



From mountain to sea

# The Gordon Schools

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## Handbook 2023/24

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**Contents**

<b>Introduction to The Gordon Schools</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Vision, Values and School Ethos</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Assessment and Reporting</b>	Error! Bookmark not defined.
<b>Transitions (Moving On)</b>	<b>16</b>
1 Admissions	16
2 Placing requests & School Zones	17
3 (SDS) Skills Development Scotland	17
<b>Support for Children and Young People</b>	<b>18</b>
4 Getting it Right for Every Child	18
5 Wellbeing	18
6 Children's Rights	20
7 The Named Person	21
8 The Child's Plan	22
9 Educational Psychology	23
10 Enhanced Provision & Community Resource Hubs	24
11 Support for Learning	24
12 Child Protection	25
13 Further Information on Support for Children and Young People	26
<b>Parent &amp; Carer Involvement and Engagement</b>	<b>27</b>
14 Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy	27
15 Parental Engagement	27
16 Communication	27
17 ParentsPortal.scot	28
18 Learning at Home	28
19 Parent Forum and Parent Council	29
20 Parents and School Improvement	29
21 Volunteering in school	29
22 Collaborating with the Community	29
23 Addressing Concerns & Complaints	30
<b>School Policies and Useful Information</b>	<b>31</b>
24 Attendance	31

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25	Holidays during term time.	32
26	Dress Code	32
27	Clothing Grants	33
28	Transport	33
29	Privilege Transport	33
30	Early Learning & Childcare Transport	34
31	Special Schools and Enhanced Provision	34
32	School Closure & Other Emergencies	34
33	Storm Addresses	36
34	Change of address and Parental Contact Details	36
35	Anti-bullying Guidance	36
36	School Meals	37
37	Healthcare & Medical	38
38	Exclusion	39
39	Educational Visits	40
40	Instrumental Tuition	40
41	Education Maintenance Allowance	41
42	Public Liability Insurance	41
43	School Off Site Excursion Insurance	41
44	Data we hold and what we do with it.	42
45	The information we collect from you	42
46	Your Data, Your Rights	43
47	Parental Access to Records	43
48	Information Sharing	43
49	ScotXed	44
<b>Further Information</b>		<b>45</b>

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All information in this handbook is correct as of November 2023

# Introduction to The Gordon Schools

Welcome to The Gordon Schools. Our School is a comprehensive Aberdeenshire secondary school located in Huntly, with a rich and successful history stretching back over 180 years. We continue to be committed to partnership working within our local community, together with all other stakeholders that support the learning we provide. Together we are working hard to ensure all our pupils get the best possible start in life and are enabled and encouraged to maximise opportunities to grow and succeed towards their own positive destinations. We value the input of parents and carers who are very much encouraged to become involved in the life of The Gordon Schools and our Parents in Partnership body.

Our Vision for the School is simply: Together Growing Succeeding. This is at the core of what we do in order to continually develop and improve quality learning and teaching experiences for all. We have high expectations of our pupils, encouraging each one to attain the best they possibly can at every stage through a journey of life-long learning. I look forward to welcoming you in person to The Gordon Schools.

Phil Gaiter  
Rector

## School Contact Details

<b>Head Teacher</b>	<b>Phil Gaiter</b>
<b>School Name</b>	<b>The Gordon Schools</b>
<b>Address</b>	<b>Huntly. AB54 4SE</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>01466 405990</b>
<b>Website</b>	<b><a href="https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/">https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/</a></b>
<b>Parent Council Email</b>	<b><a href="mailto:pipgordonschools@gmail.com">pipgordonschools@gmail.com</a></b>
<b>Parent Council Information</b>	<b><a href="https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/">https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/</a> 'Parents in Partnership' tab</b>

## Adverse weather and emergency closure

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/schools-closures/>

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The Gordon Schools is a non-denominational school with a roll of 660. Our School has a welcoming and positive ethos, where we aspire to put all learners and colleagues at the centre of our Vision. Fundamental to this, we are also constantly striving to support and develop alongside our local community and its place in the wider world. Our School draws from a wide geographical area, having 10 primary schools in our Cluster; two of which have large rolls of approximately three to four hundred pupils each, with others having on average up to a maximum of about 50 pupils each. As a School we also regularly attract pupils from out-of-zone schools in the surrounding areas.

We are involved in joined-up multi-agency working on a daily basis which underpins our commitment to 'Getting it right for every child', liaising with Educational Psychology, Social Work, Police Scotland and the Fire Service, Skills Development Scotland, NHS Grampian, Developing Young Workforce North East, Quarriers, Aberdeenshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Aberdeen University and RGU Outreach, SAMH, as well as drawing on the services of a Wellbeing Worker, two Pupil Support Workers and nursing assistant. We are also in partnership with MCR Pathways (Aberdeenshire Young Talent) to support our care-experienced and most vulnerable pupils, now in its sixth year of running.

It is vital that our School is outward looking. As strand of this involves seeking and maintaining recognition for our wider achievements. We are currently a 'sportsotland Gold school sport award' holder and in 21-22 we renewed our 'Eco Schools Green Flag Award'. We are also a Fair Trade 'Fair Achiever School' and will be looking to re-instate our International Schools Award during 2023-24. The Gordon Schools has embedded a range of community links in our curriculum to provide more meaningful contexts for learning. Amongst our partners are Deveron Projects, The Huntly Town Team, Huntly Development Trust, Networks of Well-being', Johnstons of Elgin, Deans Shortbread, Huntly Ethical Trading Initiative, Orb's Bookshop, the Armed Services, as well as our Aberdeenshire colleagues in Live Life Aberdeenshire and Active Schools. Educational partnerships that feature in the learning life of our School are links with North East Scotland College (NESCol), Scotland's Rural College (SRUC), Moray College University of the Highlands and Islands and the Open University YASS scheme with Senior Phase (S4 – S6) pupils regularly undertaking timetabled courses through these institutions and programmes.

Supporting pupil voice and the UNCRC, we have an active Pupil Council meeting regularly to support decision-making in our School and the School also contributes to Aberdeenshire's Pupil Participation Forum. Our young people are also involved in having their say in how Huntly should develop.

Devolved budgets are managed in accordance with authority guidelines to support planned improvements in our School.

### **Our school day**

08:55 – 09:05am: Registration	12:05 – 1:00pm:	Period 4
09:05 – 10:05am: Period 1	1:00 – 2:00pm:	Lunch
10:05 – 10:55am: Period 2	2:00 – 2:50pm:	Period 5
10:55 – 11:15am: Interval	2:50 – 3:45pm:	Period 6
11:15 – 12:05pm: Period 3	3:45pm:	Close of School

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# Our Vision, Values and School Ethos

## The Gordon Schools Vision



At The Gordon Schools, we have a living Vision that guides our everyday actions and expectations. It is a statement that embodies the values of what we are trying to be and do as a School community.

An easy way to remember our Vision is using the initials of our School: **T G S**

Our **Vision** is:



### **Together:**

Is about treating one another positively, kindly and with respect. We all feel included as a part of our School community, the local Huntly community and the north-east, national and global world.

Our actions here affect other local, national and international communities. We must consider what consequences our actions will have on others around us and on the sustainability of our environment, both locally and globally.

### **Growing:**

We need everyone to value and look after their health & wellbeing. This includes our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

TGS should be a happy place, with support for everyone to feel good about their health. We want everyone to develop confidence and resilience for their lives in and beyond School.

### **Succeeding:**

Means being the best possible version of yourself that you can be. If you succeed with this, then you will learn as well, and achieve as much as you can.

Have a growth mind-set; explore new things and aim for future success!  
At TGS we want you to be proud of the efforts you make towards your achievements and successes and we will celebrate all of this with you.

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## The Gordon Schools Coat of Arms



At the top of the School Coat of Arms, two yellow boars' heads on an azure background represent the Gordon family. Two lions' heads on a gold background are linked with Badenoch. Two red crescents on a gold background link with Seton. Two fraises, or strawberry flowers, on an azure background represent Fraser. The Gordon family owned Badenoch, Seton and Fraser lands and these four names are remembered in our House system.

A red chevron with silver stars carries the link with the Brodie Arms, the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Gordon having married Elizabeth Brodie. The colours black and gold relate to the Barry Arms of Strathbogie (the original name for Huntly). The green leaves represent our Linden trees. The grey tower represents the tower of the Simpson Building, the original building that dates back to 1839.

The motto In Fas Constans derives from Bydand, that appears on the armorial bearings of the Gordon Family. Both mean Steadfast or Abiding.

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# Curriculum

Within our school, we aim to provide a curriculum that is both inclusive and ambitious for all – a curriculum which is both academically challenging as well as providing opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work.

Our curriculum will be based around the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence – to ensure our pupils are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors, and responsible citizens. Our curriculum will also reflect the principles of curriculum design to ensure breadth, depth, personalisation & choice, challenge & enjoyment, progression, coherence, and relevance. We will therefore, have a curriculum which we will adapt continuously over time to meet the needs of our pupils.

Following the principles of Curriculum for Excellence, achievement of children and young people is celebrated in its broadest sense. This means looking beyond formally assessed learning, to recognise activities like volunteering and participation in arts, sports, and community-based programmes. This approach complements the nurturing and aspirational outcomes of Getting It Right for Every Child, and our aim in Aberdeenshire to overcome inequality by Raising Attainment for All, promoting Equity and Excellence in schools, and Closing the Gap. Further information on the school's approach to Curriculum for Excellence including information for parents, can be found on the school website at: <https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>

## Curricular Areas

- **Literacy and English Language:** Listening, Talking Reading, and Writing.
  - **Numeracy and Mathematics:** Number, Money and Measure, Information Handling, Shape, Position and Movement.
  - **Health & Wellbeing:** Mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing, Physical education, activity and sport, Food and health, Substance misuse, Relationships, sexual health and parenthood.
  - **Social Studies:** People, past events and societies, People, place and environment, People, society, economy, and business.
  - **Sciences:** Planet Earth, Forces, electricity and waves, Biological Systems, Materials, Topical Sciences.
  - **Technologies:** Technological developments in society, Business technology skills and knowledge, Computing science, Food and textiles, Craft, design, engineering, and graphics.
  - **Expressive Arts:** Music, Drama & Art and Design.
  - **Religious and Moral Education:** Christianity, World Religions, Development of beliefs and values.
  - **Modern Languages:** German, French, and Spanish.
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## Curriculum Design

Our curriculum is designed based on the following 7 principles:

- Challenge and enjoyment
- Breadth
- Progression
- Depth
- Personalisation and choice
- Coherence
- Relevance

## Developing Young Workforce

Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) is the Scottish Government's Youth Employment strategy to better prepare young people for the world of work.

Developing the Young Workforce is embedded in Scotland's Curriculum and along with the Curriculum for Excellence and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) it is one of the three main building blocks underpinning Scotland's education offer for children and young people.

The DYW Aberdeenshire priorities are as follows:

- Development of the **DYW Curriculum** offer including embedding the Career Education Standard Entitlements 3-18 and the further development of BGE pathways and Foundation Apprenticeships in the senior phase.
- **Skills Development**: embedding skills for learning, life and work SDS Metaskills and skills profiling
- **Partnership** Development, including partnership with employers
- Support for **Equalities**

As part of the 3-18 curriculum, pupils will develop skills for learning, life, and work and Skills 4.0 and Metaskills. Throughout their time in school, from Early Years onwards, all pupils will have an opportunity to engage with employers, through experiences like workplace visits, career talks, employability events and courses, work experience and curriculum based activities. They will also have the opportunity to learn about further and higher education as well as different career pathways into employment.

In School, we have a Skills Development Scotland representative, who supports pupils with their journey to a post-School positive destination.

In S4-6, pupils will be given the opportunity to study for vocational qualifications, including Foundation Apprenticeships, alongside the more traditional qualifications.

Further information for parents on Foundation Apprenticeships can be found [here](#)

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**Curricular Levels S1 – S3**

<b>Early</b>	The pre-school years and P1, or later for some.
<b>First</b>	To the end of P4, but earlier or later for some.
<b>Second</b>	To the end of P7, but earlier or later for some.
<b>Third and Fourth</b>	S1 to S3, but earlier for some. The fourth level broadly equates to Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework level 4. The fourth level experiences and outcomes are intended to provide possibilities for choice and young people's programmes will not include all the fourth level outcomes.

**Broad General Education Curriculum map**

<b>S1</b>	<b>Business Education &amp; ICT</b>	<b>Expressive Arts</b>	<b>Health and Well Being (HWB)</b>	<b>Languages &amp; Literacy</b>
	<b>Enterprise &amp; Technology</b>	<b>Art Drama Music</b>	<b>Physical Education Personal &amp; Social Education</b>	<b>English French German</b>
	<b>Mathematics &amp; Numeracy</b>	<b>RMPS &amp; Social Studies</b>	<b>Science Technologies</b>	<b>Skills for life &amp; work</b>
	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Geography History Modern Studies Religious &amp; Moral Education</b>	<b>Biology Chemistry Physics</b>	<b>Preparing our Workforce</b>

S2	Business Education & ICT	Expressive Arts	Health and Well Being (HWB)	Languages & Literacy
	Enterprise & Technology	Art Drama Music	Physical Education Personal & Social Education	English French or German or Spanish
	Mathematics & Numeracy	RMPS & Social Studies	Science Technologies	Skills for life & work
	Mathematics	Geography History Modern Studies Religious & Moral Education	Biology Chemistry Physics Design & Manufacture	Developing Young Workforce insert days in the curriculum

S3	Business Education & ICT	Expressive Arts	Health and Well Being (HWB)	Languages & Literacy
	Options: Business Administration Computing Science	Options: Art Drama Music	Options: Practical Cookery Physical Education Core: Personal & Social Education	Core: English  One from: French German Spanish
	Mathematics & Numeracy	RMPS & Social Studies	Science Technologies	Skills for life & work
	Core: Mathematics	Options: Geography History Modern Studies	Options: Biology Chemistry Physics Graphic Communication	Developing Young Workforce opportunities in the curriculum

		Religious & Moral Education	Design & Manufacture Fashion & Textile Technology	
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### Senior Phase (S4-S6)

Pupils study the courses in which they want to gain National Qualifications and Awards during the Senior Phase. These may be accredited by the SQA, Princes Trust or other awarding bodies.

In S4 most pupils will follow six or sometimes seven courses. All pupils will study English and Maths and most will choose any four other courses. There is also a core of Wider Achievement, Physical Education, Religious, Moral & Philosophical Studies and Personal & Social Education.

In S5 and S6 pupils could follow up to five (sometimes six) courses. In S5 & S6 there is a core of PSE.

In the Senior Phase we also work closely with North East Scotland College and Aberdeenshire Council to provide pupils with the opportunity of studying courses at college as well as school. These can include such courses as Foundation Apprenticeships.

### Development of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Values

In our school we are committed to providing appropriate opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural values through both the ethos and the curriculum.

The Gordon Schools welcomes and values pupils from all faith backgrounds. We are a non-denominational School and have close links with Churches in the extended Huntly community. Situated in a predominantly Christian community, at Christmas, our school participates in services held by local Ministers and, where appropriate, encourages presentations by religious groups and charities. The Gideons present First Year pupils with a copy of the New Testament each year. The Scottish Executive has issued new guidelines for Religious Observance which further assist in the spiritual development of all members of our school community.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

Sports and activity clubs are widespread across our School. Sports offered include athletics, badminton, cross-country running, football, hockey, netball, rugby, swimming and volleyball, to name just a few. There continues to be sporting representation regionally and nationally. Seniors are involved in enterprise, citizenship and health & well-being activities. We also have various School musical groups and there is also an annual high profile School show. There are trips and visits around the country and also abroad. Pupils are required to contribute to the cost of local excursions. All pupils in all years are given wide and varied opportunities to participate in the life of the school.

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## **1+2 Language Learning**

The Scottish Government policy 'Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach' is now embedded in our curriculum. Children are growing up in a multilingual world and to allow them to take their place as global citizens, they need to be able to communicate in many settings. This approach entitles every child and young person to learn two languages at school in addition to their mother tongue language.

In our School the first foreign language will be either French or German. This language can be learned from P1 (in Primary School) through to S3 (in secondary school). There will be opportunities to experience and learn the basics of Spanish, French and German in S1, followed by choice for S2 and S3.

If you would like your child to access Gaelic Medium Education and they have not yet started to attend a primary school you can make a request for an assessment of need for Gaelic Medium Primary Education (GMPE). For more information, please go to:

<http://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/gaelic-in-schools/>

The parent or carer of any child or young person can make a request for their child to attend to any school which offers GMPE. This will enable your child to be taught by specialist staff. As there are currently no schools in Aberdeenshire which have GME provision learners are transported to school in Aberdeen City.

## **Further Information**

Further information on the school's approach to Curriculum for Excellence including information for parents, can be found on the school website at:  
<https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>

More general information on Curriculum for Excellence and the new Qualifications can be found by clicking on the hyperlinks below.

### **Policy for Scottish Education:**

<https://education.gov.scot/about-education-scotland/policies-and-information/education-policy-and-legislation/>

### **Early Learning & Childcare:**

<https://education.gov.scot/learning-in-scotland/sector/early-learning-and-childcare-elc/>

### **Broad General Education (Pre school – S3):**

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/curriculum-in-scotland/broad-general-education/>

### **Senior Phase and beyond (S4 – 16+):**

<https://education.gov.scot/scottish-education-system/senior-phase-and-beyond>

### **National Qualifications:**

<https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/58062.3806.html?pMenuID=5605>

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# Assessment and Reporting

Pupils move through the curriculum at their own pace. A wide range of assessment techniques are used in school depending on what is being assessed and the reason for the assessment e.g.

- Observation of what the pupils “say”, “write” and “do”.
- Homework
- Self and peer assessments
- Marking of class work and other individual/class assessments
- Ongoing tracking and monitoring procedures in school
- Scottish National Standardised Assessments (P1, P4, P7 and S3)

Progress will be evidenced using a variety of approaches that best reflect the learning that has taken place and will track the skills that your child or young person is developing.

Assessment is ongoing throughout the Broad General phase and is a continuous process which influences the goals set for your child. As part of assessment, each year children and young people in P1, P4, P7 and S3 will participate in the National Standardised Assessments (formerly SNSA). These national assessments are completed online and provide teachers with immediate feedback on each child or young person’s progress in literacy and numeracy. Children and young people do not have to prepare or revise for the assessments, which take place as part of normal learning and teaching. The assessments do not have any pass/fail mark and the results are used to help teachers plan the next steps in learning for each child/young person. Further information on SNSA is available at

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-national-standardised-assessments-purpose-and-use/>

The results of children’s achievements are discussed with them regularly so that they are involved in taking responsibility for their own learning. This may take the form of oral discussion and/or written comment. In this way, it is hoped to assist the pupil identify what has been learned and the next steps to their learning. Children regularly set targets in their work.

Parents will be informed of progress:

- through pupil profiles/learning logs
- through parent consultation evenings and other meetings
- through curriculum/learning events/parent workshops
- by the annual school report
- Individual Education Plans and associated documents

Parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school at other times throughout the year to discuss their child’s progress.

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## Secondary schools: Assessment & Reporting in the Senior Phase (S4-S6)

In the Senior Phase pupils embark on the National Qualifications.

As pupils enter this phase, they are set an aspirational target grade for each subject they are studying. This forms the basis for learning conversations between staff and pupils to discuss progress and identify next steps. This is shared with parents/carers through Tracking Reports.

Further Information on Assessment, Reporting & Profiling can be found on Parentzone:

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/curriculum-in-scotland/assessment-in-the-senior-phase/>

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# Transitions (Moving On)

Most of the pupils at The Gordon Schools come from our ten Cluster Primary Schools:

Cairney School; Drumblade School; Forgue School; Glass School; Gordon Primary  
Insch School\*; Kennethmont School; Largue School; Premnay School; and  
Rhynie School

(\*Dual-zoned for The Gordon Schools and Inverurie Academy)

To support in the transition from primary to secondary, we liaise with our Cluster Primary Schools throughout the session. All of our Head Teachers meet regularly to co-ordinate developments.

Two Open Information Evenings for Parents and Carers in Primary 7 are held during the school session. There are opportunities to meet Senior Leaders, Guidance Teachers and pupils from the school and tour The Gordon Schools.

There are visits from secondary colleagues to our Cluster Primary Schools during the session, together with a week-long Transition Experience for Primary 7 pupils to The Gordon Schools in June. An easy-to-follow Welcome booklet is prepared, giving advice, facts and information. To make the transition as smooth as possible and to lessen the impact of change, pupils meet new teaching staff in settled groups. They have an opportunity to follow their timetable, meet a range of subject teachers and to see the facilities and buildings. In addition small groups of pupils meet on a regular basis during the session to support them in a more extended transition.

During the Transition week, a second Parents' Information Evening is held. Throughout this process, Parents/Carers will have opportunities to ask any questions or share any information about their child's needs which will support them through the transition. Senior pupils also act as "Buddies" to support first year pupils as they settle into school in August. The aim of all this is to make sure that transition is as smooth as possible.

Families of pupils enrolling out-with transition time meet with one of the Depute Rectors. Time is made available to provide families with a guided tour and to provide advice and information about School life.

Visit Parentzone for more information about transitions:

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-child/transitions>

## 1 Admissions

To view the school catchment area for your address, go to:

<https://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/admissions/school-zones/>

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## **2 Placing requests & School Zones**

For all advice and information on placing requests and guidance on school catchment/zones go to:

<http://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/information/choosing-a-school>

Your child would normally attend a school within the school catchment area (zone) close to where you live. However, you can request that your child attends a school in another zone (out of zone). Please follow the links for more info:

[Out Of Zone Placing Request Policy & Procedures](#)

## **3 (SDS) Skills Development Scotland**

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is Scotland's careers service.

Qualified SDS Careers Advisers work in schools and careers centres across the whole of Scotland. The SDS Careers Adviser in our school is Cathy Mellstrom. Contact with the Careers Adviser should be done through the school.

Careers Advisers will meet with young people to help them make decisions about their future career pathway. Alongside other school staff, Careers Advisers are involved in supporting young people through subject choice at relevant stages in their education. This may involve working with individuals one to one, or with groups or classes. Young people can continue to access support from advisers when they leave school, through the Career Centres in Peterhead, Inverurie and Aberdeen.

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# Support for Children and Young People

## 4 Getting it Right for Every Child

Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national policy approach in Scotland which aims to support the wellbeing of all children and young people, by offering the right help, at the right time, from the right people. Certain aspects of this policy have been placed in law by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

Aberdeenshire's Children's Services Planning Partners are strongly committed to fully embedding the Getting it Right for Every Child approach. This shared commitment is expressed through the vision statement of Aberdeenshire's Children's Services Plan, which Aberdeenshire's Schools play a key part in delivering:



Its vision is that:

***'Our commitment to Aberdeenshire's children and young people, is to provide them with the right support, in the right place, at the right time.***

***In helping them reach their individual potential and goals, we will work together to make Aberdeenshire the best place in Scotland to grow up'***

You can find out more about our Children's Services Plan at:

<http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/who-we-are/our-childrens-services-plan/>

## 5 Wellbeing

The Getting it Right approach is reflected in agreed local processes for assessing need and planning support for individual children and young people. In Aberdeenshire, we have a strong ethos of partnership working, with a shared sense of professional accountability for improving the wellbeing of children, young people and families.

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Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is about safeguarding, supporting and promoting children and young people’s wellbeing, and ensuring support is provided if and when this is needed. GIRFEC is:

- Child-centred
- Holistic
- Accessible and responsive
- Joined up
- Rights-based

The concept of Wellbeing is at the heart of the GIRFEC approach and is defined in Part 18 (s96) of the Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, through eight Wellbeing Indicators. These Wellbeing Indicators reflect the Scottish Government’s aspiration for all Scotland’s children and young people to be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

These 8 Wellbeing Indicators need to be met In order for children and young people to grow and develop into confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.



The Gordon Schools Guidance Team

- Mr A Dixon: Depute Rector (Overall charge of Health and Wellbeing)
- Mrs S Murdoch: Badenoch House (Acting Principal Teacher)
- Mrs A Carle: Fraser House Principal Teacher
- Mr A Clark: Gordon House Principal Teacher
- Mrs L Fettes/Mrs G Grant: Seton House Principal Teachers

Our Guidance teachers provide the link between home and School. Although all teachers in the school have responsibility for pupil welfare, it is our Guidance colleagues who are in a position to have the complete picture of pupil progress during their secondary school years. The Guidance Teacher in a Secondary School acts the 'Named Person' for each pupil in their House. They provide support and guidance of a personal nature, assisting pupils to make well-considered decisions. Guidance teachers see all their pupils on a weekly basis when teaching Personal and Social Education and conduct routine interviews with pupils during each stage of their school career.

Guidance colleagues meet regularly with members of the Senior Leadership Team to discuss all aspects of pupil welfare. They are also regular meetings to co-ordinate Additional Support for Learning. The progress and welfare of pupils experiencing specific difficulties are reviewed at these times.

Guidance teachers are also the link between the school and outside agencies, such as:

Universities, Further Education Establishments, Skills Development Scotland, Children's Hearings, Psychological Services. Work Experience agencies, Health & School Medical Service, Social Work Department, Cluster Primary Schools and Community Health & Development.

Whenever there is a concern about the well-being of pupils, Guidance teachers contact Parents/Carers by telephone, e-mail or by letter. In return, Parents/Carers are asked to inform the appropriate member of the Guidance team of any circumstances that might affect a pupil's progress at school. Colleagues in The Gordon Schools value this sense of partnership between home and school. Should you wish to meet with a Guidance teacher an appointment should be made through the school office. The telephone number is 01466 405990. Parents are also encouraged to contact the Rector or members of the Senior Leadership Team. If there is something causing real concern do not hesitate to get in touch. Someone will help. We are all concerned and will try to assist.

### **Wider Pupil Support Team**

Our Guidance Team are a part of our wider pupil support team and systems. The full team also includes our Pupil Wellbeing Worker, two Pupil Support Workers, our MCR Pathways Coordinator, our School Nursing Assistant; NHS Nursing support; our School Counsellor; our 'Time to Talk' support worker; Full Colour Coaching 1:1 and small group supports.

## **6 Children's Rights**

Every child/young person has rights in addition to human rights. These are called Children's Rights, and they're written in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They outline what children need to give them the best chance of growing up happy, healthy and safe. Adults such as parents, schools, councils and governments have a responsibility to make sure that children access their rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a statement of children's rights. It has 54 articles that cover all areas of a child's life and it sets out the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights that all children are entitled to.

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Scotland is in the process of incorporating the UNCRC into Scots Law. This will ensure that rights are binding rather than guiding and all levels of government must apply the rights in legislation, policy and practice.

Children and young people are learning about these rights in school and some schools take part in The Rights Respecting Schools programme, a UNICEF accredited programme to support schools in developing rights based practice as part of the school ethos.

In our schools we will:

- Raise awareness of Children's Rights, and how rights can be accessed
- Ensure Children's Rights are provided and protected by the adults who support our children and young people
- Provide a variety of opportunities for children and young people to get involved in decision-making
- Make sure children and young people's views influence how we develop services
- Support children and young people to express their views
- Listen to and act on children and young people's views on what we do well, and what we could do differently

More information for parents on Children's Rights can be found here

[Parent Club Childrens Rights leaflet.pdf](#)

Aberdeenshire Council has endorsed a Children and Young People's Charter. You can find out more about Children's Rights and opportunities for participation at:

<http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/home/children-and-young-people/>

## **7 The Named Person**

Prevention and early-intervention are seen as key to the Getting It Right approach in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people. By providing support at an early stage, most difficulties can be prevented from escalating.

One way the Scottish Government has decided this should be taken forward, is by making a Named Person available to every child and young person in Scotland. From birth to prior to starting school, the Named Person Service is provided by your Health Visitor. The Education Service provides the Named Person Service for all children on entry to Primary One, until aged 18 (or beyond where a young person remains at secondary school). In Aberdeenshire the Named Person will be either the Primary Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher and in Secondary School, the Named Person will be that young person's allocated Principal Teacher of Guidance (with a few exceptional circumstances).

The purpose of the Named Person role is to make sure children, young people and parents have confidence that they can access help or support no matter where they live or what age the child is. Acting as a central point of contact, the Named Person can help children, young people or parents/carers get the support they need, if and when they need it.

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The Named Person can help by:

- Providing advice, information, or support
- Helping a child, young person, or to access a service or support
- Discussing or raising a wellbeing concern about a child or young person.
- Being a key contact point for other professionals if wellbeing needs are identified for a child or young person.

There is no obligation for children and young people or parents to accept any offer of advice or support from the Named Person. Non-engagement with a Named Person is not in itself a cause for concern. The Named Person Services is currently delivered on a national policy basis.

For more information you can contact your child or young person's Named person directly, or go to:

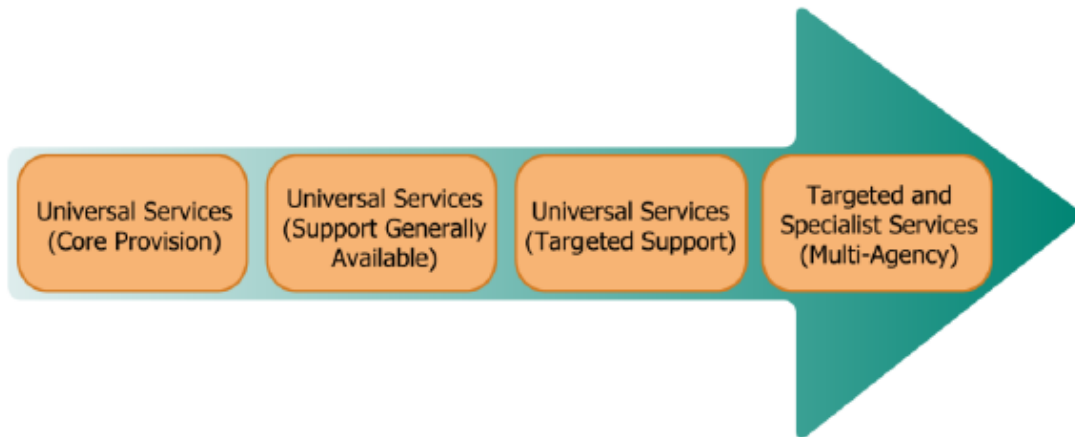
<https://www.gov.scot/policies/girfec/named-person/>

The Named Person for your child/young person is your child's Guidance Teacher.

## **8 The Child's Plan**

The *Getting It Right* approach makes sure children and young people are provided with a range of support, which is proportionate and put in place to meet assessed need. This is reflected in Aberdeenshire's staged approach to assessment and planning for individual children and young people, shown below.

- Universal Services (Core Provision)
  - Universal Services (Support Generally Available)
  - Universal Services (Targeted Support) Targeted and Specialist Services (Multi-Agency)
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For a small minority of children or young people, there might be higher levels of wellbeing need or risk identified. These children may require a level of targeted support, which needs to be coordinated on a single or multi-agency basis through a Child's Plan.

Where a child or young person needs one or more targeted supports, the benefit of a Child's Plan will be discussed with them and their parents/carers. An assessment using the National Practice Model (*My World Triangle/Resilience Matrix*) would help to identify any wellbeing needs (*Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Resected, Responsible, Included*), and highlights strengths and pressures in the child's situation. Families are fully involved as key partners in these discussions.

The Child's Plan will outline what action will be taken by the child, their family and professionals, and detail how these supports aim to help improve the child or young person's Wellbeing and overcome any difficulties.

A Lead Professional will be identified to co-ordinate and manage any Child's Plan.

Information is available on the Aberdeenshire *Getting It Right for Every Child* Website:

<http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/>

## 9 Educational Psychology

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) provides a service across Aberdeenshire from the early years to school leaving age. Educational Psychologists work with children, young people, parents and carers, educational staff, local authority colleagues and a wide range of other professionals including health professions, social work, early years partner providers and post school training and education providers.

When there are concerns about a child or young person's learning or wellbeing, an Educational Psychologist can support others to assess needs and problem solve their way through potentially difficult and complex situations. Consultation with people who know the child best forms the basis of Educational Psychology assessment. The purpose is to explore and understand the concern and support people to come up with solutions that will work in that particular context. More information about Consultation can be found on the Educational Psychology Service website:

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<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/as/aberdeenshireeps/about-us/>

The website also has a range of helpful resources available for all parents:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/as/aberdeenshireeps/parent-information/>

## 10 Enhanced Provision & Community Resource Hubs

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to supporting children and young children to be educated in local schools through providing the right support in the right place at the right time. By enhanced provision we mean that a local primary and secondary school has an enhanced level of resources, such as access to a sensory room and life skills area; and support for learning staff who have an enhanced level of expertise to meet a range of needs.

Further enhancement is available through the community resource hub, for a small minority of children with severe and complex needs, who regardless of chronological age are making very small steps in learning and are at the early levels of learning.

The enhanced provision centres and community resource hubs can offer outreach support to mainstream schools, short term assessment placements and flexibility (e.g. blended places).

For more information on all our resources and policies go to:

<http://asn-aberdeenshire.org/>

## 11 Support for Learning

At times in their lives all children may require support for learning for a range of reasons. Some children may need a lot of support all the way through school. Others may need only a small amount for a short time.

A child is said to have additional support needs if they need more, or different, support to what is normally provided in schools or pre-schools to children of the same age. Reasons for requiring support might include:

- Missing school because of an illness or long-term condition
- Having a physical disability
- Being a young carer
- Communication difficulties
- Being particularly able
- Changing school a lot
- Being looked after or in care
- Difficulty in controlling behaviour
- Having a difficult family situation
- Suffering a bereavement

Social and emotional factors Each school cluster has an allocation of Teachers of Additional Support for Learning (ASL) who are employed to support pupils with additional support needs. They work across each cluster in primary and secondary.

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In partnership with school staff, parents and other professionals (if appropriate), they identify barriers to learning, assess children's needs and support learning and teaching through a relevant curriculum.

Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) assist teachers in promoting achievement and raising the standards of pupil attainment. They provide general support in relation to the needs of the class and individuals' care, health and wellbeing and safety and to promote a secure and safe environment.

## 12 Child Protection

### National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland 2021

Child protection is the responsibility of all who work with children and families regardless of whether or not they come into direct contact with children. All workers must be fully informed of their responsibilities in respect of keeping children safe. All services working with children, young people and families are expected to identify and consider the wellbeing of children and to share concerns appropriately.

### **Equal Protection from Assault (Scotland) Act 2019.**

This was introduced on 7 November 2020 and all who work with children have a crucial role in implementing the Act. Instances of reasonable chastisement are now classified as an offence of assault and will be shared with the police.

Within our School we have a designated member of staff appointed to be responsible for Child Protection matters. If there is the possibility that a child could be at risk, the school is required to follow the Child Protection Procedures laid out for Education.

This may mean that the child is referred to Social Work, the Police or the Children's Reporter. In our school the designated staff is: Alistair Dixon, Depute Rector

Remember – if you suspect a child is at risk, do not rely on someone else to notice.

If you would like to speak to someone, seek help or pass on information or concerns:

You can speak to designated staff in our School.

Social Work Monday to Friday during office hours contact your Children & Families local [Social Work Office](#)

Evenings & Weekends call the Out of Hours Service on 03456 08 12 06

Police Emergency 999, Non-Emergency 101

Signs of abuse can range from poor personal hygiene and hunger to unexplained injuries or self-harm.

If a young person tells you they are being abused:

- stay calm and listen to them
  - never promise to keep it a secret – tell them you must let someone else know
  - remind them that they are not to blame and are doing the right thing
  - report it, but leave any investigation to child protection agencies
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Protecting Aberdeenshire's children and young people is everyone's business, go to:

<http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/child-protection/>

### **13 Further Information on Support for Children and Young People**

The following websites may be useful:

#### **Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)**

<http://www.girfec-aberdeenshire.org/>

#### **Aberdeenshire Council**

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/additional-support-needs/>

#### **Support for All**

<https://young.scot/campaigns/ayefeel/>

#### **Enquire – National Parent Information Service and Helpline**

<http://enquire.org.uk/>

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# Parent & Carer Involvement and Engagement

*The term “parents” refers to anyone with parental responsibilities and others who care for or look after children or young people.*

Both globally and nationally it is recognised that parents are the single most important influence on their children’s development, learning and achievement. The involvement and engagement of parents in their children’s learning is recognised as a key element in raising attainment, through support, help and encouragement given at home and whilst at school.

## 14 Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy

The Parental Involvement and Engagement Strategy 2023-2026 demonstrates the commitment by Aberdeenshire Council to improve the quality and the extent of all parents’ involvement in their child’s learning and the important role they play in their child’s education.

The plan sets out a vision for parental involvement and engagement for the next three years and covers a journey that a child takes from pre-birth to age 18. It highlights the leadership of those who make the difference day in and day out.

If you would like to read the Aberdeenshire Parental Involvement and Engagement strategy it can be found on Aberdeenshire Council’s website here [Parental involvement and engagement - Aberdeenshire Council](#)

## 15 Parental Engagement

Parental engagement is about parents’ and families’ interaction with their child’s learning. It can take place in the home, at school or in the community: where it takes place is not important. The important thing is the quality of the parent’s engagement with their child’s learning, the positive impact that it can have and the interaction and mutual development that can occur as a result of that interaction.

## 16 Communication

The school uses a range of approaches to share information about your child’s learning and progress. These include:

Using ‘Groupcall’ to text and email reports, letters, praise and concerns

Where contact details have been provided, all contacts identified as “parent contacts” will receive the information being sent. The exception to this is the morning absence text which will only be sent to the main parent contact.

Use of Parentsportal.scot for notices, permission slips and school reports

School Website: <https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>

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Use of Groupcall to text and email

Use of Parentsportal.scot for notices, permission slips and school reports

School Website: <https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk>

Newsletters, Events

School reports

The school calendar highlights planned opportunities where we welcome you into school for events, and opportunities to talk about your child's progress, wellbeing, and behaviour (see the Family Calendar on our website for further Information).

## 17 ParentsPortal.scot

[parentsportal.scot](https://parentsportal.scot)

In support of Aberdeenshire Council's ambition to offer more digital services to its residents, Aberdeenshire primary and secondary schools are rolling out a new national online service called **parentsportal.scot**. This is designed to replace the paper 'schoolbag run', giving a child's registered contacts access to a range of school-related online services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

At the heart of the system, is a secure account through **mygov.scot**, which is referred to as '**My Account**' or '**MyAberdeenshire**' account. 'MyAberdeenshire' is already used to allow parents/carers to make online payments or receive notifications if a school closes unexpectedly. **Parentsportal.scot** and '**MyAberdeenshire**/'**mygov.scot** will work together, making this a convenient one-stop-shop, to access all Aberdeenshire digital services.

Initially, **parentsportal.scot** will allow parents/carers to see basic information about your child(ren)'s school and twitter account as well as:-

- make a link to your child(ren)
- complete the annual data check process electronically (child's main contact only)
- update their own as well as your child(ren)'s details at any time
- to register and access for online school meal payments using one sign in (iPayImpact)

**How do I sign up?** - If you **already have a myAberdeenshire account** to pay for school meals through iPayImpact, you can sign up using the same sign in details at <https://parentsportal.scot/home/> You **do not need** to register or set up a new **mygov.scot** account.

If you do not have a myAberdeenshire/mygov.scot account or are looking for more information and videos on how to access to **parentsportal.scot**, please go to <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/parents-portal/>

## 18 Learning at Home

Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. Your home is a great place to support learning. Your child can try out new activities or practice familiar learning, at home and in their wider community.

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At our school we provide materials for you to work with your child to develop key skills at home. To view these materials, please go to our website:

<https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>

## **19 Parent Forum and Parent Council (Parents in Partnership)**

The Parent Forum is a collective name for all parents, carers, and guardians in the school.

The Parents in Partnership is a group of parents selected by the Parent Forum to represent the views of all parents, carers, and guardians in the school. The Parent Council works with the school to support learning and teaching, school improvement and parental and community engagement. At The Gordon Schools, our Council is called 'Parents in Partnership'. Meetings are held at least once a term, with the choice to attend in-person or on-line.

Contact the Parent Council Chairperson Mrs J Reed or Mr Gaiter, Rector, for more information about getting involved in the Parent Council or email: [pipgordonschools@gmail.com](mailto:pipgordonschools@gmail.com)

## **20 Parents and School Improvement**

Our school has a range of priorities that we work on each year which are explained in our School Improvement Plan (SIP). Parents often have helpful and creative ideas about how to improve their child's school and what can be done to improve the quality of children's learning. In our school we will consult with parents in a number of ways. These may include:

- working & focus groups which any interested parent is invited to be part of
- questionnaires and surveys
- consultation with Parents in Partnership

## **21 Volunteering in school**

There are many opportunities for you to support learning in school. These may include:

- volunteering to share the skills and knowledge you have
- supporting children and young people in the classroom
- supporting or lead extra-curricular activities
- directly supporting with specific skills (paired reading for example)

More detail about this can be found using the link below:

<http://jobs.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/volunteer-with-us/> or contact your Head teacher.

## **22 Collaborating with the Community**

We work with many local organisations, community groups and businesses to ensure our children and young people benefit from further resources, experiences, and opportunities. If you are interested in working with the school, please contact Mr Gaiter, our Rector.

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## 23 Addressing Concerns & Complaints

Aberdeenshire Council recognises the vital role that parents play in supporting their child's learning and is committed to fostering positive relationships with parents. No matter how strong partnerships are, or how good our policies are, sometimes things can still go wrong and there may be occasions where parents wish to express unhappiness or dissatisfaction with council services, policies, or staff behaviour.

<http://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/contact-us/have-your-say/have-your-say-guide/>

When a complaint is made it must be handled in accordance with the Complaints Handling Procedure which provides two opportunities to resolve issues internally. In order to maintain positive relationships, it is usually better for all if parental concerns or complaints can be resolved at school/ early years setting level as quickly as possible.

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved at frontline resolution (Stage 1) then it will progress to Investigation (Stage 2) and a detailed investigation into the matter will be carried out. Complaints that are complex, serious, or high risk and require detailed, lengthy investigation may be dealt with at the Investigation Stage from the outset.

Once the two internal stages of the Complaints Handling procedure have been exhausted, the complainant must be directed to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to carry out an independent external review of the process. The SPSO is the final stage of the complaint procedure.

Once the SPSO reaches a decision they may contact the council with recommendations for improvement and will provide dates by which the recommendations must be implemented. The council is required to report back to the SPSO and evidence that the required action has been taken.

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# School Policies and Useful Information

School Policies are published on the school website and can be found by clicking the About Our School tab and then going to Policies and Reports. Please go to:

<https://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/>

All Aberdeenshire Council Education policies can be found here:

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-us/service-structure/education-and-childrens-services-policy-framework/>

## 24 Attendance

**Lateness:** Pupils should make sure they sign in at reception so their attendance record can be updated. Patterns of late attendance will be followed up by members of the Guidance, our Pupil Support Worker and Senior Leadership Team.

**Permission for absence from school:** A note should be forwarded to the school explaining the reason for the planned absence.

**If you are absent:** If the absence is not planned, Parents/Carers can contact the school or phone 01466 405990 and select the appropriate option.

**If you feel ill,** tell your class teacher and ask permission to report to the school office. If appropriate, office staff will arrange for you to be collected from school.

**Good attendance and punctuality will help to foster better learning and attainment.**

All parents/carers of children of school age have a duty to provide education suitable to age, ability and aptitude. As part of an Aberdeenshire's approach to the management of pupil absences, we use a system called Groupcall, which allows us to contact parents/carers more quickly and efficiently to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. Groupcall gives us the ability to send text messages to parent/carer's mobile phones or make automated telephone calls to parent /carers via telephone numbers supplied to the School. The system is primarily used to seek clarification on why a child is absent from School.

Parents should note that the majority of holidays taken during term time are categorised as *unauthorised absence*. Under exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher can authorise a family holiday during term time, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

Improving attendance is vital for our School. There is a direct link between good attendance and good attainment. Parents/carers are asked to ensure that pupils come to School on time each and every day. Late-coming seriously disrupts learning in classes and is dealt with as part of the Aberdeenshire Council Attendance Policy. Every effort will be made, with parental co-operation, to encourage good habits of punctuality in pupils. Latecomers should report to the Reception in order to register and subsequently report to a member of the Senior Leadership Team at morning interval to review the reason for their lateness. Again, good punctuality is just as important as good attendance, in helping make for a settled start to daily learning.

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### **What parents needs to know:**

The school follows the Aberdeenshire Attendance Policy:

<http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/council-policies-education/resource/4d0b8f53-24d8-4638-b084-17fe885d11d4>

Procedures for following up on pupil absence are based on the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 which requires by law that parents/carers ensure that children attend school regularly. The Home/School Liaison Officer has a key role to play, providing a vital link.

## **25 Holidays during term time.**

The Scottish Government has deemed that holidays taken during term time for primary and secondary children should be recorded as unauthorised absence unless there are special, exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to remove your child from school to attend a family holiday you must inform the Head Teacher. This will be recorded as unauthorised absence though there may at times be exceptional family circumstances previously discussed with the Head Teacher. Parents are advised to limit the number of holidays taken during term time, to minimise disruption to a child's education. For annual holiday dates for Aberdeenshire schools please see the section at the back of this book, contact the school office or go to:

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schooltermdates>

## **26 Dress Code**

Pupils in The Gordon Schools are expected to wear the following items to school:

black polo; black jumper; black sweatshirt; black hoodie; black blazer (School coat of arms added by supplier). Some pupils also prefer a white polo; white shirt (with/without a School tie). Trousers or skirt in black, thick material (**not** see-through leggings, crop tops or short Lycra-style shorts).

Please also consider the changeable nature of weather conditions and provide your child with appropriate outerwear and footwear to suit.

Suppliers:

- My Clothing (online) [Price List – My Clothing](#)
- Gordon Rural Action (Huntly) Uniform Exchange:  
For a donation or free items of pre-loved, second-hand uniform as well as occasionally some new Uniform donated by a supermarket supplier.
- Stevensons: Enter school name and log-in/create account [Home - Stevensons](#)

Physical Education. PE Kit consists of: T-shirt or Polo Shirt; shorts or tracksuit trousers; suitable trainers; trunks/swimsuit

Parents should note their responsibility to ensure all clothing and belongings brought to school should be named or marked in some way, as it is difficult for children to distinguish their own clothing from that of others.

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## 27 Clothing Grants

Some families may be entitled to a school clothing grant per eligible child per financial year. More information about this can be found at:

<http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/assistance/school-clothing-grants/>

## 28 Transport

To qualify for Home-to-School Transport, Primary school pupils must reside more than 2 miles from and attend their zoned school whilst Secondary school pupils must reside more than 3 miles from and attend their zoned school.

These distances are the shortest available route from the pupil's house to the school gate and can take into account main roads (including dual carriageways), tracks and paths. Pupils will be assigned a collection point, in villages and towns and where safe to do so, pupils may have to walk up to 1 mile to the nearest collection point. Pupils who reside in rural locations are usually collected at the nearest adopted road to them (track end or roadside). School transport vehicles will not use private unadopted roads or tracks. It is the parent's responsibility to escort the pupil to and from their collection point. Application forms (Form PTU100) are completed by the school.

## 29 Privilege Transport

Transport provision is also made available for pupils who are not ordinarily entitled to transport. Privilege transport is provided on school transport services subject to spare seating capacity. There are 3 types of privileged transport available.

### **In-zone Privileged transport**

Pupils who attend their zoned school but are under the qualifying mileage can apply for In-zone privilege transport. If there is suitable seating capacity available and an existing route then the application should be approved, if there is not and there is a safe walking route available to the pupil, then it may be rejected. Please also note that if seating capacity is needed for a pupil who is entitled to school transport, In-zone Privilege pupils may be given written notice and removed from transport.

### **In-Zone Privilege Transport – Safety**

Pupils who attend their zoned school but do not qualify due to their residence being under the qualifying mileage can apply for In-zone privilege transport. If there is no safe walking route available to the pupil, they are guaranteed a seat on transport by applying for an In-zone Privilege pass. A pupil who is guaranteed in-zone privilege transport would not be removed to make room for a pupil who is entitled to school transport.

### **Out of Zone Privilege Transport**

There is no transport entitlement to pupils who attend a school which they are not zoned for. Pupils may apply for Out of Zone Privilege transport; pupils are required to

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meet the nearest available school transport vehicle to them, and it is the parent's responsibility to bring the pupil to the nearest collection point. Out of Zone Privilege transport pupils may be removed, with written notice, at any time for In-Zone Privilege and Entitled transport pupils. Processing of any new Out of Zone applications received prior to the start of the new term in August does not usually begin until late September. This ensures that all entitled pupils have been allocated and there is a true indication of the remaining available seats. Please have alternative arrangements in place for the start of term and in the event the application is refused.

Applications can be made by contacting your child's school. For further information, see the Council website.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/school-transport/>

or contact [school.transport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:school.transport@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

### **Local Bus/Registered School Bus Services**

Some services operate as registered bus services. These operate on a fare paying basis and pupils will be required to pay a fare to the driver or purchase a season ticket for travel. National Entitlement cards (NEC) can also be used on these services (Young Persons' -Under 22s Free Bus Travel Scheme)

## **30 Early Learning & Childcare Transport**

Transport to early learning and childcare settings will not be provided by Aberdeenshire Council.

## **31 Special Schools and Enhanced Provision**

Aberdeenshire Council may provide free transport where necessary for pupils with additional support needs who access enhanced provision or community resource hub level support. In certain cases, it will be appropriate for pupils to make their own way to school by public transport and where this is authorised, bus passes are issued. Where a pupil's address falls in the delineated area of a resourced school, and is within reasonable walking distance, the Local Authority will consult with the Community Child Health Service before deciding if free transport should be provided.

## **32 School Closure & Other Emergencies**

Head Teachers decide if and when schools should close due to bad weather or another emergency. In bad weather they will decide this after receiving information about local weather conditions. This decision can be made during any time, day or night. These guidelines outline the procedures for dealing with school closures during bad weather or other emergencies.

**If children are at school**, then we will use Groupcall to contact you by text/e-mail to advise you of the closure. Please do not phone us during this time, as we will be extremely busy with outgoing calls; you can e-mail us and we will respond as soon as possible. Pupils leaving with families must sign out first so we know who is still in the

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building and who will be on school transport. Pupils who can safely walk home will be released first, followed by pupils who use school transport.

**School transport contractors** have been told not to allow children to walk home alone from drop-off points under any circumstances during extreme weather conditions. If you can't meet or arrange for your child to be met, the school transport will return them to school or another place of safety and we will notify you.

**Public service vehicles** – drivers of these vehicles follow a specified route and keep to timetables – they cannot make special arrangements.

It is important contact details are current and the people named are available – particularly during bad weather.

If you are concerned about local weather condition, contact the school. You may wish to collect your child yourself and are free to do so provided you make arrangements with the school (see above regarding signing-out).

### **Before the start of the school day**

During bad weather some staff may not be able to get to school or bus routes may not be safe to travel on – so the school may have to close. Headteachers will advise parents and carers using the following communication tools below. We will always try to make a decision around full or partial closure by 07:00 on the day at the latest.

Out with school hours, your local radio station is a good place to find out information on school closures. The following radio stations receive updated information every 30 mins from our website:

- **Northsound 1**  
FM 96.9
- **Northsound 2**  
MW 1035 kHz
- **BBC Radio Scotland**  
FM 92.4 - 94.7MW 810 kHz
- **Moray Firth Radio**  
FM 97.4 MW 1107 kHz
- **Waves Radio**  
FM 101.2
- **Original 106 FM**

### **Twitter / X**

<http://twitter.com/aberdeenshire>

### **Aberdeenshire Council Website**

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/schools-closures/>

You also have the option to sign up to receive email alerts when your school(s) updates their closure status:

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/myAberdeenshire/>

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### **33 Storm Addresses**

When there has been severe snowstorm during the day it may be prudent for pupils who live some distance from the normal bus routes not to attempt to reach their homes but to spend the night in alternative accommodation nearer school. It is the parent's responsibility to inform school about any pupils who may be at risk in such situations and to provide the name and address of a relative or friend who is willing to provide overnight accommodation.

### **34 Change of address and Parental Contact Details**

To enable us to make easy contact with parents, the school would appreciate if any changes of address, telephone number or circumstances is amended via your [parentsportal.scot](#) account (see Menu section 'Your Account') or notified in writing to the School Office. It is also important that the school has details of an Emergency Contact should it prove impossible to get in touch with parents in the event of an emergency.

### **35 Anti-bullying Guidance**

#### **What is Bullying?**

Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children's Services define bullying as the following:

Bullying takes place when the actions of an individual or group of people cause harm to someone by taking advantage of an imbalance of power within a relationship (whether perceived or real). Bullying behaviour can be persistent and/or intentional, but often it is neither.

Bullying can be verbal, physical, mental/emotional, or cyber and is behaviour and impact. It can be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, persistent, or a one-off incident. The impact is on a person's ability to feel in control of themselves.

Bullying can be verbal, physical, emotional, or cyber. It can be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, persistent, or a one-off incident. People who experience bullying behaviour feel vulnerable and/or socially isolated.

#### **What will the school do about it?**

Schools should promote consistency of response to instances of bullying behaviour using a 6-step approach. They will:

1. Record the Incident
  2. Speak to the individuals involved having frank and honest dialogue
  3. Speak to parents
  4. Utilise Restorative approaches
  5. Monitor the situation
  6. Review and increase response accordingly
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More information can be found in our School's anti-bullying guidance at <http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/b9bb8c35-50b7-401e-a7e3-30833f69cc73/resource/8d5ff96d-775f-4516-9f6b-c15ce425f407/download/cusersspellascdocumentsecs-002-anti-bullying-policy-2018.pdf>.

and

[Promoting-Respect-and-Equalities-Policy\\_Updated-Aug-23v2-002-2.pdf](http://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/Promoting-Respect-and-Equalities-Policy_Updated-Aug-23v2-002-2.pdf)  
([gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk](http://gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk))

## 36 School Meals

### Secondary School Lunches

Our academies offer a breakfast, morning break and lunch service. This is very different from the service in our Primary schools and is popular with Academy pupils.

We also provide an online pre-order system (Fusion) that works alongside our normal counter service. Academy pupils can order their lunch straight from their mobile device and then pick it up from a designated collection point at lunchtime. Fusion Mobile also allows pupils to check their balance. To place an order funds must be available on their account.

### Secondary school prices

To view the available options and their prices see the link below.

View the

- <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/media/27407/secondarypupilpricelist.pdf>

There are many benefits of having lunch at the Academy:

- A delicious and varied menu offering great value
- Choice of main courses each day
- A varied range of snacks and hand held options
- A range of sandwiches, salads and fresh fruit are available

Additional information regarding Secondary school meals can be obtained via this link

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/meals/secondary-school-meals/>

### Online payments system

We are encouraging parents/carers to register for online school payments to eliminate handling of cash. Parentsportal.scot is the recommended way to register to access all school payments including school meals.

Parentsportal.scot is securely linked to a myAberdeenshire account and to register follow this link

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<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/parents-portal/>

Please ensure there are always sufficient funds on your child's account prior to sending them for school meals. There is a formal debt recovery process for accounts that fall into debt.

If you are having difficulty making payments, please contact the school office as we are here to support families and will do whatever we can to assist you.

#### Free School Meals Information

Am I entitled to free school meals?

Click on the link to find information that explains the free school entitlement and how to go about it.

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/free-school-meals/>

If you have difficulties obtaining access to free school meals, please speak with your school and we will work together to provide assistance.

If you require any further information regarding School Catering send a message to this email address - [schoolmeals@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:schoolmeals@aberdeenshire.gov.uk).

## 37 Healthcare & Medical

Every child's health and welfare is very important to the school. Parents who have any concerns should let school know by telephoning or writing in. Alternatively, parents can inform the Health Visitor or their own GP. Parents are requested to let the school know of any hospital appointments.

Parents/carers are requested to keep children at home for 24-48 hours if the child has diarrhoea, flu-like symptoms or is clearly unwell.

Always seeks a GP's advice before sending a child back to school. Please remember that other children can be vulnerable to infection.

The school is fortunate to have a nurse in attendance to undertake Health Interviews and provide advice on health matters for pupils. The school doctor will play a vital role in monitoring a child's health and well-being.

Although our medical staff provide help and advice as appropriate, all pupils must be registered with a doctor in general practice who should be consulted about health matters as they arise. Parents should provide us with the name and telephone number of their child's doctor and an up-to-date emergency contact for themselves in case it becomes necessary for a child to be sent home during school hours because of illness.

Aberdeenshire Community Dental Service inspect P1 and P7 children in schools as part of the National Dental Inspection Programme. Written parental consent is not required for dental inspections, but parents will be informed in writing approximately one week before the inspection date.

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(S) Immunisation against Diphtheria, Tetanus and Poliomyelitis is provided for all pupils during the third year. If a pupil is unable to keep the school appointment, parents are advised to request immunisation from their own doctor.

HPV Immunisation to protect against cervical cancer is offered to all girls in S2. This is a series of 3 injections over a six-month period commencing in September each year. A catch-up programme is also in place for girls who miss any of their injections.

Most pupils will at some time have a medical condition that may affect their participation in school activities. For many this will be short term, perhaps finishing a course of medication to combat an infection.

Other pupils have medical conditions that, if not properly managed, could limit their access to education. Such pupils are regarded as having health care needs. Most children with health care needs can attend school regularly and, with some support from the school can access most school activities. However, school staff may need to take extra care in supervising some activities to ensure that pupils are not put at risk.

Planning formats may include either:

- Individual Pupil Protocol (IPP) (Med form 7).
- Health Care Plan written by Health professionals for very specific medical needs.

A risk assessment should also be completed.

The above can help schools to identify the necessary safety measures to support pupils with medical needs and ensure that they and others are not put at risk.

Please find the link below to our policy and guidance: Supporting Children and Young People with Healthcare needs and managing medicines in Educational Establishments

<https://asn-aberdeenshire.org/policies-and-guidance/>

Sunscreen - As children are outdoors for learning and for play, parents should apply this prior to sending children to school or nursery. School staff do not supply, nor do they apply, sunscreen creams.

If your child has long term medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes, which may require on-going support, this should be fully discussed with the school. In certain cases specific training of staff about a child's treatment may need to be given. In addition, some children have conditions which may require occasional staff intervention e.g. severe allergic conditions such as anaphylaxis.

## **38 Exclusion**

The foundation for schools, learning establishments and education authorities is a whole school ethos of prevention, early intervention and support against a background which promotes positive relationships, learning and behaviour. Where pupils who display behaviour, whereby attendance at the school would be likely to be seriously detrimental to order and discipline in the school or the educational well-being of the pupils there, and where other forms of support have proved unsuccessful, the Authority

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exclusion policy may apply. For further information on exclusions contact the school or go to:

<https://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/council-policies-education/resource/9e393d1a-2113-44c8-afb6-a517f2d495b6>

### **39 Educational Visits**

We offer various educational visits during the school year. We believe that ‘hands on’ experiences greatly enhance a child’s education, while also helping to make the necessary links between learning in school and life outwith school. Staff members and parent volunteers provide supervision to standards laid down by Aberdeenshire Education & Children’s Services. We give parents as much notification as possible regarding visits their children will participate in.

There are grants available through the Aberdeenshire Educational Trust to help with the cost of school trips. For further information go to:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/educational-grants/>

### **40 Instrumental Tuition**

From Primary 4 onwards, tuition is available for a range of musical instruments. Most disciplines are taught in the secondary schools however not all disciplines are available in primary schools due to limited resources. Orchestral string instruments are not normally available to beginners at secondary level. Tuition is subject to availability.

Guide to starting stage by discipline:

- Woodwind - P6
- Brass - P5
- Violin or viola - P4
- Cello or double bass - P4
- Percussion - S1
- Piano or keyboard - P4
- Guitar - P4
- Bagpipes - P4
- Pipe band drum - P4

As of August 2021, we are unable to offer tuition on more than one instrument to pupils.

#### **Music tuition fees**

Scottish Government Ministers and COSLA leaders agreed to the removal of fees for the academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23 which has been supported by funding from the Scottish Government to allow existing levels of provision to be maintained.

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Funding for 2023/24 has been confirmed by the Scottish Government, therefore there will be no fees for instrumental tuition during this academic session.

<https://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/music-lessons/youth-music-sessions/>

Aberdeenshire Youth Music Sessions (AYMS) provide ensemble music-making opportunities for children outside of the school day.

For further information go to:

<http://aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/ims/>

## **41 (S) Education Maintenance Allowance**

An Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment paid directly to young people from low income families to enable them to stay on in further education at school or college after they reach statutory school leaving age. This is funded by the Scottish Executive. Further information on EMA's and how to apply can be found here:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/assistance/ema/>

## **42 Public Liability Insurance**

Aberdeenshire Council holds third party liability insurance, which indemnifies the Council against claims from third parties, e.g. parents on behalf of pupils who have suffered injury, illness, loss or damage arising from the negligence of the Council or its employees. In these circumstances all claims are handled on behalf of the Council by external Insurers and Claims Handling Agents and compensation is dealt with on a strict legal liability basis. This means that there is no automatic compensation, the Council must be found negligent in order for any compensation to be offered by our Insurers and / or Claims Handling Agents.

Whilst the school will exercise reasonable care for pupils' property, it is inevitable that property will be lost or damaged from time to time. Pupils' property which is worn or brought to school or left in bags/cloakrooms is at their own risk. This includes but is not restricted to personal items such as jewellery, phones/tablets watches and bicycles. Aberdeenshire Council cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage unless caused by negligence of the school or staff.

## **43 School Off Site Excursion Insurance**

Aberdeenshire Council has in place a School Excursion Insurance policy, whereby both pupils and teachers are covered for offsite activities / trips both within the UK and abroad (offsite meaning off the school premises). The policy covers medical expenses, loss of baggage, cancellation (as specified in the policy) , curtailment and change of itinerary (along with other sundry benefits) etc. for worldwide trips and adventurous activities (including winter sports), subject to policy terms and conditions being met.

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If personal items such as jewellery, phones/tablets, watches etc. are taken on a school trip then these are taken at an individual's own risk and are not covered under the policy, unless damage or loss is caused by an Aberdeenshire Council employee.

Personal / individual cover is seen as a parental responsibility and it is your decision as to whether you feel it is appropriate to obtain this.

Where trips are booked and have subsequently to be cancelled because of any Covid related event then insurance will not be valid. This will of course be reviewed periodically.

**Please be advised, however, that the Duty of Care aspect below is not insurance related:**

### **Duty of Care**

The Authority has a duty of care in respect of pupils in its charge during school hours and as such must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of all primary and secondary pupils. This general duty of care continues if the children go home by way of school transport and ends when the child gets off the bus, at which point the parents then become responsible.

## **44 Data we hold and what we do with it.**

The UK's Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 enacted the EU GDPR's requirements into UK law and, with effect from 1 January 2021, [the DPPEC \(Data Protection, Privacy and Electronic Communications \(Amendments etc\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2019](#) amended the DPA 2018 and merged it with the requirements of the EU GDPR to form a new, UK-specific data protection regime that works in a UK context after Brexit as part of the DPA 2018 and is known as the 'UK GDPR'.

Aberdeenshire Council is committed to full compliance with these regulations. When you are asked for information by Education & Children's Services, we will tell you why we are collecting the information, how long we will hold it and the legal basis for gathering this information. A Privacy Notice has been issued to all schools relating to the information we hold on yourself and your child/ward.

## **45 The information we collect from you**

Aberdeenshire Council collects personal data and information about your child in order to provide your child with a school education.

We will normally only share information (other than in child protection situations) in order to provide services for your child as part of his/her school education. We collect special category data about your child and process this because it is in the substantial public interest.

The information held by Aberdeenshire Council is used to assess, plan, coordinate, deliver, and quality assure the education services to your child. The Council does not use an automated process for making decisions about your child or the services required; decisions are made with you. We will keep this information for a period of 5 years from the maximum school leaving age of your child, as required to by The

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Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003, unless we have a legal responsibility to keep the information for a longer period of time.

## 46 Your Data, Your Rights

You have legal rights about the way the Council handles and uses your data. More information about all of the rights you have is available on our website at: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/online/legal-notice/data-protection/>

Alternatively, you can contact the Council's Data Protection Officer by emailing [DataProtection@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:DataProtection@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) or in writing to: The Data Protection Officer, Town House, 34 Low Street, Banff, AB45 1AY.

You also have the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, ([www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)). They are the body responsible for making sure organisations like the Council handle your data lawfully.

The Council is required, where it is the data controller, to act in a transparent manner by providing information to individuals about how it will collect and use their personal data. Privacy Notices are an essential part of complying with this requirement. The Privacy Notice must provide information to individuals in a concise, transparent, intelligible, and easily accessible way and must be written in clear and plain language. All Education & Children's Services Privacy notices are available on our website at: <http://publications.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/dataset/education-privacy-notice>.

## 47 Parental Access to Records

Access Requests are the formal process by which individuals can seek information held about them (or their children) by the council. The requests can be broad, in terms of everything that is held, or quite specific - everything held by a specific department, establishment, team or individual. We have a legal requirement to provide the information under the Data Protection Act 2018. An Access Request is wider than an Educational Record in that it will include all personal data held about a child not just their educational record. Further information can be found at:

<https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/>

The Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003 means that you can get access to your child's records. Details of the regulations and process for obtaining information specific to pupils are available by contacting the school directly or can be found at:

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/my-school/general-school-information/my-childs-record/>

## 48 Information Sharing

In terms of effective communication, including sharing relevant and proportionate information, where appropriate, Aberdeenshire Council in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and Human Rights Act 1998 adheres to this as part of our current routine practice.

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## 49 ScotXed

ScotXed is a term used to represent the Scottish Government's Education Analytical Services, which is part of the Scottish Government's Learning Directorate.

ScotXed have legal powers to request data with regards all children and young people being educated in Scotland's schools, with the information collected about pupils and staff in schools used to help to improve education across Scotland. They do not collect the names of your child/children and they do not receive any contact details the school may have for you (e.g. telephone number, email address), and no information is published or made publicly available that would allow your child/children to be identified. More information on what and why they need data about your child/children, along with how they collect and store it is available in their Education Statistics Privacy Notices for parents and carers:

<https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/ScotXed/SchoolEducation/ESPrivacyNotices>

If you have any concerns around the national ScotXed data collections, you can:

- Contact the Scottish Government's data protection officer, [DataProtectionOfficer@gov.scot](mailto:DataProtectionOfficer@gov.scot), or
  - The Head of Education Analytical Services, Mick Wilson, [mick.wilson@gov.scot](mailto:mick.wilson@gov.scot), or
  - You can write to them at Education Analytical Services, Area 2A-North, Victoria Quay, Leith, EH6 6QQ.
  - Alternatively, complaints may be raised with the Information Commissioners Office at [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk).
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# Further Information

The links below take you to the most up to date information on these topics.

## **School Improvement Plan**

[Standard & Quality Improvement Plans | The Gordon Schools](#)

## **Members of Parental Groups**

Parent Council Chairperson Mrs J Reed, Treasurer Mrs H Kings

For more information about getting involved in the Parent Council or email: [piggordonschools@gmail.com](mailto:piggordonschools@gmail.com) & see: [Documents | The Gordon Schools](#)

## **Stats for Attainment**

The Scottish Government have developed a “School information dashboard” that provides a range of statistical information about each publicly funded school in Scotland. This includes school attainment information about Curriculum for Excellence Levels Achieved (for primary and secondary schools) and attainment in National Qualifications (for secondary schools).

The dashboards can be consulted:

<https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/>

[Secondary School Information Dashboard \(shinyapps.io\)](#)

(Choose Aberdeenshire & The Gordon Schools)

## **School Events Calendar & Holidays (including Assessment Calendar)**

[TGS-Family-Calendar-2023-24.pdf \(gordonschools.aberdeenshire.sch.uk\)](#)

## **Aberdeenshire Council School Holiday Calendar**

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/school-term-dates/>

## **Map of Catchment Area**

<https://gis.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/maps/map.aspx?geolocate=true&resolution=2&initialDialog=localKnowledgeDialog>

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