



From mountain to sea

Update: Last week of term: June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Hello Everyone, I know that the most important questions for you just now are around what will happen in August! The announcement by John Swinney last week means that we now need to have two plans; one for where we still have Covid-19 reduced numbers in the building as well as minimising social contact and; another for a full school with safety measure in place with greater social contact for all. A big thank you to everyone who completed our Transport, Catering and Shielding survey – very much appreciated and this information will be used IF we need it for August.

Currently, Scottish Government is planning to review the situation in early July and then finally on 30 July, to advise schools, based on the latest medical advice, whether we will return on 12 August with reduced numbers or with the full school, perhaps with some phasing-in over the first three days. So, what might August look like? Here is our TGS Plan A and Plan B:

Plan A

Full Face-to-Face Return

Pupils will be returning to the building after 20 weeks of home learning and holidays. Due to this, we feel it's important to bring pupils back in a phased way during the first week. This will allow us to have better communication and time to speak with our young people. Therefore, on Wednesday 12 August, we'll welcome our new S1s together with our S6 buddies and those who have been their 'virtual buddies' during transition. On Thursday 13 August, we'd then welcome in all of our S1, S2 and S3 pupils. The Friday would only be for S4, S5 and S6 pupils. From Monday 17 August, we would have all year groups, every day.

Plan B

Covid-19 Blended Learning Return following Government Health Advice

This Plan means that we would have a reduced capacity of 215 pupils – one-third of our school roll. Transport would also be severely affected, with around 25% of bus pupils being able to travel on any one day (with no out-of-zone and no privilege passes). We would be able to offer S4, S5 and S6 pupils a minimum of 3 days every second week and our S1, S2 and S3 pupils a minimum of 2 days, similarly every second week. When not in TGS, home learning would continue to be the norm for pupils. This would continue until a change in Government advice.

Assuming that we are still working to the timescales above, we will be in touch with you once we have Government information to let you know which Plan we will be proceeding with.

Senior Phase 19-20 (Old) S4, S5 & S6 Celebration of Learning – featuring Iona Fyfe

This week, we will post-up our wee 'virtual' Celebration of Learning on YouTube. A link will be sent out, tweeted out and hosted on our School website so you can share in celebrating with us our achievements across the Senior School. Congratulations to all our Award Winners who are

currently being notified 😊 Our very own Former Pupil, professional singer, Iona Fyfe is our virtual guest speaker, with a beautiful rendition of the School song to boot!

From Catering Services Colleagues:

School meals provision for return of pupils to classes

We look forward to welcoming our Academy pupils back and have been working hard behind the scenes to offer you an innovative way to provide you with our school lunches.

It is our intention to have in place by the start of the new term a new ordering App. This App will enable pupils to pre-order their lunch and collect it from designated collection points within the school. This will allow for the controlled flow of pupils and therefore helping to alleviate queues. More information regarding the App will be sent to you over the summer holidays.

From August we are committed to providing a service but as with everything at the moment this is a fluid situation and School Catering will change and adapt to the guidelines as they are given by the Scottish Government, direction from Aberdeenshire council and making sure the health and wellbeing of the pupils and our staff are at the front of everything we do. More details will follow on our service will be able to provide as we gain more information.

Due to current COVID-19 guidelines we require your support to restrict the handling of cash in schools to reduce the transmission of COVID –19. Please can we ask all parents to register prior to the start of term to make online payments. To register or make payment please follow the link: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/meals/online-payments/>

Return of resources

Thank you also for all the resources that have been returned so far – very supportive for us moving forward in August.

If you've not already checked with your child, please do so and pass back anything that was lent or that we can re-use next session. The School will still be open during summer for resources to be dropped off between 9am and 3pm each school day. Pupils should label items with their name, class and the name of the teacher the resource was borrowed from so that Faculties know who has returned resources (labels will be provided in school if required).

Labelled items should be placed in the box provided which can be found outside the main School office, opposite Miss Raeside's and Mr Gaiter's offices. Many thanks for your support with this.

Primary 7 into S1 Transition update

Hello Everyone, this week you will be receiving from us an e-mailed letter (paper if you need it!) from Mr Johnston outlining more detailed information about practical arrangements for August. Thanks to everyone who has been making use of and contributing to our blog! 😊

If any of our adult family members want to view the transition blog, you can do so via this link <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/as/s1blog/>

Work Experience Week September 2020

Sadly, but not unsurprisingly, this week we received the following correspondence from the Aberdeenshire Work Placement Unit:

"Since the Covid-19 lockdown, many aspects of our lives have faced considerable change. Work experience is no exception and the Work Placement Unit (WPU) has had to adapt accordingly for the next academic session and make some very difficult decisions.

Regrettably, we are **unable to arrange placements** for academies which have their **work experience week in September (TGS planned week)**, October and November 2020. For schools which have submitted self-found forms for this period, the WPU will contact the placement providers to advise that the placement will not be going ahead during this time. When contacting these employers, we'll ascertain which ones will be able to offer a placement at a later date.

The main reason behind the decision to cancel these placements is to ensure the safety of pupils while on their work placement. Other factors which have influenced this are arranging transport to and from pupils' work placements, the extremely tight timescale for carrying out workplace assessments and, changes to H&S guidance in response to the Covid-19 situation.

Additionally, many employers, particularly small businesses, are not currently trading (and some will not be able to do so for several weeks) meaning that they are unable to consider work placement requests or respond to correspondence from the WPU.

Finally, while 'hands on' placements remain desirable for many pupils, virtual work placements are an alternative and the WPU is looking at virtual options and shall advise schools about these as and when they become available."

If there are other and future opportunities to provide this in session 20-21, we will of course look into them and provide a further update should this be the case.

Please note that the above does **not apply** to S5/6 Foundation Apprenticeships.

SQA Results

Pupils are due to receive their SQA results on Tuesday 4th August. As far as we know, this deadline will still be met. Given the rural nature of much of the TGS zone, it is not uncommon for Certificates to arrive at very different times of the day or even the next day.

To receive SQA Results by text or e-mail in advance of their SQA Certificate arriving, then learners must sign up at www.mysqa.org.uk before 5 pm on Tuesday 14 July 2020.
www.sqa.org.uk/2020nqlearners

*****Moving Learning Forwards*** Updated 30-06-20**

Timeline	
Tuesday 2 June - Friday 3 July	<p>S1 become S2; S2 become S3; S3 become S4 &; S5 become S6. All pupils will now be engaging with new learning for session 2020-21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scheduled learning activities for new S2 for the coming week posted up by a Monday lunchtime • scheduled learning activities for new National level pupils for the coming week posted up by a Tuesday lunchtime • scheduled learning activities for new S3 for the coming week posted up by a Tuesday 1600 • scheduled learning activities for new Higher and Advanced Higher for the coming week posted up by a Wednesday lunchtime • on-line learning due to begin for those in S5/6 undertaking their Foundation Apprenticeships
Monday 6 July	First day of the School 5-week* summer holidays 😊
<p>* The First Minister announced on 21-05-20 a consistent date for the whole of Scotland to return to schooling. The one week of holiday which has been reduced has been scheduled to be taken at the end of summer term during the forthcoming session 2020-21, following local and national negotiations. Summer 2021 will now begin on Monday 28 June. This will mean a seven week summer holiday next calendar year.</p>	
Monday 10 August	School In-Service day (1)
Tuesday 11 August	School In-Service day (2) Last day of School summer holidays.
Wednesday 12 August	Dependent upon Scottish Government and local advice, this may be the date when TGS begins to re-open for all (Plan A). During the first 3 days, we will be phasing back pupils gradually: with a full school commencing, week beginning 17 August. Wed 12: S1 only with Buddies. Thurs 13: S1, S2 and S3 together. Friday 14: S4, S5 and S6 together (no S1, S2 or S3). IF we are still on Covid-19 contingency planning (Plan B) due to medical and legislative restrictions then this date will be: First day of TGS open for gradual phased return of pupils to classes. [This will happen in a way consistent with social distancing and current government medical advice at this time that meets our local needs] Pupils who are not in School resume with a blended model for learning, teaching & assessment that includes both face-to-face and home learning for their subjects when not in TGS.
Monday 17 August	Plan A All pupils, S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 & S6 resume their full planned timetables.

For the last week of term, we are all going to become Rock Artists!

The Art Department aim to build a commemorative cairn in the TGS staff garden, and we would like your help sourcing and individually decorating the stones it will be built with.



Cairn building is a tradition that has existed in Scotland for many centuries. Carrying a stone to place on an existing cairn is a custom that continues to evolve. An ancient Scottish blessing, “Cuiridh mi clach air do charn” means “I will put a stone on your cairn.”

“A cairn site has four main purposes. The first is the marking of a grave or in memory of a loved one in their passing. The second is its use by climbers as a symbol of their success in reaching of the summit of a mountain. Thirdly, a cairn is used as a form of a path specifically across glaciers or barren, stony terrain. Lastly, a cairn has been used as a sea marker to help mariners determine their location. ”

The last few months have proven challenging for all of us for a myriad of reasons. Our way of life had to change and many things that we took for granted suddenly altered. As we look forward to returning to school, we would like you to depict an image from your personal experience of lockdown. This could be a wildflower you came across on your daily walk. The robin that visited your kitchen window every day. A rainbow. A saying or kind word of support that was shared with you. Your mobile phone that became your window to the wider world. You don’t need to be the best artist the more who take part the more substantial our cairn can become.

We would like you to paint this onto a small rock. An irregular rock is better for building with rather than a smooth pebble. These can be painted with acrylic paint, nail varnish or primed with household or masonry paint and then decorated with sharpie.

Encourage your whole household to take part, many of your parents and siblings will also be former pupils and this will hopefully enable us to build a sculpture that symbolises our memories yet forms a solid new beginning for our return to TGS. We will let you know a time for these to be gathered when we return in August and these will be deposited in a socially distanced manner for the Art Department to begin constructing with. We'll post up a photo so you can see the finished product!

Huntly Hairst 2020 Poetry Competition!



Prizes will be given for the best poem on the theme of 'VISION'

Rules;

- Poems should be between 4 and 40 lines long and with the theme 'vision'
- Poems can be in Doric or English language
- 6 categories - 3 for Doric 3 for English;
 - up to and including 12 years
 - age 13-17 years
 - 18 years and over
- Please state whether your poem has previously been published
- Entries must be submitted with name, category and contact information attached separately, to Orbs Community Bookshop, Deveron st, Huntly or by email to Lynnscrutter@aol.com
- Entries to be submitted by mid-day 16th August 2020
- One entry per person
- Entry is free

Prizes will be awarded at the Huntly Hairst on Saturday 5th September 2020 at the New Hall in the Stewarts Hall 2pm

Please note that in entering you agree to your poem being used at the Huntly Writers Group National poetry day event on 1st October

Free School Meal Entitlement

If you are currently in receipt of this, please note that payments are set to continue throughout the summer holidays until August 10.

Please contact Aberdeenshire Council's Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants Team if you would like support or any further information around this or if you feel that due to a change in your circumstances you are now eligible:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/schools-covid-19/free-school-meals-covid-19/>

If you are not able to apply online, contact on the Team on [01467 533400](tel:01467533400). Email: fsm@aberdeenshire.gov.uk if payment does not reach you or if you have any other concerns.

Any unwanted old uniform / other clothes?

If families have had or are planning a wardrobe clear-out, please be advised that these can be dropped off at the School or collected from your house. Details for drop-off/collection will follow. In the interim please wash them, put them into bags and keep hold of them! Please include any worn-out items as these will be put into the School ragbag which makes money for our funds. Please do not put any clothes into the waste bin as these will end up in landfill.

School uniform: please bag separately. These items will be given to the Inspire & Gordon Rural Action shops in Huntly.

Other Clothes – These will be donated to the GS365NNC project which is raising money to support sustainability projects at the school and Cancer Research UK. This project has raised £6,000 so far.

More details can be found at www.grassetstyle.co.uk or on Facebook @grassetstyle.

Finally...

As we approach the summer holidays and look forwards to new beginnings, thank you all for your support & feedback, constructive comments and suggestions, forbearance when we didn't get it quite right and, most of all, helping us in so many ways to support the young people of our community!

Take care, keep making healthy & happy choices – even with the new Government advice and easing of Lockdown – and very best wishes for your summer break!

Phil Gaiter

Rector

The Gordon Schools



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