



Together Growing Succeeding

**The Gordon Schools Newsletter 5
Session 2020-21**

15th January 2021

Hello to all our Parents & Carers, Families and Pupils,



I hope that the first week of home learning has been as successful as the technology has allowed it to be! We understand and share your frustrations around this; I trust that this has settled down since Monday! We are doing our best to support families who have contacted us regarding devices and connectivity – thank you for keeping updated as to your situations.

Particularly for S4/5/6 pupils, it is important to remember just now that we are still completing our courses and learning. The assessment and evidence gathering will come later and we are still waiting for the SQA deadlines. For now, please just focus on gaining and improving your depth and range of knowledge and skills across your subjects.

The items in today's Newsletter are more of an information update & reminders from last week (we will keep items in twice, maximum). So handy information for you...

- **Covid-19: Home learning until (at least) Friday 29 January**
- **Support from Skills Development Scotland for Careers and Next Steps**
- **Free School Meals Entitlement**
- **Coronavirus Winter Hardship Payment**
- **Parent Club Support**
- **Update from the SQA**
- **Parents in Partnership (PiP)**
- **Calendar dates**
- **Contacting TGS & Accessing Aberdeenshire Council Services**
- **Support If English is not your First Language**
- **Help with your Wellbeing Concerns**
- **Help If You Get Stuck in the Snow!**
- **Active Schools & Aberdeen Football Community Trust resources**

Covid-19: Home learning until (at least) Friday 29 January

Reminder, the schedule that will operate across most of TGS for posting learning that will **apply from week beginning 18 January** until we return to the building:

- New **Higher and Advanced Higher** level learning posted on a **Monday**
- New **S3** learning posted on a **Tuesday**
- New **National level** learning posted on a **Wednesday**
- New **S2** learning posted on a **Thursday**
- New **S1** learning posted on a **Friday**

Science and P.E./H.E. may be different so please check the Teams in these subjects for more information.

Engagement with Learning

We have sent a message home today to all of our S4/5/6 families to let you know how we are monitoring and supporting engagement with our online learning:

‘Teachers at TGS would like to thank all of the pupils who have been engaging with their online learning this week. We are tracking engagement on a subject by subject basis and we will be alerting families next week if pupils have not managed to submit their work by the specified deadlines. If your child has had issues accessing and/or submitting their work please get in touch with the School as we can support your child with this.’

It is vitally important that anyone who is having difficulties with content, deadlines or understanding what is being asked, contacts their teacher (via TGS if you need) to request support and clarification.

Resources

Aberdeenshire Council have a site that parents / carers can access with support and resources for remote learning.

The website link is: <http://bit.ly/ShireDigitalSupport>

If this doesn't work, try this one below:

<https://sites.google.com/as.glow.scot/digitaladviceparents/home>

The site can be easily accessed on any device, including smartphones.

If, during the course of on-line learning, your child has an issue or problem and is nervous or unsure how to address it, please see the ‘Confidential Help Form’ below that can be submitted:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oyzTzM4Wj0KVQTctawUZKQy78BQAHkBEsQ7X0bh9CfhUOTFLVjNMQ0swS0xQOENPMkpZQldZR1pQMy4u>

Help with Chromebooks

If pupils are having difficulty accessing work on Chromebooks, please use the Confidential Help Form.

If you get a message on your Chromebook saying that the version of Word being used is not supported by Chromebook, try to download a new version of Word. Chromebooks only have Word Online so it may not recognise the Word format you are trying to use.

e-Sgoil: Daytime Study Support

As part of Lockdown Live, e-Sgoil are pleased to offer daytime study support for this period of remote learning. This is in addition to the 25 early evening courses already available. Pupils can register [here](#).

[Daytime Lockdown Live time table PDF](#)

[Digital learning from Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar | e-Sgoil \(e-sgoil.com\)](#)

BBC Scotland learning offer

BBC Scotland offers a wide [collection of resources](#) to support learners, teachers and parents, from Bitesize to Authors Live, Young Reporter and The Lab, with articles, audio and video clips.

NESCoI Link Courses

Pupils who are enrolled in our NESCoI Link courses should be accessing their learning via the 'Blackboard'. Please ensure that you are logging on weekly to check for and submit any tasks/assignments that are due in. If you are having any issues with this, contact your on-line Tutor in the first case and if these are not resolved, please let Miss Raeside know and she will support with this.

Support from Skills Development Scotland for Careers and Next Steps

Lisa OBrien SDS Careers Adviser will be continuing to contact pupils at home. Please feel free to contact Lisa via email Lisa.obrien@sds.co.uk

There is a wealth of information available on www.myworldofwork.co.uk. Other related websites: www.mykidscareer.com
www.Skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk www.apprenticeships.scot

Free School Meals Entitlement

For those families who currently have eligibility to Free School Meals, a payment will be made into the parents nominated bank accounts by Thursday 21st which will cover the 3 week period from 11 January to 31 January. Each child will receive £52.50 for this period.

Will I qualify for Free School Meals / School Clothing Grant and how do I apply?

Please use you the following link to make an application for the above. This application process will advise you if you meet the eligibility criteria: [Apply here](#) A school clothing grant is currently £100 per eligible child, per year. More information about Free School Meals and School Clothing Grants can be found [here](#).

I have recently applied and I am looking for a progress update on my application?

We appreciate you may be waiting for an update on your application but we are urging all applicants not to contact us about the progress of their application as this will only distract our resources which could otherwise be used to process. Please be assured we are processing as quickly as possible and when we have assessed your application, we will contact you. To ensure fairness to all applicants we deal with all correspondence by date of receipt.

Coronavirus Winter Hardship Payment

The Scottish Government announced that low income households are to receive a £100.00 direct payment as part of a multi-million pound winter fund to help those struggling during the Coronavirus crisis.

Families currently eligible for income-based free school meals will have received the £100.00 payment per eligible child, direct to their nominated bank account. The council processed payments the week commencing 14th December 2020, parents would have seen the payment in their nominated bank accounts later that week.

Please be aware if you are still awaiting decision on your free school meals / school clothing grant application your £100.00 Winter Hardship Grant will not be processed until we have awarded your claim.

Parent Club Support – from Lorraine Henderson: GIRFEC Briefing Officer

I just wanted to update you on the Parent Club Support available during the month of January: Money Talk Team, Winter Support and Positive Parenting Campaigns.

Parent Club – Money Talk Team Campaign

January can always be a difficult month financially for families but given the pandemic more families than ever are feeling financial pressures. The Money Talk Team is a confidential and personalised service delivered by the Citizens Advice Network in Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government, offering families free financial advice and support during these tough times.

The campaign aims to encourage families to find out what benefits they are entitled to and what household bills they can save money on during these challenging times by contacting the Money Talk Team. This will run on TV, digital, OOH, Radio and Social Media until the 4th of February, with activity sign-posting to the freephone number - 0800 085 7145 and the new Parent Club page:

<http://parentclub.scot/articles/who-are-money-talk-team>

➤ [View the Parent Club Income Maximisation TV Ad here](#)

Income Maximisation Campaign – Assets Available

- Money Talk Team Toolkit
- Social Images and Copy
- Newsletter Copy
- WhatsApp/SMS copy – can be used to reach parents who are not digitally active and may be missing out on support
- Campaign Summary Document including Easy Read and Audio versions - and BSL version will be available on Dropbox and FTP links from 18th January

Download Links

- [Download the Money Talk Team Assets via WeTransfer here](#)
- [Download the Money Talk Team Assets via DropBox here](#)
- [Download the Money Talk Team Assets via FTP here](#)
 - Username: union-sgcovid_read
 - Password: 9-9rS80*@xsFd@Z

Parent Club – Winter Support Campaign

With the winter lockdown restrictions in place, we know that parents are struggling at this time, and we want to reassure parents that they are doing their best and let them know support is available via ParentClub.scot in the coronavirus hub, and also in the new Winter Lockdown Support Hub: Parentclub.scot/winter

The Winter Support Campaign started on Sunday, 10th January and is running on digital and social until the end of January.

Winter Support Campaign - Assets Available

- Social Images and Copy
- Newsletter Copy
- WhatsApp/SMS copy – can be used to reach parents who are not digitally active and may be missing out on support
- Campaign Summary Document – Easy Read, Audio and BSL version of the summary to be made available shortly on the DropBox and ftp links

Download Links

- [Download the Winter Support Assets via WeTransfer here](#)
- [Download the Winter Support Assets via DropBox here](#)
- [Download the Winter Support Assets via FTP using here](#)
 - Username: union-sgcovid_read
 - Password: 9-9rS80*@xsFd@Z

Positive Parent Campaign

Being a parent is one of the best jobs in the world but we know it can be hard work, especially now. To help families manage the current challenges, we are re-running the Positive Parenting Campaign, which brings together tips on coping with the challenges of being a parent and keeping calm with your wee one so you can focus on building a rewarding relationship together. For more information visit:

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/coping-with-being-a-parent>

- [View the 'Kicking Off' 40 second film here](#)
- [View the 'Stressful Day' 40 second film here](#)

Lorraine Henderson | GIRFEC Briefing Officer

GIRFEC Team | Children and Families Directorate Scottish Government

Update from the SQA: National 5, Higher & Advanced Higher 2020-21 An SQA message for Parents and Carers: Wednesday 13 January 2021

On Monday 4 January, the First Minister announced that, as part of a national lockdown, schools across Scotland will operate on a remote learning basis until at least the beginning of February. Following this announcement, the National Qualifications 2021 Group has met to consider the impact this will have on schools delivering National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses under the alternative certification model.

The National Qualifications Group is working through a range of scenarios and is considering any potential flexibilities, should they be needed, for the alternative certification model that will be used to award your child's courses this year. This may include extending the date for when schools and colleges send provisional results to SQA.

Learning and teaching

The priority for schools and colleges during January should be to maximise your child's learning and teaching time. Given the move to remote learning, assessment of your child's evidence cannot be undertaken unless they have been taught the foundations of their course. This will impact on the timing of assessment, which can take place later in the session.

Keeping you updated

Schools and colleges will receive regular updates on any newly published guidance and assessment resources which will support your child's teacher or lecturer to gather evidence, consistently apply the national standard and make accurate assessment judgements.

The National Qualifications 2021 Group is continuing to work through the details of the 2021 alternative certification model, including appropriate contingencies, and will provide further information as soon as possible.

SQA advice and information from TGS:

In light of the most recent restrictions leading to the home learning situation just now, we will be monitoring the situation and getting further advice before letting you know our strategy & timetable for evidence gathering.

Ideally, any evidence gathered this term will then be supplemented with a second window in April and May during Term 4. Following this, the current plan is that TGS will then be submitting provisional grades to the SQA.

Pupils engaging with National 2, 3 and 4 courses, will be completing their coursework and assessments on an on-going basis up until the middle of May.

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

The Gordon Schools Parent Council is called 'Parents in Partnership'. Our next PiP meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2 February. This will be held on Microsoft Teams.

Send an email to tgspip@gmail.com if you'd like to find out more or request a link to the meeting and look us up on the website:

<https://htgsparentcouncil.wixsite.com/tgsparentcouncil>

Session 2020-21 key calendar dates

We will add to this during the Term. Currently, the key dates are below.

Please note that we are now unable to confirm assessment & reporting deadlines and Easter Revision until we have received finalised SQA deadlines.

January 18	Scottish Government to review return to School date
February 2	Parents in Partnership Meeting (3) on Microsoft Teams
Wk beg 8 Feb	Primary 7 Transition Information on-line for families
February 15	Mid-term holiday Monday
February 16 & 17	In-Service days (4 & 5): no pupils in TGS
March 22 tbc	Senior Phase Tracking S4/5/6 Tracking updated Report
April 1	Thursday: Last day of Term 3
April 2	Good Friday Holiday
Wk beg 12 April	Easter Revision for S4/5/6 pupils (provisionally on-line) tbc
April 19	First day back for all in Term 4
tbc	Final SQA Assessment Evidence gathering window for S4/5/6 pupils opens and closes
April 27	Parents in Partnership Meeting (4) on Microsoft Teams
May 3	May Day Monday holiday
June 7	Local Holiday
June 8	Parents in Partnership A.G.M. (5) on Microsoft Teams
June 14	Start of 5-day visit for new Primary 7s moving into S1 tbc Follow-up Transition information for Families; format tbc
June 17	Watersports Trip pupils away (leave 16 June 23:59)
June 22	S1, S2 and S3 Merit Ceremonies tbc
June 23	Prize Giving Ceremony tbc
June 25	Last day of Term 4 and session 2020-21 Watersports Trip pupils return home
August 10	SQA Results Certificates issued to pupils
August 16	Staff return to TGS for session 2021-22

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 08:00 – 17:00): 01466 **405990** (note: **new number**)

You will be given two options:

Option 1: To report an absence (only between 08:00 – 17:00)

Option 2: All other enquiries

From 17:00-08:00 there is a voicemail service for you to leave a message (absence or otherwise) and we will respond to this as soon as we can.

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

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

Support If English is not your First Language

Aberdeenshire 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL) Service produced help videos for the first period of lockdown to support families in accessing and using Glow, MS Teams and Google Classroom. These resources are available in English, as well as Arabic, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian. These resources may support any families who are still struggling with accessing learning from home

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/as/ealaberdeenshire/learning-at-home/#Videos>

Please contact eal.service@aberdeenshire.gov.uk if you need any support'

Help with your Wellbeing Concerns

The Educational Psychology Service helpline for parents, carers and professionals is now operational again. The line will be staffed Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 09:00 – 15:00.



From mountain to sea

Educational Psychology Service

We are offering a phone service for parents/carers or professionals who would like to talk through any education or wellbeing concerns about a child or young person.

The phonenumber will be available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9am to 3pm, from 07/01/2021.

Call us on **01779 403721**

If you would prefer us to call you, please email eps@aberdeenshire.gov.uk with your name and number.



Help If You Get Stuck in the Snow!

Please see our website for information on Cotag 4x4 Response group. They are a non-profitmaking registered charity. The link is below:

[COTAG 4x4 Response - Supporting the community in times of need](#)

Please note COTAG are not set-up as an on-call recovery service and their nearest volunteers to Huntly are around 30 minutes away.

Active Schools: keeping children and adults active during lockdown

With all sport and physical activity sessions run through Active Schools being suspended currently, we want to provide you with information on some of the fantastic resources and online content they have created that you could use to support pupils with keeping physically active during their home schooling period.

You may remember during the summer we set a variety of challenges each week for pupils to participate in and send us their best efforts and our series of Mindfulness Videos thanks to one of our partner organisations allowing people the opportunity to take a few minutes out of their day to relax and unwind. There are approximately 20

videos that have now been added to a YouTube playlist on the Live Life Aberdeenshire YouTube channel and can be viewed and tried at any point.

Active Schools Join in Playlist:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLf9SJJOIgiNL5zD4xvzj9nYXJkTvqOuE6>

Out with the video content, the team have designed a fantastic Stay Active at Home set of online resource cards that can be downloaded from the Live Life at Home page of the LLA website with some simple games and ideas to help keep children active at home:

Active Schools Resource Cards - <http://bit.ly/ASAResourceCards> or <http://bit.ly/ASACreativeCards>

Aberdeen Football Community Trust resources

Please find a link below to the Aberdeen Football Community Trust resources DONline Learning resources.

<https://www.afccommunitytrust.org/donline-learning-3/donline-learning-2/>

These are available to support young people's health and wellbeing and education. Using the same link, you will find new activity packs added each week for both Primary and Secondary pupils. The resources are free to access and provide a range of activities and ideas that will help with online learning at home, or to use while your children and young people are in the School.

AFCCT and Aberdeenshire staff and parents would love to see the work the youngsters complete. Ask them to take a picture or a video of them completing any of the activities and with parental permission where appropriate share on social media using the hashtag #DONlinelearning #AberdeenshireCouncil

Finally...

Let's keep working together and maintain our communications to get through this! We are here to support and signpost you to as much help and support as we can. Stay safe, please keep following Scottish Government advice & laws and let's see what the Government update brings next week.

Best wishes to all,

Phil

Phil Gaiter
Rector
The Gordon Schools



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