



3rd December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

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Covid Update

We now continue to maintain a very low Covid rate in school, which is a great relief (thank you for all the continued vigilance) and means that we are able to continue to plan to hold our 'Christmas events' as intended in a Covid-safe way. We cross our fingers that this will not change over the next couple of weeks.

Looking forward to the New Year, schools have been asked to test all students once 'on site' at the start of the new term in January, to try and 'pick up' asymptomatic positive cases on return from the Christmas break. Of course, we want to support the safe return to school for everyone, but we also want to limit any further disruption to learning. As such, there is a strong possibility that we will ask students to come onto the school site on Tuesday 4th January (the INSET day) to carry out a test 'on site' before the start of term on Wednesday 5th January. Please pencil this in the diary as it will be vital for as many students as possible to attend on that day. If we do this, we will make alternative arrangements for those that are unable to attend to be tested on that day. We will update you prior to the end of term on the exact arrangements.

Toilet Breaks During Lessons

We are seeing an increasing number of instances where students are asking to come out of lessons to go to the toilet. In a few cases, students appear to be arranging to meet friends when they should be in class.

We are therefore introducing some slightly tighter guidelines on this to ensure that students are only leaving lesson to go to the toilet if absolutely necessary. Students should therefore ensure that they use the toilet and fill up water bottles during break and lunch.

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Where absolutely necessary, students will be allowed out of lessons, but unless students have a medical pass this will be more restricted (such as not in the first half hour of a lesson after lunch or break) and students will not be able to leave the classroom to fill up water bottles.

Where there is a genuine medical need for a child to use the toilet regularly or urgently (long-term or short-term) and a toilet pass is not already held, please contact your child's Head of House to discuss further.

Thank you for reinforcing these expectations with your child.

Student Christmas lunch (Years 12 & 13 - Tuesday 14th December, Years 7 to 11 - Wednesday 15th December)

Year 7-11 students wishing to book a Christmas lunch should collect a ticket from any till point in the dining areas up to Friday December 10th to secure their booking. On the day students must hand in their ticket with their Full name and Year group written on the reverse. The cost of the meal will be £2.35 which includes a main meal, pudding, and a cup of squash. Funds will be deducted from the student's ParentPay account at this time, in the same way as they normally pay for their meals.

For students not wishing to have a Christmas lunch, a larger varied serviced will be available in the Grab and Go canteen.

Please also note that on Tuesday 14th December, Years 7 to 11 will only have access to Grab and Go in the Canteen, due to Years 12 & 13 having their Christmas lunch in the Dining Hall. Sixth Form students are not required to purchase a ticket in advance.

Uniform reminder for Term 3

As we approach Term 3 it is timely to remind parents/carers about uniform and expectations. Below are a few reminders of what is expected:

- Trousers can be fitted, but must not be tight fitting (as leggings would be) around the lower leg *.
- Girls are able to wear school branded shorts and tracksuit bottoms.
- Footwear must be black polishable. Cloth material footwear is not permitted.
- Skirts/Shorts must sit just above the knee. It is not permitted to roll up skirts or shorts.
- PE leggings must be navy blue and either Gordano branded or non-branded. Black leggings are not permitted.
- Shirts must be tucked in at all times.
- If wearing school uniform shorts/skirts, socks/tights must be grey or black.
- Uniform must be either full school uniform or full PE/Dance Kit on PE/Dance days. A mix of both is not permitted - e.g. Blazer, shirt, tie and leggings. (The only exception will be a school hoodie with normal uniform during the colder terms, as outlined below).

*This is the deciding factor in whether trousers are meeting expectations. One of the pairs of trousers linked in our July letter has caused some confusion for parents, which we acknowledge has been unhelpful.

Reminder - from January 2022 the trousers in the link (originally included on the list of acceptable trousers) will no longer be allowed:

<https://www.next.co.uk/style/st398331/322512#322512>

Students may continue to wear PE/Dance kit on the days they have PE or Dance but may change at the start / end of the lesson should they choose to.

Please also ensure that if students choose to have piercings, hair dye, false nails, nail varnish etc, that these are removed or hair/nails sorted before returning to school in term 3. Should students come to school without any of the above resolved, parents/carers will be asked to collect their child and resolve the issue as soon as possible. Should a piercing be unremovable due to infection, we will need medical professional confirmation of this, otherwise it will need to be removed. Please note that clear nose studs are NOT permitted.

Mask Reminder

We are still unfortunately seeing instances where a few students are arriving without masks, or not wearing them as required during the school day. Could you please remind your children that they should be wearing masks when moving around inside. This is particularly important at the moment, with the emergence of the new Omicron variant. They may be removed once in classrooms, but not whilst lining up in corridors. Please send your child to school with a spare mask as they can get misplaced during the school day.

Kooth

Kooth.com have a number of mental health and well-being resources that may be of use to families in the run up to, and over, the holiday period.

- The South West Team will be running a Parent and Carer session on 8th December for any Parents and Carers who would like to know more about Kooth. Places can be booked using this link:
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/198299648587>
- Kooth have also created a fantastic support brochure for parents and carers that can be found at
<https://cloud.brandmaster.com/shared/assets/ec06b1fa82d6f5234a8c>
- Christmas live chat opening hours are here:
<https://cloud.brandmaster.com/shared/assets/b199de8ff17a72dd6953>
- What's on at Kooth in December can be found here:
<https://cloud.brandmaster.com/shared/assets/3ec1eab39c9feb189309>

Please do encourage your child to use these valuable resources should they need to do so.

Young Carers

You may not be aware but there is support available for students who are young carers. A young carer is someone under 18 who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled, has a mental health condition or misuses drugs or alcohol. They may not directly support someone who is ill but might take an active role in looking after siblings, doing housework/shopping or listening to someone who is a full-time carer.

If your child, or someone you know is a young carer please let the school know by contacting their Assistant Head of House / Year and we can put them in touch with the Young Carers Trust. You can find more information about this trust by clicking on the link <https://carers.org/about-caring/about-young-carers>


Assistant Heads of House / Year:

- Year 7 - Mr Hance chance@gordanoschool.org.uk
- Biscay - Mrs Lewis rlewis@gordanoschool.org.uk
- Cromarty - Mrs Mooney kmooney@gordanoschool.org.uk
- Fitzroy - Mrs Mabey nmabey@gordanoschool.org.uk or Mrs Curme ncurme@gordanoschool.org.uk
- Lundy - Mrs Whaley gwhaley@gordanoschool.org.uk
- Portland - Mrs Robinson erobinson@gordanoschool.org.uk
- Shannon - Miss Dolling cdolling@gordanoschool.org.uk

It has been a long term, but day after day our students still show their customary positive engagement, resilience and humour. In particular, our Year 11 students have been brilliant in the way that they have tackled their mock examinations this week, and we wish them luck for the remaining ones next week.

As we approach the last fortnight of a tiring term, positivity and patience becomes more important than ever. Thank you for all you can do to continue to encourage this.

With best wishes.



Tom Inman
Headteacher