

AUTUMN TERM 2021 COVID GUIDANCE – SENIOR SCHOOL

Dear students,

The start of a new school year is always a very exciting time for us all. Mixed with the inevitable nerves that many of those joining Gordonstoun this term will no doubt feel, there is the anticipation for everyone of what lies ahead in the next twelve months at our wonderful school.

I am pleased to say that, after so long when it feels like we have been having to impose tighter and tighter restrictions on you, the situation in Scotland is such that this term we can genuinely look forward to gradually getting back to something much more like 'normal' Gordonstoun life. Having said that, as you will see when you read this guide, we have been given very clear instructions by the Scottish Government that we must keep a number of sensible safety measures in place for the first few weeks. Thereafter, we are hoping that most restrictions will be removed all together.

Please read this guide carefully and be sure you know what to expect when you return. If you have any questions, do email your Houseparent who should be able to help you with them. As in previous terms, we are relying on you to work with us and help us to manage things so that everyone has a good time and we keep each other safe.

I and the rest of the staff body are really looking forward to having you with us for what I am sure will be a wonderful and exciting year.

Best wishes.

Mr Devey

MAIN CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS GUIDANCE ISSUED

- There is no longer a requirement for bubbles and households
- There is no requirement for social distancing amongst students, although we will try to minimise large student crowds, especially indoors
- We can now operate a full music, drama, dance, PE, sport and outdoor education programme, including fixtures
- The refectory will return to a pre-covid approach, but with a focus on good hand hygiene before eating (you must wash your hands before every meal)
- Large groups will not need to isolate if there is a positive case
- Masks no longer need to be worn in and around your boarding houses, but do still need to be worn in classrooms and in any indoor settings when moving around, like the Refectory
- Chapel will return, with singing, though masks will need to be worn throughout

THE FIRST TEN DAYS BACK

In order to comply with Government guidance, we are asking that:

- all students have a negative PCR test 1-3 days before returning
- you only return if you are symptom-free
- you all to take an LFD test when you arrive prior to going to your boarding house, and daily for the first ten days after that
- those arriving from amber list countries will also have a daily temperature test
- there will not be Elgin leave or visits to the Duffus Post Office in this period

AFTER THAT - BASIC PRINCIPLES

We will be following the three V's:

VACCINATION – we will ensure that any student who is eligible gets access to a vaccination

VENTILATION – we will be keeping windows and doors in classrooms, the refectory and boarding houses open as much as possible

VIGILANCE – we will ensure that we all stay vigilant to any signs of Covid-19 in our community and deal with it quickly and safely if it appears

...as well as:

BASIC HYGIENE

- Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitiser where it's provided, or carry your own
- Don't share food, drink, cups, utensils, toiletries, make-up, towels or clothes
- Keep your room and possessions clean and tidy
- Follow guidance on cleaning shared facilities before and after use (desks, toilets etc)

WEAR A FACE-COVERING

- At all times when in a building, but this is not needed when you are in your boarding house

STAY HEALTHY

- Eat well and drink lots of water
- Get plenty of sleep
- Exercise regularly
- Get plenty of fresh air
- Tell a member of staff if you feel unwell

MORE DETAIL ON BASIC PRINCIPLES

Hand washing - Good personal hygiene is at the core of all Covid-19 advice around the world. You should get in to the habit of washing your hands regularly, and this washing should last for at least 20 seconds and involve soap and hot water. You should always wash your hands before leaving the boarding house in the morning, before every meal, and every time you have been to the bathroom.

Hand sanitiser - In between these times, you should take advantage of the hand sanitiser stations that are all around School. You will find stations in every building you use, and you should get in to the habit of squeezing some hand sanitiser on to your hands every time you enter a new classroom or building.

Don't share things – There's a real risk of transmitting any infection by sharing items. It is natural that you'll want to share things with your friends, but we need you to avoid this as it is a very easy way for any virus to spread. Please therefore be very conscious of having everything you need to carry out your daily routines at the start of each day, both in the house and classroom, including your face covering and a fully charged laptop, so that you don't have to borrow things.

Keep your areas tidy – Please help our cleaning teams to do their job effectively and safely by keeping your own personal areas tidy. At the start of every morning, before you leave the house, please make sure your room and desk area are really tidy, with any clutter cleared away. Cleaning staff will be visiting houses regularly to give them a further clean, but you can really help them by leaving desks, floors and beds clear.

Clean things after use – again, we can help make things easier for everyone if we take responsibility for cleaning areas after we have visited them. You may, for example, need to help your teachers with some of the pre and post-lesson cleaning. We are also asking that you wipe down handles etc in bathrooms after you have used them, and trays and tables in the refectory when you have finished your meal. There are wipes in many locations around school to help you to do this, but please get in to this habit from the start so that it is easier for everyone. Obviously, please then put the wipe you have used in one of the many bins which are provided for this purpose.

Open windows – all the research that has been conducted in to Covid-19 shows that well ventilated rooms help prevent the spread of the virus. We will therefore be ensuring that there is plenty of fresh air in every classroom and building being used. On cooler days therefore please wear appropriate layers of your uniform to ensure that you are warm enough...we won't be closing windows because you forgot your jumper for example! We will also be encouraging boarders to sleep with windows open.

Spend time outdoors – we are very fortunate indeed that, at Gordonstoun, we have 200 acres of beautiful Scottish countryside that is our home. Given the advice that fresh air is good for us, we encourage you to spend plenty of time outside. Why not, within your household, go for a walk on one of the paths around School, or find somewhere quiet to sit and chat together? The more time you spend outdoors in your free time the less likely it is that you or others in your household will become unwell.

Respect other people's space – we all have our own levels of anxiety related to Covid-19. For some it may feel like something that they are very distant from and the anxiety is relatively small; for others they may know people who have been ill, or have come from areas where there has been, or still is, a very significant risk of catching the disease, and so we need to respect the fact that many people will want plenty of distance. Please therefore read the signs...if someone wants a little more space, please give it to them. We also need to be particularly respectful of the space between staff and students, and you will notice that staff will keep their distance as much as possible within the guidelines just to protect you and them.

Wear a face covering - when in all classrooms and when moving around indoors (except your boarding house).

Eat well and drink lots of water – a well known English phrase is 'we are what we eat'. It follows therefore that, if we want to keep healthy, we need to eat healthily. We have a wonderful refectory which provides us with lots of fresh food every day. Please try to think

carefully about what you choose to eat. Make sure you take lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, and avoid too much sugar. Drink water regularly, and we would advise you to carry your own water bottle which you can fill up at the many drink stations around School. You will also need your water bottle for break, which will now take place outside the refectory (years 9-11) and on the South Lawn (years 12 and 13)

Get plenty of sleep – although as teenagers you may feel sleep, and in particular getting to bed in good time, isn't something you are too keen on, a good night's sleep is a vital component of a healthy body. Trying to get at least 8 hours of good quality sleep each night is a good target for you, and many of you will need more than that. Listen to your bodies, don't get over-tired!

Exercise regularly – regular exercise is good for our bodies and minds. As well as keeping us physically fit and better able to fight off disease, it helps relieve stress and worry. Try to make the most of our beautiful campus regularly. Use the available courts, run, ride bikes, walk etc. If you try to do something every day (as the UK government has encouraged throughout lockdown), you will feel great, work better, and sleep like a log!

Get plenty of fresh air – as has already been mentioned, fresh air and coronavirus are not best friends! If you spend lots of time outside or in rooms with windows open, you reduce the chances of catching or spreading the virus.

Tell a member of staff if you feel unwell – we are all going to have to continue to be very honest with each other about this. It is tempting, if you feel a bit off colour, to think that you'll just battle on and it won't be anything to be concerned about. Whilst this is probably the case, we need to nevertheless think about the rest of the community in the current climate, and you should tell an adult as soon as you can if you start to feel unwell. This is particularly the case if you get any of the following symptoms:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

Lateral Flow Testing - this will usually be on Mondays & Thursdays. If you haven't yet completed the consent form (if you are over 16), please do this. The consent form is attached to this email. If you are under 16 and your parents haven't yet filled it in on your behalf, please remind them.