



Together Growing Succeeding

The Gordon Schools Newsletter (10)

Session 2020-21

20th May 2021

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

Information for you:

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- **SQA update**
- **S6 Leavers and S4, S5 Leaving procedures**
- **Session 2020-21 key calendar dates**
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- **Changes to our Canteen food due to new Scottish legislation**
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Term 4 update

It is great to have a full School back in TGS! Sadly, summer weather is not yet with us but hopefully it's being saved up for July and beyond! Our Senior Phase pupils are coming towards the end of the evidence gathering period and teaching colleagues will then be busy with moderation, where we check with other teachers and schools to ensure that there is a consistent standard of marking and grading. There is an SQA update below and please also see our updated calendar.

We'll be saying goodbye to our S6 pupils soon – they have had a very interrupted S5 and S6 but have really been a great support to TGS during their time here. Thank you and best wishes also to those parents and carers who will no longer have young people here next session at TGS 😊

Also accompanying this Newsletter is a letter from our Director of Education and Children's Services (ECS), Laurence Findlay, reinforcing the need for a peaceful and calm time in School as pupils leave. I'd be very grateful if parents and carers could reinforce this message, please. We do hope to have a small leaving celebration in the last week of June and do not want any actions to jeopardise this.

Across our School, health & safety is still very important, as we are in a Level 2 situation with regards to Covid-19 Government restrictions. Additionally, schools' have their own set of guidelines to follow around masks, parents in schools, events and such like that continue to protect everyone. Therefore, the wearing of face masks is still a requirement for all those known non-exempt and pupils should also continue to regularly wash and/or sanitise their hands during the day and follow our one-way system around TGS. Furthermore, we are not yet able to welcome parent/carers back in the building in groups. We will update you as new guidance emerges. There is a letter from the Director of ECS for all families accompanying this Newsletter explaining how the current restrictions affect School events.

At social times, morning interval and lunchtime, we continue to strongly encourage pupils to be outside as much as possible, weather permitting. At interval and lunch times, we again strongly encourage pupils to purchase their food and drink from our School canteen. IF anyone goes into Huntly town, they must adhere to societal restrictions and restrictions in our local shops. For ordering lunch, please try to use the **Fusion app** to order meals in advance. There are be pick-up points around the School for collecting lunches. Many thanks for considering this option.

SQA Update

Our window for gathering evidence for SQA certification closes soon (Monday 26th April – Friday 26th May, including 2 additional days for mop-up if deemed necessary). This assessment window has been essential in allowing our Senior Phase pupils to be certificated this academic session as we are only allowed to certificate pupils if we have evidence that has been gathered in line with the SQA guidelines, to support certification. Last session we were permitted to combine evidence together with inferred judgement.

Our teaching colleagues are working hard to ensure that they are fully aware of the updated SQA guidance regarding the setting, marking standards and moderation of assessment materials. As part of this process, we are working with colleagues within the school, across Aberdeenshire, and on a National level in some cases. We will continue to do this to ensure that we can be confident in the validity of our assessment evidence.

Once pupils have completed their assessments, our teaching colleagues will mark these to the standards shared by the SQA, and they will work collegiately with others to ensure that this standard is being applied consistently (the moderation process). As I am sure you can appreciate, this process will rightly take time and, our faculties will be unable to confirm assessment results with pupils until after this process has been completed.

During the week beginning 14 June, we will share with pupils their 'Provisional Grades' which are being submitted to the SQA. It is expected that these gradings will be the same ones that appear on pupils' SQA certificates in August.

S6 Leavers and S4, S5 Leaving procedures

As pupils complete the evidence gathering process and teachers agree that they have enough valid and reliable evidence to proceed with gradings and moderation, pupils can collect a Leaver's Form from our Main Office. This is signed-off by all teachers, Guidance Teacher and the Year Head.

We also must have details of where the pupil is going post-TGS – their intended 'positive destination'. In the case where this is not yet clear, we ask that you contact TGS to let us know as soon as you know, as we are responsible for collecting this information for 12 months after pupils leave. Once the Leaver's Form is complete, then the pupil has left TGS and their attendance is no longer required.

Session 2020-21 key calendar dates

Please see below for updates to our School calendar for the remainder of this session:

Monday 26 April – Friday 28 May	Final SQA Assessment Evidence gathering window for S4/5/6 pupils opens and closes (including 2 additional days for mop-up if deemed necessary)
June 3 June 4	Additional Scottish Government In-Service days to support our SQA moderation processes. No TGS pupil attendance. 1 day transition visits for new Primary 7s moving into S1
June 7	Local Holiday
June 8	Parents in Partnership A.G.M. (5) on Microsoft Teams
June 14	Timetable for 2021-22 begins this week SQA Provisional Grades to pupils during this week

June 21	Current S1 Full and S2 Tracking Reports issued home
June 23	Senior Phase Prize Giving Ceremony Recorded for on-line
June 25	Last day of Term 4 and session 2020-21
August 10	SQA Results Certificates issued to pupils
August 16	Staff return to TGS for session 2021-22

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme

Thank you to those pupils who have opted into the asymptomatic testing programme. Testing should continue to take place twice weekly, on a Sunday and Wednesday.

Any pupil who still wishes to take part, can pick up a consent form, and following its return, collect a supply of test kits and step-by-step guide from our School Office. If you would like to see what the test involves (two times each week), see the online video at: www.gov.uk/covid19-self-test-help

N.B. This regular testing is **only** for individuals without symptoms. Those with symptoms must continue to follow national guidance. They **must** self-isolate and book a PCR test at a test centre or via a home test kit at the earliest opportunity. People with symptoms **must not** rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend school.

Changes to our Canteen food due to new Scottish legislation

The Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 was implemented in schools on 8 April 2021. The changes to the regulations are based on current scientific evidence to support the health and well-being of young people in the school setting. Please see the information below from our Catering Services:

The food and drink provided across the school day is intended to support progress towards achieving Scottish Dietary goals. Resulting changes will help to ensure that young people have access to nutritionally balanced school lunches.

To comply with the guidance, we have made significant changes to :-

- increase access to fruit and vegetables,
- reduce the sugar content in the menu and
- reduce the amount of red and processed red meats.

To improve provision of fruits and vegetables both will feature more prominently in a range of options and included in a number of our in house recipes. Based on new

requirements there has been a change to the types of soft drinks on offer. To reduce sugar content Smoothies and fruit juices have been removed and a selection of drinks that conform to regulations are now available.

The provision of red and red processed meat options has been reduced to conform with the recommended allowance of 230 grams over a week.

We would hope to continue work with our recipes and suppliers to expand on the alternatives that could be offered in the future.

We all have a part to play in shaping the choices of children and young people but Government and schools cannot do it alone, we need the support of parents, industry, community and producers. Our hope is that by everyone working together, we can ensure our children and young people develop the skills, knowledge and experience they need to make positive dietary choices and lead long, healthy lives.

The link below is to the statutory guidance supporting the implementation of the regulations:

[Healthy eating in schools: guidance 2020 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/Topics/healthandcare/healthy-eating-in-schools/guidance-2020)

Free school meals entitlement & Funding available to support families eligible for free school meals

- Will I qualify for Free School Meals / School Clothing Grant & 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](#).

To view information on the School's uniform policy & dress code, together with where you can purchase uniform please visit our website:

www.gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/uniform-purchase/

EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

The deadline for applications to the EU Settlement Scheme closes on 30 June 2021. The scheme applies to people from the European Union, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein who arrived in the UK before 31 December 2020, and do not have British Citizenship.

We want to play our part ensuring that all children and families who should be applying for the scheme, do so before it's too late. There are two different levels of applications dependent on the time that the individual has lived in the UK:

- Pre-settled Status - for those individuals who have resided in the UK for **under 5 years**.
- Settled Status – for anyone who has lived in the UK for **5 years or more**.

Failure to apply for the scheme, can result in individuals not being able to access services such as housing, health and benefits, or even the potential of deportation back to their country of origin.

We are just double-checking that children and families who may meet the criteria for the EUSS have made applications for themselves and their children. Of particular note are the following factors:

- Each family member needs to have an application lodged in their own right. If a parent has been granted settled or pre-settled status, this does not transfer to their children.
- If the child of EU nationals was born in the UK, this does not guarantee that they have British Citizenship.

There are a number of Government funded agencies who provide advice and support on the EUSS, and below you will find contact details for two of them. If you have not yet lodged your application, please contact one of these services and lodge your application without delay.

- Citizen's Rights Project
Tel: 07803 102173 (English and Polish) or 07518 926137 (English or Spanish).
Email: info@citizensrightsproject.org
Text message or WhatsApp: 07803 102173 or 07518 926137 (in English or other European Language)
- Citizen's Advice Scotland
Tel: 0800 916 9847.

Staffing Update

This term we will be recruiting a new Faculty Principal Teacher of Technical as we say goodbye to Mr Griffiths, who is retiring. We also say farewell to Mr McIntosh, from our Science Faculty, who is also retiring. Interviews for both posts are this term. In order to fully staff TGS for next session, we have also applied for some Probationer Teachers to join us, so I hope to be able to introduce some new colleagues to you before the end of this term, together with some internal staffing news.

Taking care of our School environment: car idling

Both at the start of school and at the end of the School day there are many vehicles parked with their engines on. This includes many those dropping off and collecting their children.

Idling is against the law in Scotland, and the reasons for this are very serious. Apart from the general pollution this causes, children are at great risk of fumes from idling because they are physically closer to the sources of fumes but they also have a 50% higher intake than adults.

The link to the Aberdeen City [web page](#) with all the information also applies to Aberdeenshire.

We are proud of the steps we have taken so far to improve our whole School environment and we ask for and appreciate your support in continuing to improve all aspects of TGS life to support our collective health and wellbeing and future climate.

Short survey from Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) are looking to shape up their 2021 employer-led 'Scotland's Biggest Parents Events' to highlight current and future jobs and pathways and would really appreciate the views of parents, carers and guardians to ensure they deliver information and insight that is helpful and hits the key topics you would like to hear about. They are asking for 2 minutes of your time through a short survey to help them get this right for you.

Please find the survey here: [DYW - Scotland's Biggest Parent's Event 2021 Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](#) The deadline for survey completion is **Friday 4th June**.

You can check out last year's focus [HERE](#) and keep an eye on the DYW Scotland website for updates for this year's event. Thank you for your support, Team DYW.

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

Finally...

We now seem to be moving in the right direction with restrictions in our community, so please keep playing your part in keeping everyone safe & healthy and look forward to more relaxing times! Take care for now everyone 😊

Phil

Phil Gaiter

Rector

The Gordon Schools



phone: 01466 405 990

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