



Together Growing Succeeding

The Gordon Schools Newsletter 2

Session 2020-21

27th August 2020

Hello to all our Pupils and Parents & Carers,

This edition is to keep you up to date with the latest information and news around Covid-19 guidelines for TGS and all schools, as well as to let you know how we've settled back so far and some of the tasks we need to complete with families help this term.

There are sections on the latest Scottish Government guidelines around face-masks in schools; Covid-19: where to find School information; contacting TGS & accessing Aberdeenshire Council services; Parents' Portal update and our Annual Data check; how our new S1s are settling in; Parents in Partnership news from our Parent Council; SQA results and certification 19-20 and; the catering Fusion Mobile app for pre-ordering School meals.

Latest Scottish Government guidelines around face-masks in schools

We need your support to provide face masks for our pupils from this Monday, in keeping with newly updated Scottish Government guidelines.

Face coverings should **not generally be required in classrooms** or other learning and teaching environments. **However, from Monday 31 August**, face coverings should be worn in the following circumstances (**except** where an adult or child/young person is **exempt** from wearing a covering – see further below):

- where adults and young people in secondary schools are moving about the school in corridors and confined communal areas (including toilets and our canteen, when not eating) where physical distancing is particularly difficult to maintain; and
- in line with the current arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged 5 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport.

This approach reflects precautionary judgements based on the latest scientific advice and the experience of school reopening to date.

Key points on how to put on, remove, store, and dispose of face coverings, to avoid inadvertently increasing the risks of transmission:

- Face coverings should not be shared with others.
- Before putting on or removing the face covering, hands should be cleaned by washing with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
- Make sure the face covering is the right size to cover the nose, mouth and chin. Children should not be touching the front of their mask or pull it under their chin or into their mouth.
- When temporarily storing a face covering (e.g. during classes), avoid placing it on surfaces, due to the possibility of contamination.
- Re-usable face coverings should be washed after each day of use in school at 60 degrees centigrade or in boiling water.
- Disposable face coverings must be disposed of safely and hygienically. Children and young people should be encouraged not to litter and to **place their face coverings in the general waste bin**. They are **not** considered to be clinical waste in the same way that used Personal Protective Equipment may be.

Exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. Further information on exemptions can be found in wider Scottish Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-staying-safe-and-protecting-others/pages/face-coverings/>

Pupils **may** also have a reasonable excuse not to wear a face covering if, for example: they have a health condition, or are disabled, including hidden disabilities, for example, autism or a learning disability.

IF you believe that your child should be exempt from wearing a face mask for the reasons above, please make TGS aware **before Monday 31 August**.

This will allow us to make staff aware and support your child with a form of identification to carry and show, should they be questioned about this.

Covid-19 Information

Our School and Aberdeenshire information around Covid-19 can be found on our TGS website.

We are not yet in a position to offer the usual selection of extra-curricular activities but once we receive updated Scottish Government and Education Scotland guidelines and are more confident about health and safety for all, we hope to increase opportunities to participate over the course of the session.

Contacting TGS & Accessing Aberdeenshire Council Services

Please either download the 'MyAberdeenshire' app for your phone / device or register on-line at 'MyAberdeenshire' to access services provided by Aberdeenshire Council.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/my>

Services include iPay payments ('School payments' including paying for school meals, services and activities); 'Parents Portal'; School Closures and Term dates, for example.

Please use the following to contact The Gordon Schools:

The Gordon Schools
Huntly, AB54 4SE

Phone (available 08:45 – 17:00): 01466 792181

Absence line number (available 24/7): 01466 795020

(we are moving to Skype during Term 2. We will update you with our new number and procedures when we are ready to make this switch)

Web: <http://www.gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk>

E-mail: gordonschools.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Parentsportal & Annual Data Check

Parentsportal.scot is a digital service to help replace the traditional school bag post run by providing direct communication to parents and carers through a growing selection of online services. As parentsportal.scot is securely linked to your [myAberdeenshire](#) account it also makes it a one-stop-shop for digital services already available in Aberdeenshire.

Every year we are legally required by Scottish Government to carry out an 'Annual Data Check'. All Aberdeenshire schools are being asked to complete this task using Parentsportal from this year. Completing this task electronically has the added advantage of taking away the need for paper going between School and Home at a time when we are trying to minimise the spread of Covid-19.

It is therefore essential that all families **who can**, do register for Parentsportal. Aberdeenshire schools have been asked to make their Annual Data Check available to Parents/Carers via Parentsportal from **31 August**. Please support us by registering before this date if you have not already done so. We currently only have around 40% of all pupils able to be counted in the Data check in this way.

We are aware that many families are having difficulty with registering. Here is some advice to help with some of the common problems we have been contacted about.

- Please check your myAberdeenshire account contact details (name, address, e-mail, home and mobile phone numbers) to ensure that they match exactly with the contact details you have provided TGS.
- You can check and update your myAberdeenshire account details by logging into your account. Next, select the 'myAberdeenshire' drop-down menu from the top right-hand icon on your screen. Select 'Update my details' to view your details and 'Edit Details' if you need to update anything that is not correct. This is the information that needs to match **exactly** with your details that TGS holds.
- The name that you enter to link your child in Parentsportal **must match exactly** the name they were registered with at TGS (you WILL need to include middle names if these were given to us).
- In 'Parentsportal' ensure that **all fields are completed**, including 'your relationship to the child'.

If you have followed all the steps above and are still having difficulty, please contact the School and we will support you through this.

Our new S1s settling-in 😊

Mr Johnston, Depute Rector, who has been leading our Transition Team, is really delighted about the progress made to date by our new S1 intake. There are 127 pupils in the year group, and they have settled in really well, especially given that they were unable to come up for a five-day visit in June.

Mr Johnston is impressed by how well they have adapted to their new learning environment and are getting to know and communicate with so many new teachers. Our Junior and Senior Buddies have done really well too and from below you can see how they've hit it off!

Quotes from new S1s:

- “The Buddies are really super-funny and helpful”
- “We sort of don't want them to leave us, but we do know our way around now”
- “The Buddies always put a smile on my face, and I love meeting up with them”

Quotes from buddies:

- “New S1s have been a breath of fresh air. Their enthusiasm has really rubbed off on the S6 – it's great!”
- “Very strange to be in the position of the people we looked up to when we first started 5 years ago!”
- “Been interesting learning how to teach the S1s about how to get around the buildings”
- “They've been fun to work with and are looking much more confident now around the School”

Parents in Partnership (PiP) [our TGS Parent Council]

The Gordon Schools Parent Council is called 'Parents in Partnership'. The Annual General Meeting is planned to be held on-line on **Tuesday, 22nd September** at 6.30pm. Nearer the time, we'll pass on details about how you can attend the meeting.

Our PiP are really keen to recruit new members, especially from S1 families. Meetings are held termly, plus an AGM. There are opportunities to get involved with raising funds for TGS as well as supporting our Improvement Plan and other educational areas. Last session the School got great input around our Promoting Respect and Equalities policy, setting up our very successful Careers and Apprenticeship event as well as holding a fashion show and coffee morning.

Send an email to tgspip@gmail.com if you'd like to find out more and look us up on the website <https://htgsparentcouncil.wixsite.com/tgsparentcouncil>

SQA results and certification 19-20

Following the Scottish Government announcement on Tuesday 11th of August, it has been confirmed that the SQA will now certificate pupils for National Qualifications based on the original teacher estimates that were submitted. As a result of this, those pupils affected will receive a new SQA certificate on Tuesday 8th September. This will happen only if any of the results that they were awarded on Tuesday 4th of August were lower than the result estimated by the School. Any pupil who would like to know if they are affected by this should speak with their Guidance Teacher.

School Catering & the 'Fusion Mobile' app

Our canteen pre-order kiosks are not currently in service due to Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions. To allow pupils to continue to pre-order their lunch if they wish, the Council have introduced the 'Fusion Mobile' app, allowing pupils to pre-order their lunch and collect it from a pre-arranged point in School to reduce queuing and congestion in the canteen.

Families should already have received their own personal 'onboarding codes' from the Aberdeenshire Catering Service to allow your child to register for this service on their mobile or device. If you do not have this code, please contact TGS and we will provide you with this or ask you child to get this from our Main School Office.

S1 pupils must remain in School for lunch unless they are going to their home to eat. Our Canteen will be open, and we would strongly advise all pupils to remain on School grounds during lunchtime and interval. Pupils will not be allowed to take-away any plated or hot food from the Canteen.

If pupils do go into the community then they must respect the rules that are in place in local shops and **ensure that they wear a face mask in any indoor setting**. They must not congregate in groups or break with 2-metre social distancing with any adults they encounter.

Session 2020-21 key calendar dates

We will add to this during the Term. At the moment here are the key dates. A Family Calendar will be posted on the School website covering the entire School session 2020-21 once we have received our update from the SQA regarding exam and assessment dates.

| | |
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| October 9 | Last day of Term 1 |
| October 26 | First day back for all in Term 2 |
| October 28 | Individual and Family photos (tbc) |
| November 20 | In-Service day (3): no pupils in TGS |

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| December 18 | Last day of Term 2 |
| January 4, 2021 | Holiday |
| January 5 | First day back for all in Term 3 |
| February 15 | Mid-term holiday Monday |
| February 16 & 17 | In-Service days (4 & 5): no pupils in TGS |
| April 1 | Last day of Term 3 |
| April 2 | Good Friday Holiday |
| April 19 | First day back for all in Term 4 |
| May 3 | May Day Monday holiday |
| June 7 | Local Holiday |
| June 14 | Start of 5-day visit for new Primary 7s moving into S1 |
| June 22 | S1, S2 and S3 Merit Ceremonies (tbc) |
| June 23 | Prize Giving Ceremony (tbc) |
| June 24 | Watersports Trip pupils away (leave 23 June evening) |
| June 25 | Last day of Term 4 and session 2020-21 |
| July 2 | Watersports Trip pupils return home |
| August 16 | Staff return to TGS for session 2021-22 |

Finally...

I am really encouraged by the way both pupils and colleagues have settled back to TGS. People are trying very hard to adapt to the current situation and making allowances for the 'new normal'. We'll continue to monitor the situation and act on national & local guidelines as they appear.

Please help us to keep our pupils safe, smart and in clean clothes whenever possible. Remember to mask-up, socially distance from adults, keep the canteen and building clean & tidy and leave room in the corridors and communal areas for everyone to get by. Together we are making a positive difference!

Best wishes to all and continue to stay safe 😊

Phil Gaiter

Rector

The Gordon Schools



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