



Together Growing Succeeding

The Gordon Schools Newsletter (2)

Session 2021-22

15th October 2021

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

Information for you:

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- **Participatory Budgeting – Pupil Success!**
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Update

Hello and thank you for reading our end of term Newsletter. Despite all the challenges we have faced around Covid-19, it has been a positive start to the new School session at TGS. Our main aims have been a combination of supporting and renewing health and wellbeing for all, together with re-establishing the learning focus and routines that will take our young people towards positive destinations when they are ready to move on.

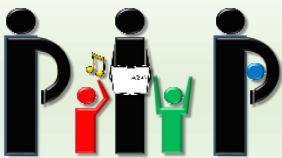
In line with this, we've safely re-introduced opportunities for young people to play their part in School life in classes, whole-School activities and also through extra-curricular activities. Please do take a look at the extra-curricular booklet on our website to see the wide range available for pupils. Please have a look at our planned calendar dates below to find out about what we are trying to offer our pupils this session as we try to safely return to more opportunities for interaction and learning.

After a voting process and competitive interviews, we've appointed our new TGS School Captains and Vice-Captains for the coming session. Big congratulations to Kirstin Harper and Lauren Crighton-Moyes as Captains and Freya Wilson & Oscar Williamson as Vice-Captains. Very well done also to our new House and Sports Captains as well as our TGS Ambassadors. Pupils in all Registration classes also have the chance to join our Pupil Council to add their voices to making TGS a better place for all. It's really encouraging to see so many pupils volunteering to make a positive difference!

Earlier in the term, I was delighted to be able to host the opening ceremony for the John Swan Atrium, our new social area and technology room, based on the former Brunton Area and T4, respectively. This is proving to be a great resource for both pupils and teaching colleagues, and a fitting tribute to the late Mr Swan.

We are awaiting updated advice from Scottish Government over what schools will look like post-October break and will communicate this out to you as soon as we are able to, given the two week holiday period. I wish everyone a happy and healthy October break! Enjoy!

TGS Parents in Partnership 21-22



Our Parents in Partnership (PiP) body successfully recruited a new Chair and Secretary this term, to work with our existing Treasurer. We'd like to thank Joyce Reed (Chair) and Laura Thomson (Secretary) for volunteering to support the Parent Forum, alongside our existing Treasurer, Mary Turner.

Laura has already been busy sorting out lines of communication. If you would like to e-mail our Parents in Partnership body, please use the **new e-mail address:** pip4tgs@gmail.com

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 9 November at 18:30. Joyce would like to encourage you to come along and find out how you can support the School and the pupils. Even attending the meetings and voting on issues that matter to you can really help. You don't need to take on a formal role to make a real difference to how the School works to support the pupils in all aspects their School life. Simply coming along is enough.

At the moment meetings are held on Microsoft Teams. If you would like an invitation to the meeting, please e-mail Laura on the above address. Once you have attended a meeting, you will automatically be sent an invitation for subsequent meetings

unless you opt out. All parents/carers are welcome to attend, whether you have a general interest or would like to contribute specifically around fundraising or how to support School improvement priorities and ways of working. If you would like to add an agenda item for discussion, please email us and we will add it to the next meeting. Many thanks 😊.

Participatory Budgeting – Pupil Success!

Congratulations to Jules Stoneman in S1, whose project bid to support families affected by Autism, ADHD and other related conditions in our community has been successful. During the next two terms, Jules will work together with local charity group, ASDitude, to raise awareness, gather volunteers and provide resources to families in our community. He has won £1,500 of funding for this project!

Reminder: P.E update: changing & uniform

Please note that we have been able to resume both indoor and outdoor P.E as well as swimming. Our changing rooms are back in action too, so all pupils **should come to School in TGS uniform, change into their P.E. kit and change back into uniform for the remainder of the day**. Your cooperation with this is much appreciated.

SQA update

The SQA have confirmed that there will be a planned full exam diet next year for all National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher pupils (see our key calendar dates below for the start and end dates). There are contingency plans in case this is not possible. To give our pupils the experience of what an exam diet is like and to support us with gathering evidence of learning, there will be a 'Prelim' diet for S4/5/6 pupils in exam subjects, beginning in January. Pupils will attend TGS as normal during this time.

Session 2021-22 key calendar dates

Please see below for our planned calendar dates for the remainder of this session 2021-22. A separate calendar will be issued for Parents Meetings and Reports next term.

15 October	Last pupil day of Term 1 in School (Friday) & October break for all
16 October – 31 October	
1 November	
1 November	Pupils and Staff return to TGS for Term 2 (Monday)

8 November	TGS Parents in Partnership meeting (2) 18:30 Microsoft Teams
9 November	'Champions in School' visit from GB Olympian
17 November	TGS Careers Fair: all day for pupils and families S4 History trip to Bannockburn
18 & 19 November	In-Service days: no pupil attendance – staff colleagues only (Thursday & Friday)
13 December	Teaching colleagues from Denmark in School this week
15 December & 16 December	tbc provisional S1/2/3 Christmas Dance (15 th) and S4/5/6 Christmas Dance (16 th) tbc in November.
21 December 22 December – 4 January 2022	Last pupil day of Term 2 in School (Tuesday) & Christmas holidays for all (Wednesday) to (Tuesday)
5 January 2022	Pupils and Staff return to TGS for Term 3 (Wednesday)
12 January	S4/5/6 Prelim Diet begins for SQA exam subjects All pupils attend School normally during this time
18 January	TGS Parents in Partnership meeting (3)
31 January	Danish Primary colleagues in School & Cluster this week
3 February	Final day of S4/5/6 Prelims
9 February	Primary 7 Parents Information Evening (1) tbc
10 February	Occasional Day holiday (1) (Thursday) &
11 February	Occasional Day holiday (2) (Friday)
14 February	Aberdeenshire Mid-Term holiday (Monday)
15 February 16 February	In-Service days (4) & (5): no pupil attendance – staff colleagues only (Tuesday & Wednesday)
17 February	Pupils and Staff return (Thursday)
1 April	Last pupil day of Term 3 in School (Friday)
2 April – 17 April	Easter Holidays tbc S4/5/6 'Easter Revision' during these holidays
18 April	Pupils and Staff return to TGS for Term 4 (Monday)
25 April	Last day in TGS for S4/5/6 pupils
26 April	SQA National Exam diet begins S4/5/6 pupils begin Study Leave and Course Completion Time TGS Parents in Partnership meeting (4)
2 May	tbc normal School day (see 2 nd June instead)
1 June	Last day of SQA National Exam diet
2 nd & 3 rd June	tbc Queens Diamond Jubilee holidays for all
6 June	Occasional Day holiday (3) (Monday)
7 June	Planned timetable change for 2022-23 TGS Parents in Partnership Annual General Meeting

20 June	tbc Primary 7 transition day (½ of the year group)
21 June	tbc Primary 7 transition day (other ½ of the year group)
22 June – 24 June	tbc Primary 7 transition days: whole year group on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday
23 June	tbc Primary 7 Information Evening (2)
1 July	Last pupil day of Term 4 in School (Friday)
2 July – 21 August	Summer break (seven weeks)
9 August	SQA Results Certificates issued to pupils
22 August	In-Service day: no pupil attendance – staff colleagues only
23 August	Term 1, Session 2022-23 begins for all pupils

Traffic and parking around TGS

You may have seen recent coverage in the Huntly Express about the dangers surrounding traffic congestion and parking in the mornings and at going home time. IF you drop off/ pick-up your child near TGS, please find a safe setting-down place that is well away from our crossing patroller and does not obstruct anyone's vision and line of sight who may be crossing the road.

Be very mindful also of the many minibuses and large coaches which need access to the School and take-up a substantial part of the road when entering and leaving the area around TGS.

We also do have pupils who cycle to TGS. Make sure you leave adequate room for them if you are overtaking and check your blind-spots when turning corners. With the darker mornings and afternoons coming, as well as likely wetter and greyer weather, please make sure that pupils are visible and use all of their road sense in their movements on the streets around TGS. Let's all work together to keep everyone safe!

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme

Any pupil who wishes to start taking 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. Those who wish to continue, please keep collecting new kits from the School Office when you need them. 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. **The whole household must**

self-isolate and book a PCR test(s) 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.

Direct payment of Free School Meals for October 2021 holidays

All pupils currently entitled to statutory free school meals, will receive a payment of £25.00 for the period 18 October 2021 to 29 October 2021. The payment is comprised by two weeks free school meals at £12.50 per week.

Scottish Child Bridging Payment – October 2021

All pupils currently entitled to statutory free school meals, will also receive a Scottish Child Bridging Payment of £160.00.

- Do I need to apply for this funding and when will I receive payment?

Eligible families already in receipt of free school meals, do not have to apply for this funding. Payment will be made direct to your nominated bank account by 15 October 2021.

Future Payments 2021

In addition to the October Scottish Children Bridging Payment, the Scottish Government also announced a £160 payment which will be paid to eligible families in December 2021 along with direct payment of free school meals. Further information will be made available later in the year confirming the expected payment date.

Future Payments 2022/2023

Four equal payments of £130 will be made at Easter, Summer, October and Christmas along with direct payment of free school meals. The payments will be made in line with the start of the school holidays. Further information will be provided in advance of the payment dates.

For more information please visit: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/free-school-meals/>

Free School Meals & School Clothing Grants

- I have recently applied for Free School Meals, but I've not been notified of the outcome

If you have recently applied for income based free school meals, please be assured that Aberdeenshire Council are dealing with all applications as quickly as possible, and will contact you direct when your application has been processed.

Families who are on a low income but not currently in receipt of free school meals can check entitlement by completing the following online form:

[Check entitlement and apply for free school meals](#)

Children are eligible for free school meals if their parents (or carers) are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

The current qualifying benefits and allowances are:

- Income Support (IS)
- 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
- Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of less than £7,500
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit with a monthly take home pay of less than £625

(the qualifying benefits and allowances are subject to change)

If you are aged 16-18 years-old and receive any of the above qualifying benefits in your own right, you can apply for free school meals.

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/

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

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...

I'm really proud and pleased how both pupils and staff colleagues have responded to all the pressures of Covid-19, mitigations, returning to full-time learning this term. There has clearly been a big effect on mental health, family finances and self-confidence caused by recent events. Everyone at TGS is committed to supporting our community back to a stronger place. There will be bumps in the road along the way, but please do take advantage of all the supports and opportunities offered here. Let us know if you are having issues requiring our input and let's all work together to get our TGS community happier, healthier and learning!

Take care & best wishes,

Phil

Phil Gaiter

Rector

The Gordon Schools

