure that time is balanced between learning set for the following day and more extensive assignments set for further in advance. There should be encouragement to keep notes in good order, to store books and jotters carefully and to check timetables the evening before, to see that appropriate books, materials and equipment are packed ready for the following day. Always remember, even when your daughter/son does not have a specific home learning task to complete there is always a need for revision of work carried out that day or week. Encouraging your daughter/son to follow a regular plan of revision will prove invaluable in maximising performance in classwork and will also go a long way to ensuring success in examinations.

Our Library Resource Centre

The Library Resource Centre supports learning and teaching across the curriculum and is used extensively by colleagues and pupils. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to take advantage of the resources available for schoolwork, recreation and personal development. The library is open during class time for individual pupil and class use. It is used for borrowing/returning books, researching using books and/or computers and for class or group activities. In addition, senior pupils use the library for timetabled as well as optional study periods.

The library has an extensive range of fiction, split in to 3 sections; Junior, Young Adult and Senior, catering for all ranges of interest and ability. The non-fiction section includes general interest books as well as those supporting school subjects. This section is supplemented by the cross-curricular resources. Pupils and staff have access to Aberdeenshire Libraries' full catalogue. This facility greatly increases the range and choice of resources for everyone. In addition, inter-library loans for senior pupils can be arranged from Aberdeen University.

The Careers Library is for use by all pupils and contains up to date information on, for example, possible occupations, college and university prospectuses, open days and writing CVs. The librarian also operates a Job Vacancy Bulletin mailing list. Regular updates on current opportunities in the area are e-mailed to any pupil with an interest in finding employment at present or in the

future. Anyone who wishes to be added to the mailing list should speak to the librarian. All current information is also displayed on the Careers Noticeboard in the library.

The library opens before registration at 8.30 am and at lunchtime from 1:30 – 2 pm, for pupils to use computers, finish homework, read newspapers, books, play board games or simply “chill out”. The librarian runs a reading club; members in S1-3, follow the Grampian Children’s Book Award, reading and reviewing the shortlisted books and taking part in the competitions. Any group in the school is welcome to use the library’s facilities at lunchtime for clubs or meetings. At the beginning of the new academic year, the library, in conjunction with Health and Wellbeing, hosts an Activities Fair and publishes a booklet listing all the activities pupils can take part in during their time at The Gordon Schools.

I.C.T.

At The Gordon Schools, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is seen as playing a vital part in the curriculum. We encourage the integration and use of ICT in all subject courses. Pupils have access to technology through our extensive ICT network. The school network, links all subject classrooms throughout the school, including the school Library. Pupils have direct access to the Internet. ‘Glow’ is the name for the Scottish Schools’ Digital Network which links all schools in Scotland. All pupils and staff in schools have a Glow user name to allow them access to this valuable area for Educational resources. In addition, there are five fully equipped ICT rooms with multi-media facilities. There are also i-Pads and portable laptops available under a booking system.

There is a variety of software installed on the school network for pupil use. There is a planned programme of ICT training for all pupils in The Gordon Schools. Pupils can access the most up-to-date software for careers education. Regardless of subject choice, we aim to involve all pupils over a four year period in the following core ICT areas: word processing, use of databases, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, electronic mail, the internet, graphics and creating a website.

The address of our school’s website is given at the start of this Prospectus. There are also opportunities to use a wide variety of software relating to subject departments. It is also important that our curriculum helps to meet that challenge for each pupil. With careful planning and staff and pupil commitment we aim to ensure that our students are fully equipped to meet the technological challenges of the twenty first century.

Positive Behaviour in The Gordon Schools

A positive ethos with good behaviour is essential if The Gordon Schools is to realise our Vision and Values. It is also central to our ability to go about daily business in a manner that recognises that the School is a community based on trust, involving the mutual respect of pupils, staff and parents.

Principal elements of the Positive Behaviour Policy

There are four principal elements of the Positive Behaviour Policy in The Gordon Schools:

- High expectations of good behaviour.
- Praise for pupils who strive to improve, consistently meet or exceed expectations.
- Support through a discipline system for pupils who fall short of these expectations.
- The development of a partnership between teachers, pupils and parents.

Praise System - Informal Praise

Teachers use their professional judgement when operating a praise system in the classroom. Praise may involve a verbal acknowledgement, a written comment on a piece of work, stars or ticks. Overall verbal praise and maintaining good working relationships remain paramount.

Praise System – Formal Praise

Teachers praise pupils at a school level for consistency, meeting expectations or going beyond these expectations in their work, behaviour or attitude. Teachers give pupils a form to take home that shows why this is deserved.

The Gordon Schools operates a House Points System whereby staff may issue pupils with a merit stamp in their planners. Stamp totals are calculated and the House which has received most merit points (stamps) is announced as “House of the Month”. The House which has received the most merit points at the end of the academic year will receive the “House of the Year” award and this will be recognised at the annual Prize-Giving ceremony.

Staged Intervention - Discipline Referral System

We cannot stress too strongly the need for the involvement, support and co-operation of parents and carers at an early stage in this process.

While our aim is to support our young people and help them with any problems they may have, we have a range of sanctions that are applied in the best interests of each young person. These include detention at interval, lunchtime or after school, special assignments, or withdrawal of privileges.

If, however, any of our pupils demonstrate that, despite all the support we can offer, they are not willing to stay within our code of behaviour, then, in the best interests of the whole school community, they will be excluded. In certain cases, where it is deemed to be appropriate, parental support will be sought to refer the pupil to an Education Psychologist or to the Social Work Department.

Anti-bullying Initiatives: Advice for Parents and Carers

Bullying is wrong. Nobody has the right to hurt other people by hitting them, calling them names, sending threatening text messages, e-mails or using Facebook to spreading rumours or by doing anything else which is intended to be upsetting. Whichever form it takes, bullying can have the effect of frightening the victim, making him or her feel extremely unhappy and powerless. It is always unacceptable. At The Gordon Schools we are aware that bullying exists, as in every other school, but we aim to minimise it. We expect our young people to develop their talents and abilities

to the greatest extent possible and we recognise that this should occur in a happy and secure environment.

Bullying should not be ignored. In Personal and Social Education pupils are encouraged to participate in anti-bullying activities which raise anti-bullying awareness and strategies. Pupils are encouraged to talk to someone they trust such as a teacher, parent or friend. In The Gordon schools we have an Anti-Bullying Awareness week and special Assembly. Parents are always made aware of bullying issues and how we can work together to support our young people in partnership with our Guidance Team.

How can parents recognise bullying?

Parents must trust their instincts. Any change in a child's behaviour may be worth following up. If you are worried, discuss your worries in a frank way with your youngster. Things to look out for include:

- a reluctance to go to school
- asking to be driven to school
- school work deteriorating
- clothes or books torn or damaged
- unexplained bruises or scratches
- becoming withdrawn
- having nightmares
- developing headaches or stomach pains
- coming home hungry (dinner money taken)

Of course, however difficult it is for parents to accept, your child might not be the victim, but the bully.

What should parents do?

- In the first instance, encourage your child to talk about the bullying, but be prepared to accept that he or she might not want to confide in you.
- It is perfectly natural that you might feel anger that your child is being bullied. Don't rush to confront the child who is bullying your son or daughter, or their parents. Arguments between parents usually make the situation worse, rather than better.
- Give your child appropriate advice. Telling a child to hit back seldom works. It can often result in counter claims. Telling a child to ignore those who are teasing and taunting does not deal with the problem. Repeated taunts cannot simply be ignored.
- Work with the school to reinforce the message that bullying is always unacceptable and that it will not stop until people feel free to talk about incidents of bullying.
- Contact the school if you suspect that bullying is taking place. Ask to speak to your child's Guidance teacher, or, if he or she is not available, then to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

What will the school do?

- Treat matters seriously
- Reassure the child that talking to staff is the right course of action
- Investigate the incident fully, talking to everyone involved
- Take action to stop the bullying, including giving out punishments if the school discipline code has been broken
- Use discretion to decide when a conciliatory approach may be more effective
- Make sure that both victim and bully know who to approach for help in the future
- Inform parents of those involved
- Make sure that everyone is aware of the consequences of bullying
- We aim to involve pupils, parents and staff, working together in a partnership against bullying.

Standards and Quality Report and Improvement Plan

Each year, the Rector produces the Standards and Quality Report and the Improvement Plan which evaluates the previous academic year's performance and outlines plans for the following year. This is produced after clear auditing and evaluation procedures, including views of parents, pupils, colleagues and external agencies as appropriate. This document explaining clearly our priorities is available from the School's website from September of each year.

Parent Forum and Parents in Partnership (Parent Council)

There is widespread agreement that the involvement of parents in the education of their children has a positive influence on children's learning. The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 aims to make it easier to become involved in their own child's education and in their child's school more generally. The Gordon Schools and Aberdeenshire Council work very hard to involve parents. What the law says:

The main aims of the Parental Involvement Act are to:

- help parents become more involved with their child's education and learning
- welcome parents as active participants in the life of the school
- provide easier ways for parents to express their views and wishes.

To help achieve these aims, all parents will automatically be members of the Parent Forum at their child's school and will be entitled to have a say in what happens at the school. Parents have said they want good opportunities to express views, to raise issues that are important to them and their child, to get a proper response to requests and questions and to know more about what goes on in schools. The law is designed to make it easier for you to do all of this.

What does being a member of the Parent Forum mean?

All parents who have children in a school are automatically a part of the Parent Forum for that school. The Parent Forum has set up a Parent Council to represent them and act on their behalf. At The Gordon Schools, Parents have decided to call this body, 'Parents in Partnership' to reflect the atmosphere and ways of working that are felt to be of most benefit for all.

As a member of the Parent Forum you can expect to:

- get information about what your child is learning
- get information about events and activities at the school
- get advice/help on how you can support your child's learning
- be told about opportunities to be involved in the school
- have a say in selecting a Parent Council to work on behalf of all parents at your school.

What is a Parent Council?

The role of The Gordon Schools 'Parents in Partnership' will be to:

- support the school in its work with pupils
- represent the views of all parents
- encourage links between the school, parents, pupils, pre-school groups and the wider community
- report back to the Parent Forum.

Who are the members of The Gordon Schools 'Parents in Partnership'?

Nearly all members of our 'Parents in Partnership' are be parents of children who attend the school and the Chairperson must have a child in the school. However, the Parent Council can decide to co-opt other members from teachers and the community who will have knowledge and skills to help them. The Chair of our Parent Council will be elected at our AGM in June and can be contacted via The Gordon Schools.

What is the role of the Parent Council?

The detail of what 'Parents in Partnership' does will be decided by parents, but the Act lays down certain functions which can be summarised as 4 broad areas:

- supporting the school in its work with pupils
- representing the views of parents
- promoting contact between the school, parents, pupils, providers of nursery education and the community
- reporting to the Parent Forum.

The Parent Council will also have a role in the appointment of the Rector (Headteacher) and Depute Headteachers.

What is the role of the Headteacher?

The Headteacher should be present at Parent Council meetings, or be represented by another member of staff.

The Headteacher can be asked to give advice and information to the Parent Council on any school matter they are responsible for.

The Headteacher is required to give a yearly report to the Parent Council on the performance of the school and on the objectives and ambitions for the school.

How will parents be supported?

The Gordon Schools and Aberdeenshire Council will support the involvement of parents:

- at home – e.g. by providing them with information on what their children are learning at school and how this can best be supported at home
- through school – e.g. by providing parents with opportunities to contribute to the life of the school
- in a more formal way – e.g. by helping them to decide what kind of parent group the school should have.

Parent Council Fundraising Group

Within our Parents in Partnership we also contribute by raising money for the School by arranging social events and activities which both promote the involvement of parents as well as supporting the wider life of the school. Pupils benefit from money raised by the fundraising group.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Sports and activity clubs are widespread across our School. Sports offered include athletics, badminton, cross-country running, football, hockey, netball, rugby, swimming and volleyball, to name just a few. There continues to be sporting representation regionally and nationally. Seniors are involved in enterprise, citizenship and health & well-being activities. We also have various School musical groups and there is also an annual high profile School show. There are trips and visits around the country and also abroad. Pupils are required to contribute to the cost of local excursions. All pupils in all years are given wide and varied opportunities to participate in the life of the school.

Subjects with additional costs

There are some practical subjects where we ask that parents contribute to the cost of materials. The Education (Scotland) Act 1980 provides that we make available free of charge the materials necessary to allow pupils to take advantage of the education provided. We need, however, to make a charge for "extras" e.g. things that the pupils can take away and retain. Our School website contains up-to-date information on which subjects and associated contributions.

Any family who feels that there circumstances would warrant a reduced or zero contribution should get in touch with the School in strict confidence. Each case will be treated on its own individual merits.

Instrumental Tuition

Instrumental tuition is heavily subsidised by Aberdeenshire Council. The Council therefore has a policy of charging parents/carers a moderate annual fee, payable in 4 equal termly instalments. This fee represents a contribution towards the overall cost of tuition. Tuition is offered on an individual or group basis, and fees charged reflect this difference.

If tuition changes from group to individual (due to others dropping out), fees will only be increased to the individual rate at the start of the following term. Fees can be paid online, by phone or post. Paying online is the most cost effective way to collect fees, so we strongly advise/request that all contributors pay online to help keep costs, and therefore future fees, down. In some circumstances pupils may be exempt from fees.

To see the latest fees and get more information please go to the link below:-

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/ims/music-tuition/instrumental-music-service-frequently-asked-questions/>

Responsibility and Leadership

We are conscious in The Gordon Schools that education and learning are about much more than academic qualifications. They are also about the development of skills and qualities that will help a young person to contribute to society and to make her or his way in their world. One of the most important sets of qualities we can develop in our young people are those associated with the skills of leadership and responsibility.

To this end we aim to offer opportunities for young people to develop their skill set throughout their time at The Gordon Schools. Examples of this may be in S1 as Tour Guide for parents/carers of P7 pupils; in all years as a Pupil Council representative or in the Senior Phase as a School Prefect, House Captain or overall School Captain. We are currently reviewing and expanding opportunities for pupils to take on a variety of roles and welcome suggestions and initiative from pupils, our Parent Forum as well as colleagues working here at The Gordon Schools.

Lockers

Lockers are provided to allow pupils to leave schoolbags and other items in a secure place. The period for reserving lockers has been extended beyond one session.

Small Large

Locker hire for one year £6 (small) £9 (large) + £5 deposit

Locker hire for two years £10 (small) £16 (large) + £5 deposit

Locker hire for three years £15 (small) £25 (large) + £5 deposit

Locker hire for four years £20 (small) £30 (large) + £5 deposit

In order to increase the return rate of locker keys, a deposit of £5 per key is required. This is returned at the end of the hire period, when the key is returned.

Equal Opportunities

“Equalities – it runs through everything we do”

The Gordon Schools, as an Aberdeenshire Council organisation, has a public sector equality duty to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between those who have protected characteristics and those who don't and; foster good relations. In line with the Equalities Act 2010, we recognise that we must protect the following characteristics in everything we do: age; disability; race; religion or belief; sex (gender); pregnancy and maternity; sexual orientation; gender reassignment and; marriage and civil partnership. There are policies and procedures, as well as support available, to deal with any incidents of prejudice and discrimination that are reported to us.

Information about the 2009 Additional Support for Learning Act

Legal information

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 came into force in November 2005. In June 2009, the Act was amended. These amendments form the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 and it comes into force on 14 November 2010.

What does this mean for pupils and parents?

The new Act doesn't change the basic purpose of the 2004 Act – it aims to strengthen some duties under the Act and clarify parts that have been confusing.

Here are some of the main changes:

- Under the 2004 Act 'additional support' means support that is provided in a classroom or a school. The 2009 Act changes this to include support that is given out of school but that helps a child get the most out of their school education. This could include a social worker helping a child who refuses to go to school or a mental health nurse supporting a child to cope with issues affecting their school life.
- Children who are looked after by a local authority will automatically be assumed to have additional support needs. For looked after children who don't need extra help this will have little impact. For those who do need help it will make sure their needs are considered as they move through school or if they change school. Local authorities will also be expected to check whether these children require a Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP) or not.
- The 2009 Act allows parents to ask their local authority for a specific type of assessment at any time. Under the 2004 Act parents had this right only when asking the education authority to identify whether their child had additional support needs or when asking the education authority whether their child required a CSP.
- The duties that local authorities have towards young disabled children have been strengthened. Under the new Act local authorities have a duty to assess disabled children aged between 0 and 3 and provide them with additional support, if required, in agreement with their parents.
- Local authorities will have to publish information on where parents and carers can find help, information and advice, including contact details for Enquire. Local authorities will have to make sure that a summary of this information (including details of dispute resolution and mediation services) is available from all schools (and other sites that provide education). They also need to make sure this information is included in school handbooks and on their website.
- There is a section about placing requests that states that parents of children with additional support needs, (including those that have CSPs) can make placing requests to any school in Scotland including schools outside of the local authority area they live in.
- All appeals about placing requests to special schools (whether the child has a CSP or not) will be referred to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal. Some of the changes made in the 2009 Act deal specifically with children who have, or may require a CSP, and in particular to disagreements between local authorities and parents about the CSP.
- The Act extends the reasons that a parent or young person can make a referral (called a reference) to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal. Parents can make a referral when a local authority decides that a child does not need a CSP but also when local authorities have: failed to provide the additional support set out in the CSP; not responded to a parent's request to find out whether their child needs a CSP within a given time; or, after having said they will consider whether a CSP is required have not made a decision (within a given time) on whether the child needs a CSP or not.
- The Act also gives the Additional Support Needs Tribunal extra powers to force local authorities to provide, or make arrangements providing additional support that is set out in a CSP if they have not done so.

- The new Act includes a duty for the Scottish Government to fund a national independent advocacy service (on request and free of charge) to support parents and young people in Additional Support Needs Tribunal proceedings.

The above points do not include all the changes resulting from the 2009 Act but simply cover the main points. Throughout the summer Enquire will be changing all their guides and fact sheets to take account of the 2009 Act.

If you have any questions about the 2009 Act

Please contact the Enquire Helpline on 0845 123 2303 or by email on info@enquire.org.uk

Scottish education law outlines a framework for children to be supported to make sure they benefit from education and reach their full potential.

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 outlines how to meet the needs of children who require additional support to ensure they can make the most of their education. Amendments were made to this act in 2009, which became law in November 2010.

“The Act aims to ensure that all children and young people are provided with the necessary support to help them work towards achieving their fullest potential. It also promotes collaborative working among all those supporting children and young people and sets out parents’ rights within the system.”

(Supporting children’s learning code of practice 2010)

Under this law, any child who needs more or different support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools is said to have ‘additional support needs’.

Children may need extra help with their education for a wide variety of reasons. A child’s education could be affected by issues resulting from:

- social or emotional difficulties
- behavioural difficulties
- problems at home
- bullying
- being particularly gifted
- a sensory impairment or communication problem
- a physical disability
- being a young carer or parent
- moving home frequently
- having English as an additional language.

It is not possible to list all the reasons because it will always depend on the individual child. What is important is that many circumstances may affect children’s ability to learn. So support may need to come from health, social work or certain voluntary organisations, as well as from education.

Professionals with different areas of expertise should all work together to make sure any support your child gets is properly tailored to their individual needs.

Your child’s needs may last a short time, and the problem may be resolved easily. Or their needs might be very complex, and they may require additional support for a number of years.

Whatever your child’s needs, everyone involved should try to identify them as early as possible and provide the necessary support in a way that does not make your child feel singled out.

What are additional support needs?

The law says that a child or young person may have additional support needs if they are unable to benefit from their school education without help beyond what is normally given to children or young people of the same age. Your child may need additional support at any time during their school life, from the age of three when they start pre-school education. They may also need additional support to help them prepare for pre-school or school.

Why children may have additional support needs

It is not possible to list all the circumstances that may mean a child needs additional support because every child is different. Circumstances that disrupt one child's learning could have little or no effect on the learning of another.

The following are some examples of situations that may give rise to additional support needs. However, these are a guide only. As a parent, you will know your child better than anyone else and understand when they may be having difficulties.

The learning environment is not appropriate for a child's individual needs

It may be that what is being taught, or the way it is being taught, is not suitable for your child. The materials used may be inaccessible to them. Perhaps the physical environment, e.g. the way the classroom or school is laid out, is not giving your child the best chance of success.

A child who is more able may need a more challenging curriculum in order to make progress. A child whose first language is not English may also need additional support to access the curriculum.

Family circumstances are affecting a child's ability to learn

Children's progress at school is influenced by what is happening at home. If their home life is disrupted in any way, this may affect their ability to benefit from school education. Examples include children who are affected by family breakdown, who are homeless or move home often, who are helping to care for parents or siblings with health problems or disabilities, or who have become parents themselves. All looked after children are considered to have additional support needs, unless assessments find that support is not needed.

The child has a disability or health need

Children are likely to need additional support at school if they have motor or sensory impairments (e.g. difficulty with movement or sight), specific language impairments, autistic spectrum disorder, learning or attention difficulties or a debilitating illness. Mental health problems such as depression or eating disorders can also affect children's ability to learn.

A child is experiencing social or emotional problems

Children may also need additional support if they have been bereaved, have missed a lot of school for whatever reason, are being bullied or are bullying, are experiencing racial discrimination or displaying behavioural difficulties. Children who misuse drugs or alcohol are also likely to need support to access education.

Remember the above is not meant to be a complete list — a child may need additional support at any time and for any length of time.

Getting it right for every child

In Scotland a national programme called Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people. The GIRFEC method supports three initiatives to help children's well-being and learning — Equally Well, The Early Years Framework and Achieving our Potential (for more information on these see the Scottish Government website

www.scotland.gov.uk). It encourages professionals to make judgements based on the best relevant information, and supports appropriate early intervention. GIRFEC's approach should be reflected in all Government policy documents and initiatives affecting children and young people.

The GIRFEC Practice Model contains the well-being wheel shown below. This illustrates the main ways in which children can be best supported to ensure their overall well-being. A child's well-being and other outcomes can be assessed against the eight indicators in this wheel: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. For all children and young people to achieve their potential and become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens — the aim of Curriculum for Excellence — they must each be helped to achieve the best they can according to these eight indicators. You can find out more about Getting it right for every child on the Scottish Government website - www.scotland.gov.uk/gettingitright.

You can find information about Curriculum for Excellence from your child's school, Parentzone, Learning Teaching Scotland and the Scottish Government.

Additional Support for Learning

A child or young person is said to have 'additional support needs' if they need additional support with their education. Additional support can mean any kind of educational provision that is more than, or very different from, the education that is normally provided in mainstream schools.

A child or young person may need additional support for a number of different reasons, for example:

- Difficulties with mainstream approaches to learning
- Disability or health needs, such as motor or sensory impairment, learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder.
- Family circumstances e.g. young people who are carers or parents.

The Additional Support for Learning Team serves the needs of pupils across the Children's Support Network, within The Gordon Schools and all of our associated Primary Schools. Some members of the team work in both Primary and Secondary school. The team work very closely especially during transition.

Roles of Additional Support for Learning Teachers

Additional Support for Learning Teachers are subject teachers who have undergone additional training to enable them to:

- Identify and assess pupils with additional support needs
- Support the teaching and learning of pupils across the mainstream curriculum

These roles are carried out in a number of ways:

- By teaching alongside class teachers
- By looking at a pupil's work
- By talking with parents
- By looking at learning materials and evaluating their accessibility
- By working closely with Guidance staff
- By talking to class teachers
- By providing tutorial support to individual pupils or small groups, where appropriate
- By linking with agencies such as the Sensory Impairment Service, NHS, Social Work, Community Education or Psychological Services
- By delivering and contributing to on-going staff development

Pupil Support Assistants

- ensure care, health, wellbeing and safety of pupils
- Support for learning and teaching activities
- Promotion of positive behaviour
- Assist in the organisation, preparation and use of

Transport

In common with many rural schools, the catchment area for The Gordon Schools is wide and scattered, extending to ten miles north, five miles west and fourteen miles to the south-east. Transport arrangements are therefore elaborate and extensive. There are a large number of coaches, minibuses and taxis contracted to convey pupils to and from our School. Some of these connect with other routes. Where transport has seatbelts, pupils must wear them. While the School will strongly encourage the use of seatbelts, it is the responsibility of pupils and parents/carers to ensure that they are worn. The behaviour of pupils on school transport is expected to be of the very best. Misbehaviour will result in normal disciplinary sanctions being enforced.

We encourage pupils to walk, park and stride or cycle to School where it is safe and possible to do so. A lockable cycle storage area at the gates in the bus park is available and we recommend that pupil's secure their bicycle in that area.

Emergency Procedures, including Arrangements for Adverse Weather

Every effort is made to maintain a full educational service. On some occasions circumstances arise which lead to disruption. Schools may be affected by severe weather, dislocation of transport, power failures or difficulties of fuel supply. The Rector has complete discretion to close the school in anticipated storm conditions that will put pupils at risk. In such cases we do all we can to let parents know about the details of closure and re-opening. Parents are kept in touch by using letters, by telephone, by the Internet on Aberdeenshire Council's website, by local radio and by Aberdeenshire's adverse weather telephone line. The Council website address is: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk. Further details are in student planners.

Adverse weather telephone information line... What to do:

- Dial Aberdeenshire Council's access number **0870 054 4999**
- Enter The Gordon Schools' own pin number **021130**
- Press 1 to hear the school's message about adverse weather.

Adverse Weather Arrangements

In the event of severe snowstorms, emergency arrangements have been organised to ensure that all pupils get home safely or that they are looked after in temporary, alternative accommodation. These include the allocation of duties to Senior Staff and Guidance Staff, a Snowstorm Action Pack, Emergency Bus Lists and Emergency Address Cards. Please also note:

- If pupils have to be sent home early, parents on our *Priority Phonecall* list are informed beforehand. This list is kept for emergencies. Parents who wish to be included should contact the school office.
- Individual pupils must never leave the school without first obtaining permission from the office.
- It is important that pupils do exactly what the staff or the bus driver tells them to do.
- Parents are advised by letter, in September in the first term of each session, of *Snowstorm* emergency procedures. Special cards are issued to parents for them to complete and return to school. A practice is held for pupils in late autumn when internal procedures are checked and explained.

Safety of pupils in snowstorms - Authority advice for Parents

Parents and carers are reminded that they should:

- provide the school with information about emergency contacts that can be reached.
- keep the school office advised of any changes to this information.
- have an adverse weather emergency address.
- make sure that your child wears appropriate outdoor clothing throughout the winter.
- decide whether it is safe for your child to travel to school in adverse weather conditions.
- not take their son or daughter to school if transport is not running. This may cause problems later on.
- be aware that parents are responsible for their child's safety to and from the pick-up/drop-off point.
- not remove their child during adverse weather conditions, without first informing the school.

The need for such safety procedures is stressed here. This is underpinned by real care and concern by staff in school to make sure that pupils are never faced with dangers in transport. It is also important to note that large numbers of pupils travel each day to and from school in safety and comfort.

Free School Meals

Can my child get free school meals?

Children are eligible for Free School Meals if their parents (or carers) are in receipt of the following:

- Income Support*
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)*
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit)
- Any income related element of Employment Support Allowance*
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit (WTC), and have an income of less than £16,105*
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC) and have an income of less than £6420*
- Universal Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

*Pupils are eligible for Free School Meals in their own right if they are 16-18 and fall into this category.

Where can I obtain an application from?

If you are in receipt of housing benefit/council tax reduction you will not need to submit a separate application form for free school meals. If you qualify for free school meals we will write to you and confirm your entitlement.

If you are not in receipt of housing benefit or council tax reduction you can obtain an application form for free school meals by contacting us:

- Telephone: **03456 08 12 00**
- Email: benefits@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- In person from your local [Benefits Office](#) or from your child/children's school.
- [Download an application form \(172 kb\)](#)

Your should return your completed application form to the following address:

- Aberdeenshire Council, PO Box 18533, Inverurie, AB51 5WX

Do I have to provide any additional information with my application form?

When you complete and return your application form you will have to provide some documentary evidence. This could be:

- A letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) less than three months old confirming the type of benefit and current eligibility.
- If you receive Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance, your letter must state the words Income-based.
- Your Tax Credit Award Notice TC602 for 2015/2016 from HM Revenue & Customs showing entitlement to Child Tax Credit ONLY (with no Working Tax Credit payment) with a gross income assessed by HM Revenue & Customs of £16,105 or less.
- Pension Credit Award Notice for 2015/2016 including assessment pages.
- Confirmation of current support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) or a Social Services Asylum Team.

You can send the documentary evidence with your claim form, however we do not advise that you send any valuable documents by post. You may wish to bring your documents to your nearest local Benefit office where the documents will be verified and returned to you immediately.

If you are experiencing any difficulties in providing the documentary evidence in support of your claim please contact us for advice and assistance.

What happens if my circumstances change?

If your circumstances change for any reason you must contact the Benefits Section:

- Telephone: **03456 08 12 00**
- Email: benefits@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- In person at your local [Benefits Office](#)

If you receive a free school meal to which you are not entitled you will be asked to pay that money back.

Who do I contact if I have any queries about Free School Meals?

If you have a query about entitlement to free school meals you can contact the Benefits Section

- By telephone : **03456 08 12 00**
- By email: benefits@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
- In person at one of our [Benefit Offices](#)

School Clothing Grants

How much is the school clothing grant?

The grant is £50 per year (1st April to 31st March) for each child. Payments are made by BACS to your nominated bank account.

Can I get a school clothing grant?

You can apply for a school clothing grant if you or your family receives:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than £16,105
- Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your income is under £6420
- Universal Credit

If you are between 16 and 18 years old and receive any of these benefits in your own right, you can apply for a school clothing grant for yourself.

You may also be eligible if you are an asylum seeker receiving support under Part VI of the [Immigration and Asylum Act 1999](#)

Contribution based job seekers allowance is not an eligible criteria for school clothing grants. For more information on Child Tax Credit and working Tax Credit visit the [Inland Revenue website](#).

If you live in Aberdeenshire but your child attends school in Aberdeen City then you must apply to Aberdeen City Council for a school clothing grant. You can find out more about this [here](#).

How old does my child have to be?

The School Clothing Grant is only available to children in full time education up to the age of 17 years. You cannot apply for clothing grants for children attending nursery school.

Where can I get an application form?

If you are claiming housing and/or council tax reduction, you are not required to complete a separate application form. We will contact you directly about a school clothing grant. The information you have already supplied will be used to assess your entitlement for a school clothing grant. If we do require any further information we will write to you about this.

If you are not claiming housing / council tax reduction, you can obtain an application form at your child's school or by contacting your local [Aberdeenshire Support and Advice Team](#).

Alternatively you can call the Team on 03456 08 12 00 or e-mail asat@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

What information do I need for my application?

If you are claiming housing and/or council tax reduction, you do not need to provide any additional information unless we request it. If you are not applying for housing/council tax reduction you will need to provide proof of your income. This could be:

- a “How your income support is worked out” statement from your Department of Work and Pensions Office; or
- Your TC602 Tax Credit Award Notice from Inland Revenue.

Please note we cannot accept bank statements as these do not provide all of the required information. You will need to include original documents with your application (photocopies are not accepted). The documents will be returned to you.

Do I have to buy a school uniform?

You are strongly encouraged to use the clothing grant to buy clothes that meet the school dress code. Some items of school clothing can be bought from your child's school.

Who do I return the application form to?

Completed application forms must be returned to the Aberdeenshire Support and Advice Team at the following address:

Aberdeenshire Council
PO Box 18533
Inverurie
AB51 5WX

Alternatively, you can submit your form to your local [Aberdeenshire Support and Advice Team](#).

When will I hear if I have been awarded a grant?

The Team should contact you within 14 days.

Payments are made on a monthly basis but you will be informed about the date of payment as soon as possible,

Please note, if your child is starting Primary 1, Secondary years 5 or 6, we cannot award a grant until their attendance at school has been confirmed. Payment will not be made until after the schools return from their summer break.

Educational Psychology Service

Aberdeenshire Educational Psychology Service bring psychology to the heart of learning and teaching, working with others to improve life experiences and outcomes for all children and young people.

The Educational Psychology Service provides a service across Aberdeenshire from pre-birth to 24 years old. We work with children, young people, families, educational staff, local authority colleagues and a wide range of other professionals including health professions, social work, early years partner providers and post school training and education providers.

To find out more about what we do, take a look at the Educational Psychology Service Plan 2014-15 which sets out our priorities for improvement over the coming year.

Educational Psychologists have skills in problem analysis and solution-focused discussion and apply their knowledge of psychology and child development to improve experiences, outcomes and opportunities for children and young people. We do this through:

- Consultation and working collaboratively with the people most closely involved with a particular issue. The aim is to explore the issue(s) and to collectively generate workable solutions.
- Gathering and analysing assessment information through consultation and making decisions about the need for any additional assessment information. Sometimes assessment can also involve observation, analysis of work, questionnaires, curriculum based assessment or dynamic assessment. The purpose of an assessment is to inform intervention.
- Facilitating discussion to agree appropriate interventions and next steps. An intervention is a strategy designed to overcome barriers to learning and teaching.
- Providing training for children and young people, parents, teaching staff and other professionals on a variety of topics.
- Carrying out research projects; for example writing up case studies, carrying out enquiries, evaluations and literature reviews on issues related to learning and teaching.

Contact Us

We have educational psychologists based in six office locations in Aberdeenshire.

Aberdeen	Fiona Yarrow Principal Educational Psychologist Woodhill House Westburn Road Aberdeen, AB16 5GJ
Fraserburgh	Dover Lodge 117 Charlotte Street Fraserburgh AB43 9LS
Kintore	Craigearn Business Park Morrison Way Kintore AB51 0TH
Macduff	The Lodge Macduff School Berrymuir Road Macduff AB44 1PT
Peterhead	Buchan House St Peter Street Peterhead, AB42 1QF
Stonehaven	Stonehaven Education Office Queens Road Stonehaven AB39 2QQ

For general enquiries email: eps@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Information for Parents and Carers

Who are Educational psychologists?

The Educational Psychology Service is part of the Education, Learning and Leisure of Aberdeenshire Council. Educational Psychologists normally have an honours degree in Psychology, a postgraduate degree in Educational Psychology and a background in working with children and young people. They are trained to work in collaboration with school staff, parents/ carers and other professionals to help children and young people to achieve.

How does an Educational Psychologist become involved?

- If you have any concerns about your child it is best to share them with school staff first as many problems can be solved in school without the involvement of an Educational Psychologist.
- School staff will contact their named Psychologist if they feel that he or she might be able to help.
- You can contact the Educational Psychology Service directly if you would prefer.

What happens when an Educational Psychologist becomes involved?

- In the first instance, the Educational Psychologist will discuss the general issue relating to learning and teaching with school staff.
- Where the Psychologist becomes formally involved with a child/young person, parental permission is always required.
- If the Psychologist becomes formally involved, his or her assessment is likely to be based on information shared by those most closely involved with your child. This information will be shared during a consultation meeting, which will last around 40 minutes.
- This meeting will involve yourself, school staff, the Psychologist and any others who can helpfully contribute to this problem solving approach.
- It may be helpful for your child to attend the meeting, particularly if he or she is in secondary school.
- At the end of the meeting there will be an agreed plan of action.
- A written record of the meeting will be sent to you and others who were present.
- A follow-up consultation meeting may be held to review the success of the action plan and decide if any further action is needed.

Will the Educational Psychologist work directly with my child?

Sometimes gathering information about your child may involve:

- Observing your child in school or nursery
- Looking at your child's school work
- Playing with your child
- Talking and listening to your child
- Using assessment materials

How else might Educational Psychologists help?

Sometimes the best way for Educational Psychologists to help is through less direct means such as:

- Advice and training for school staff
- Working closely with other professionals
- Projects that help improve learning and teaching
- Group work with pupils
- Training projects for pupils
- Workshops for parents

For more information contact us on 01224 664272 or email eps@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Quick Guide to our Complaints Procedure

Complaints procedure

You can make your complaint in person, by phone, by e-mail, via our website or in writing. We have a two-stage complaints procedure. We will always try to deal with your complaint quickly. But if it is clear that the matter will need a detail investigation, we will tell you and keep you updated on our progress.

Stage 1: frontline resolution

We will always try to resolve your complaint quickly, within **five working days** if we can. If you are dissatisfied with our response, you can ask us to consider your complaint at Stage 2.

Stage 2: investigation

We will look at your complaint at this stage if you are dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1. We also look at some complaints immediately at this stage, if it is clear that they are complex or need detailed investigation.

We will acknowledge your complaint within **three working days**. We will give you our decision as soon as possible. This will be after no more than **20 working days** unless there is clearly a good reason for needing more time.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

If, after receiving our final decision on your complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our decision or the way we have handled your complaint, you can ask the SPSO to consider it. We will tell you how to do this when we send you our final decision.

Important Addresses

Mr Ian Stirling, Quality Improvement Manager, Aberdeenshire Education & Children's Services, Stonehaven Education Office, Queen's Road, STONEHAVEN, AB39 2QQ. Tel: 01569 768497 Fax: 01569 768489	Mrs Maria Walker, Director of Education & Children's Services, Aberdeenshire Council Woodhill House, Westburn Road, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB. Tel: 01224 665420 Fax: 01224 665445	Skills Development Scotland, Unit 6, Garioch Centre, Constitution Street, INVERURIE, AB51 4UY Tel: 01467 623623 Fax: 01467 623624
Mr Vincent Docherty Head of Service , Secondary Education & Additional Support Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services, Woodhill House Westburn Road, ABERDEEN, AB16 5GB. Tel: 01224 664283 Fax: 01224 664615		

Important Addresses - Cluster Primary Schools

Mrs Kim Aplin, Head Teacher,
Cairney School, Cairnie,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4TQ.
Tel: 01466 760202

Mrs Linda Wann, Head Teacher,
Drumblade School, Drumblade,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 6EQ.
Tel: 01466 740228

Mrs Dawn Williams, Head Teacher,
Gartly School, Gartly,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4QA
Tel: 01466 720270

Mr Paul Scrimshaw, Head Teacher,
Gordon Primary School,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4SE
Tel: 01466 792550

Mrs Kathryn Twinn, Head Teacher,
Kennethmont School, Kennethmont,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4NP
Tel: 01464 831226

Mrs Joanne Brown, Head Teacher,
Lumsden School, Lumsden,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4JR
Tel: 01464 861703

Mrs Marsali Fraser, Head Teacher,
Premnay School, Premnay,
INSCH, Aberdeenshire, AB52 6QA
Tel: 01464 820201

Mrs B Rae, Head Teacher (Acting),
Clatt School, Clatt
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4NY
Tel: 01464 831243

Mrs Muriel Matthew, Head Teacher,
Forgue School, Forgue,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 6DQ
Tel: 01466 730232

Mrs Trish McLellan, Head Teacher,
Glass School, Glass,
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4YA
Tel: 01464 700210

Mrs Allison Conner, Head Teacher,
Insch School, Alexander Street,
INSCH, Aberdeenshire, AB52 6JH
Tel: 01464 820252

Mrs Hazel McIntosh, Head Teacher,
Largue School, Forgue
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 6HS
Tel: 01464 871225

Mrs Sharon Huxtable, Head Teacher,
Oyne School, Oyne,
INSCH, Aberdeenshire, AB52 6QT
Tel: 01464 851232

Mrs Claire Conner, Head Teacher,
Rhynie School, Rhynie
HUNTLY, Aberdeenshire, AB54 4HD
Tel: 01464 861257

Education Authority: Aberdeenshire*Examination Results (within Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework)*

Percentage cohort achieving;						
By end of S4	Literacy and Numeracy award at Level 4			5 or more awards at Level 5		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	87	89	91	44	46	49

Percentage cohort achieving;						
By end of S5	3 or more awards at Level 6			5 or more awards at Level 6		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	33	38	38	18	18	19

Percentage cohort achieving;						
By end of S6	5 or more awards at Level 6			1 or more awards at Level 7		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	28	29	32	19	21	23

National Data

Percentage cohort achieving;						
By end of S4	Literacy and Numeracy award at Level 4			5 or more awards at Level 5		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	77	83	83	39	43	44

Percentage cohort achieving;						
By end of S5	3 or more awards at Level 6			5 or more awards at Level 6		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	33	37	39	17	18	19

Percentage cohort achieving;						
By end of S6	5 or more awards at Level 6			1 or more awards at Level 7		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	30	31	33	19	20	21

Source: Insight September 2016 update