



# Bridge of Don Academy

## School Handbook 2023-24



## Contact

### Address

Bridge of Don Academy

Braehead Way

Bridge of Don

Aberdeen

AB22 8RR

### Telephone

01224 707583

### Email

[bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk)



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## Welcome to Bridge of Don Academy

I am delighted to welcome you to the school handbook of Bridge of Don Academy, which has been created to help you with information on all aspects of the school. This will help you to support your child's learning and ensure the smooth running of the school.

The school website will also provide you with important reference information on Bridge of Don Academy. Although its aim is to be as informative as possible, you may still have a number of questions or issues you wish to discuss. In such instances, do not hesitate to contact the school office staff who will make sure you are put in contact with the most appropriate person to deal with your request.

If you are new to the area, or are planning to move to the area in the near future, you may also wish to visit the school where you will meet some of the staff and pupils as they work within the building. Visiting during the school day will let you get a feel for the school and the positive ethos which previous visitors have noted.

Although its aim is to be as informative as possible, you may still have a number of questions or issues you wish to discuss. In such instances, do not hesitate to contact the school office staff who will make sure you are put in contact with the most appropriate person to deal with your request.

**Jill Cruickshank**

Head Teacher

# Bridge of Don Academy

## Contexts of the School

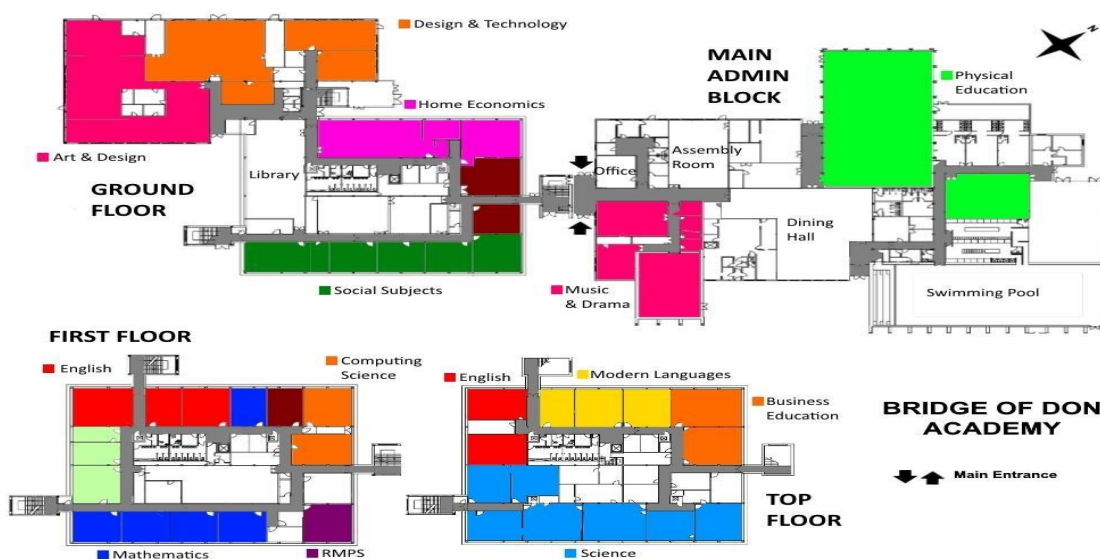
Bridge of Don Academy is a six-year secondary school which includes an Enhanced Provision Space for seven young people with targeted/specialist needs. Serving the area to the North of Aberdeen, it has within its catchment the communities of Bridge of Don, Balmedie, Potterton and Belhelvie. Young people living in the communities in Aberdeenshire are zoned for Bridge of Don Academy; approximately 350 learners are in our catchment but live in Aberdeenshire. As of the last census in September 2023, 140 learners had additional support needs and 30 (5.2 %) learners were registered for free school meals, the latter figure has increased over the years. We have increasingly effective links with our associated primaries which include Balmedie School (Aberdeenshire). The school attracts a considerable number of out of zone placing requests meaning that our SIMD profile varies. Attendance is just above the national picture and exclusions are minimal: a reflection of our inclusive approaches to supporting learning and positive behaviour.

At Bridge of Don Academy for academic session 2023-2024 we have currently 48 FTE (Full Time Equivalent) members of teaching staff, including 7 probation teachers, and a further 5.5 FTE pupil support assistants. Across the school we have 10 Faculty Heads, 4 Principal Teachers of Guidance and a teacher of Behaviour Support. In the course of this academic year we plan to appoint a second teacher of Behaviour Support and a Transition ASG Teacher.

## Location

The school campus is shared with a neighbouring primary, Braehead School. Also on the campus is St Columba’s Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic Church. The school is on an elevated site with extensive views over Aberdeen and the North Sea. The school’s playing fields and Westfield Park are adjacent to the campus.

The school is well regarded by its community and local families are very proud of it. The school community includes Bridge of Don and the villages to the north such as Balmedie, Potterton, Whitestripes and Belhelvie. Free transport is provided for pupils who are zoned for Bridge of Don Academy and live more than three miles from the school.



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Placing Request for Bridge of Don Academy

The school's catchment area can viewed online at:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-andhttps://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/find-schoolchildcare/find-school>

Families living outside the school's catchment zone can make an application via the Aberdeen City Council website at:

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-andhttps://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/apply-school-placechildcare/apply-school-place>

Bridge of Don Academy is a Community School. Many community groups make use of the school building during the school day and in the evening. Details of the programme can be found online at:

<http://www.bodcommunitycentre.co.uk/>

## **Our School Values**

The school's values are colloquially known as our BODA Bs

*Be Respectful, Be honest, Be caring, Be Your Best.*

These are embedded with parents, pupils and staff and are highlighted and regularly promoted, we plan to review the vision with all stakeholders this year, formulating a vision that will allow us to promote what Bridge of Don Academy want for all of our learners:

*Ensuring all learners leave school having attained and achieved to the best of their potential.*

Various aspects of moral, social and cultural issues are dealt with at various stages across the whole range of subjects and in assemblies. A planned programme of assemblies allows us to reinforce our school values. We are recognised by our many visitors as having a strong and positive school ethos which gives a strong platform to build on when comes to working with our young learners.

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## **Vision, Values and Skills**

Over time we have established and embedded a set of values with all stakeholders. Our values are well understood by young people, staff and parents/carers; however, our vision is less well articulated. Our SIP this year focuses on work with shareholders to define a shared **vision** that can be understood by all and will become a fundamental aspect of the schools identity. This will help to articulate our common purpose: the vision statement will define our “WHY?”.

Through regular link meetings, Senior Leaders work closely with Principal teachers to evaluate the evidence and data which supports decision making on priorities and planning for improvement. This activity is supported by regular meetings between DHTS and HT and feeds into the attainment review process. Staff have demonstrated their commitment to school improvement by engaging fully in the improvement planning process at faculty level and through participation in whole school professional learning. This will move the school forward and we continue to strive towards a collegiate approach to our school improvement journey.

Having had a settled Senior Leadership team for the preceding decade, this next year will see a new team in place and developing. Significant change to the Senior Leadership Team personnel and to roles, remits and responsibilities will require greater focus on peer support structures and professional learning opportunities. Building leadership capacity at all levels by offering the opportunity to lead whole school initiatives and projects will be key moving forward. Our working group framework will also facilitate this: the working groups have been created in line with our core Qis and are pivotal in delivering outcomes necessary for school improvement. In addition, the planning and implementation of all initiatives and procedures will include clear guidance on roles and responsibilities that will allow for accountability at all levels.

This year the leadership of change section of our SIP was informed by feedback collated from our young people, staff & parents/carers identifying key areas for change: Schools Values and Vision, Positive Behavior, Learning and Teaching, Equality and Diversity.

## **2.2 Curriculum**

Over time we have increased steadily the curriculum offer to provide flexible learning pathways. This has led to an increase in attainment through our ambition to meet the needs and aspirations of all our learners. There has been a significant increase in young people undertaking qualifications in school that are not the traditional Higher/National pathway: Skills for Work Level 5s; NPAs Level 4/5; Group Awards Level 5; Leadership Award Level 6. We have identified further areas for increasing the breadth of offer: for example, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 6 Literacy is consistently behind our VC in 4 of the last 5 years and at present the only pathway to achieving Level 6 Literacy is Higher English. Overall only 23% of our young people go on to Higher Education with the rest undertaking alternative pathways meaning that our focus moving forward is to review the current curriculum rationale and offer to make sure that it supports all learners in their aspirations and chosen pathways. There has been a significant increase in young people undertaking curriculum offers within ABZ Campus, NESCol and Consortia arrangements and/or engaging with bespoke work experience opportunities. Young people can access the courses that are appropriate to their particular pathway because the construction of the timetable uses a free choice model.

The curriculum review will be a major focus for this session. This will involve all stakeholders in shaping our curriculum. We will continue to use attainment data and stakeholder feedback to review and evaluate the impact of our curriculum going forward and make changes as appropriate. Our curriculum design and offer are an opportunity to align with our new vision which permeates all the work that we do at Bridge of Don Academy. Our curriculum offer has been and will continue to be





based on research and ongoing collaboration between staff, young people, community partners and families.

Our aim is to establish a curriculum for learners that:

- challenges and supports them to reach their full potential
- is an individualised learning plan suited to their personal, academic and vocational needs
- supports their pathway plan and allows them to follow a pathway leading into a positive destination post school.

Work will be done this session on reviewing and updating our curriculum rationale. In addition, there will be ongoing dialogue with Faculties to discuss and develop curricular offers that will provide pathways that meet the needs of young people who are not aiming for a route through Higher Education.

### **2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment**

Throughout academic session 2022-2023 we focused on gathering data to have robust evidence to support our evaluation and next steps in relation to QI 2.3. We gathered evidence through various activities including Faculty observations, Learning walks, learner conversations and pupil and parent voice.

Learning and Teaching remains an important priority for the school. Staff are continuing to develop approaches to learning and teaching considering pace, challenge and differentiation to allow pupils to reach their full potential. Staff recognise that positive relationships and nurturing principles are fundamental to supporting wellbeing and creating environments conducive to high quality learning and teaching.

Staff work hard to prepare lessons that provide opportunities for learning that is independent, collaborative and active. Lessons are structured effectively in almost all lessons and there is clear progression from prior learning to future learning. In almost all lessons tasks are linked to the purpose of the learning. However, in less than half the classes visited pupils were regularly engaged in learning that was active. This has an impact on pace, challenge and participation. Lessons are structured and planned well, however, the execution does not always achieve the high quality learning and teaching experience that it could and so has become a focus area for this session.

Staff use a variety of assessment (formative and summative) approaches to allow learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts across the curriculum. The assessments used provide reliable evidence which we use to report on the progress our young people. We have shared expectations for standards to be achieved and have established arrangements for moderation in the senior phase across the school and within the local Authority. Data from SNSA (standardised assessments) is used by Maths and English Faculties as a baseline for their subsequent monitoring and tracking of pupil progress in Numeracy and Literacy. The assessment tools and feedback allow young people to progress with their learning. Staff continue to develop higher order questioning to gauge pupil progress and the development of this skill consistently across classes is a key focus of our improvement planning for 2.3. Staff use a variety of formative assessment approaches to track the progress of young people through courses. Staff are continuing to develop pedagogical approaches – such as effective questioning – that allow them to make ongoing judgements about learners progress and understanding.

All Faculties have systems in place to monitor and track learning in the BGE and in the Senior Phase. However, there is inconsistency in the completion and sharing of spreadsheets, the scope of data gathered and the subsequent effective use of the data in planning future learning and intervening with individual learners. Moving forward, Faculties will be expected to embed efficient and

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comprehensive systems for monitoring and tracking where accountability for the effective use of these will be achieved through regular discussion and review at Faculty Meetings and DHT Links. There is an expectation that monitoring and tracking in the BGE will cohere with monitoring and tracking in the senior phase.

Our aim is to establish:

- high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people
- highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful
- effective use of assessment by staff and learners that ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements
- Monitoring and tracking systems and calendars that are robust in supporting staff to plan learning suited to each individual learner

### **3.1 Ensuring, Wellbeing, Equity and Inclusion**

Due to an increasing school roll, we have increased the number of Principal Teachers Pupil Support from three to four. Each PTG is responsible for a caseload (S1-S6) based on a traditional House structure. We have recently appointed two PTGs on a fixed term contract after two of our current staff members were promoted to Acting DHT posts within the school.

Relationships within classes remain strong across our school community. All staff recognise that positive relationships and nurturing principles are central to promoting wellbeing and to creating environments conducive to high quality and effective learning and teaching. We continue to work on establishing positive relationships at the core of practice. Staff have some understanding of the wellbeing indicators as they are used as the organising headings for feedback on a pupil's progress when information is being gathered for PSMG. There is a general understanding of the principles of GIRFEC and the importance of wellbeing and positive relationships, though habitual reference to the indicators is not embedded in staff practice.

We have long standing and embedded mechanisms and procedures in place for identifying wellbeing needs, discussing strategy with all stakeholders, planning to meet those needs and reviewing impact. The Pupil Support Management Group is the key mechanism through which targeted support is planned and deployed. All staff have access to a Confidential File on Teams that contains the key information about the circumstances and needs of each pupil. This is updated with each S1 year group in advance of the beginning of a new session and updates are made regularly to make sure that the information is current. Each PSMG planning or review meeting is followed by a communication to staff that contains, where appropriate, a summary of the main points discussed and of the actions resulting from that discussion.

A variety of supports are in place to mitigate against barriers to learning and curriculum access: two classes in each year group are designated as "supported classes" as they have an additional member of staff with them at all times; behaviour support intervention; flexibility in timetabling; ACIS counselling.

Learners are encouraged through the curriculum, particularly in PSE, to develop an understanding and acceptance of difference.

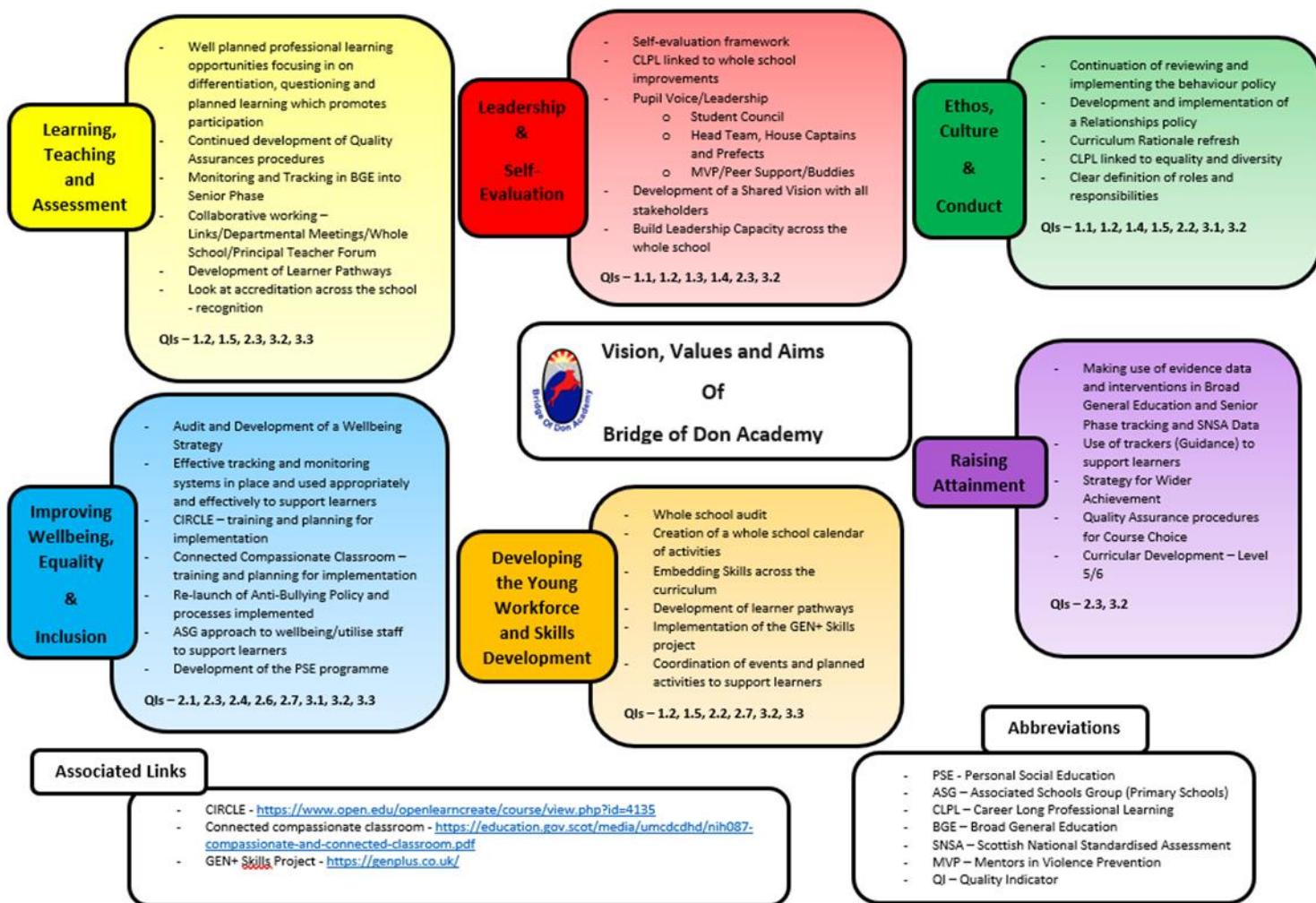
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We have also introduced the Enhanced Provision room which is now a firmly established facility within the school. We have capacity for 7 young people to be nurtured and to develop. We provide a varied curriculum, including Forest school, which enhances their educational experience.

This session we are committed to enhance relationships between pupils and staff to support learning. The GEN+ Skills project is being introduced in the BGE which will promote professional dialogue with learners. Within the Senior Phase, our expectation is that meaningful learning conversations take place between pupils and teachers so that pupils are aware of their working grade and next steps. Our learner conversations are a strength at PTG level but we recognise that Pathway Planning conversations need to be more robust at all levels throughout the school using robust monitoring and tracking data as the basis for the dialogue.

We have been able to extend the number of key adults who provide support for our young people. We have seen an increase in Counsellor Provision for our young people as well as other supports such as the Flourish Project, Active Schools, Youth Work and Priority Families. Next session Aberdeen Football Community Trust will be providing a programme for our young people which will focus on number of key aspects.





**The School Day**

Pupils are taught in school for 27½ hours each week. With teachers’ contractual pupil contact time measured in hours, a 60 minute period offers the most efficient way to timetable the school, with most teachers having a register class for 6 minutes each day.

Twenty seven 60-minute periods, however, do not fit evenly across five days, hence the reason we have two long days with six periods on a Monday and Tuesday, and three short days with five periods from a Wednesday to Friday. The shorter days allow time for other activities after school, including sports teams, clubs and meetings.

<b>MONDAY - TUESDAY</b>		<b>WEDNESDAY- FRIDAY</b>	
<b>Registration 8.39 – 3.55 Finish</b>		<b>Registration 8.39 – 2.55 Finish</b>	
<b>PERIOD 1</b>	<b>8:45am-9:45</b>	<b>PERIOD 1</b>	<b>8:45am-9:45</b>
<b>PERIOD 2</b>	<b>9:45am – 10:45am</b>	<b>PERIOD 2</b>	<b>9:45am-10:45am</b>
<b>INTERVAL</b>	<b>10:45am – 11:05am</b>	<b>INTERVAL</b>	<b>10:45am – 11:05am</b>
<b>PERIOD 3</b>	<b>11:05am – 12:05pm</b>	<b>PERIOD 3</b>	<b>11:05am – 12:05pm</b>
<b>PERIOD 4</b>	<b>12:05pm – 1:05pm</b>	<b>PERIOD 4</b>	<b>12:05pm – 1:05pm</b>
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>1:05pm – 1:55pm</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>1:05pm – 1:55pm</b>
<b>PERIOD 5</b>	<b>1:55pm – 2:55pm</b>	<b>PERIOD5</b>	<b>1:55pm – 2:55pm</b>
<b>PERIOD6</b>	<b>2:55pm 3:55pm</b>		



## Communication

### Guidance

A House System operates within the school. Each pupil is allocated to one of four house groups and is associated with one Principal Teacher of Guidance. Register classes are named according to house groups.

The aims of the House System are:

- To provide pupils with a sense of belonging to a group
- To involve pupils in healthy competition
- To give pupils the opportunity to take on responsibility and leadership roles
- To develop among pupils a philosophy of mutual support
- To provide a vehicle for representing pupils' views
- To involve all staff with the pupil groups

House points can be achieved by pupil participation in activities such as quiz evenings, extra-curricular music groups and sports tournaments. In sponsored events each House is linked to a charity (or other causes) of its choice

Mrs L Marshall	Depute Head Teacher (Acting) responsible for Guidance
Mrs L Anderson	PT Guidance - Head of House for Crathes
Mrs O Walburn	PT Guidance - Head of House for Drum
Ms A Strachan	PT Guidance - Head of House for Fyvie
Miss V Howard	PT Guidance – Head of House for Braemar

Parents should not hesitate to contact their Guidance Teacher (Head of House) if a problem occurs. If a pupil's learning is being affected by personal factors, the Guidance Teacher will contact parents/carers. You will know which are to contact from the name of your child's registration class.

Pupils attend a 6 minute Registration Period at the start of each day. Details of medical appointments or other absences should be submitted to the pupil's Register Teacher, who will update the Register accordingly.

Staff are always available in the dining hall at intervals and lunchtime and the school office is always open to pupils during school hours.

## Letters

Parents will be informed if there a class teacher has sufficient cause for concern regarding a pupil's effort or organisation. Such communication normally take the form of an Information Letter.

Where a pupil's behaviour gives cause for concern, the class teacher will communicate to parents using a Discipline Letter. See the Discipline policy later in this document for more information.

## E-mail Communication

Mail sent home via the school bag does not always reach its intended audience so if you have an email address please let us know as we have the facility to email home pupil letters and leaflets via the Groupcall XPressions app.

## GroupCall

Groupcall gives us the ability to send text messages to your mobile phones or make automated telephone calls to you. Groupcall may, for example, be used to advise you of the following:

- **School Closures**
- Advise your child is absent from school
- **Unauthorised absence**
- Changes to meetings and after school events
- **Emergency notifications**
- Information about school/class events



It is extremely important that any changes to mobile and home telephone numbers be notified to the School Office in order that records are kept up to date.

## Attendance

A school year normally consists of 380 attendances, each day being considered as two attendances, one morning and one afternoon session.

Sometimes problems arise concerning a pupil's attendance at school and, in such cases, we welcome the opportunity to discuss the situation with any parent.

The school uses an electronic communication system called Groupcall to notify parents/carers if their child is absent from school that day.



## Absent

If your child is going to be absent through illness or other reason, please contact the school office by,

- email: [bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:bridgeofdon@aberdeencity.gov.uk);
- text message through the Xpressions app, or
- telephone by 9.00AM.

This procedure will ensure you do not receive a message via the Groupcall system.

It is extremely important that any changes to mobile telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are given to the School Office as soon as possible in order that records are kept up to date and communication can be kept open.

An explanatory note or phone call is required after every absence which has not been previously authorised. Failure to do so may result in the absence being recorded as truancy and detention given to the pupil.

In respect of non-attendance at school, the City Council's nonattendance procedures will be implemented when a pupil has recorded a figure of 30 unexplained or ill-explained absences (ie the equivalent of 15 days). Such a move could lead to the prosecution of parents.

If your child is absent from an SQA exam please contact the school to discuss the next steps.

## Lateness

Pupils who arrive at school between 8.39 AM and 8.45 AM should go straight to their register class where the Register Teacher will record them as late and pass this information to the school office.

Pupils who arrive in school after 8.45 AM should report to the school office for their lateness to be recorded before proceeding to class. They should also provide a parental note on arrival, or the following day at the latest, to explain their lateness.

A warning bell is sounded at 1.50 PM giving pupils adequate time to make their way to their period 5 class. Lates in the afternoon will be recorded by class teachers.

All the recorded lates will be printed out weekly to Guidance staff who will then pursue unexplained or unjustified lateness as a disciplinary matter.

## Going Out of School

Pupils must not leave the school, except at lunchtime, without permission from a member of the Senior Staff (Head Teacher or Depute Head Teachers). Pupils who have a dental or doctor's appointment should bring the appointment card or letter to the Register Teacher at registration and must sign in and out at the school office when they depart and again when they return.



## **Google Guardians**

Our teachers use Google Classroom to upload work, notes, and resources for pupils in each subject. By providing us with an e-mail address, parents can be kept up to date with classwork and homework via an automated update sent from the Google Classroom.

## **Parents' Evenings**

There is one Parents' Evening per session for each year group. These dates are agreed by staff at the end of the previous school year.

Parents' Evenings appointments are booked online by parents themselves. This removes the need to rely on their child to make them. Appointments are then available to view on their mobile device. More details are issued on how to book appointments two weeks before the event. Dates of Parents' Evenings can be found on the school website under the 'Calendar' section and normally take place at the following time of year:

<b>S1:</b>	<b>December</b>
<b>S2:</b>	<b>February</b>
<b>S3:</b>	<b>March</b>
<b>S4, S5 &amp; S6:</b>	<b>November (parents choose one of two dates)</b>

In addition to the dates above, we run a very successful Careers Evening in February with stalls and talks from various companies and organisations.

We also have a Primary 7 Parents' Information Evening in May for parents of pupils who are due to start with us in S1 after the summer holidays.

We also encourage our parents to attend other events organised throughout the year. In recent years, these include an online safety presentation, SCHOLAR, Live 'n' Learn and Drugs Awareness. They are normally scheduled in the Assembly Room on a Tuesday from 7PM until 8PM.

## **Pupil Progress Reports**

The formal reporting of a pupil's progress is done by means of School Reports. In S1 to S3, there are two reports per session. In S4 to S6 there are four reports per session.

<b>S1 Report:</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>S2 Interim Report:</b>	<b>December</b>
<b>S2 Full Report:</b>	<b>May</b>
<b>S3 Interim Report:</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>S3 Full Report:</b>	<b>January</b>
<b>S4, S5 &amp; S6 Interim Report:</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>S4, S5 &amp; S6 Full Report:</b>	<b>February</b>

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Where there is concern about a pupil's progress, parents may be contacted by a Head of House or Depute Head Teacher. Any parent worried about their child's progress should equally feel free to contact their child's Head of House to discuss the matter.

### **School Information Line**

A telephone information line is available to callers seeking information about the school.

The line is used in times of severe weather conditions, emergency closure or other emergency circumstances, parents and pupils can receive up-to-date information using the information below:

**Telephone Number: 0870 054 1999**

**PIN code: 011020**

### **Parent Council**

The school has a very supportive and active Parent Council. This meets in the Staff Centre once a month. All parents are welcome to attend. The dates are published in the school calendar on the school's website. Alternatively, please telephone the school. The current chair of the Parent Council is Mrs Kelly Buchan. He can be contacted via the address (back cover) or by letter.

The aims of the Parent Council are to:

- **Work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents.**
- **Promote partnership between the school, its pupils and its parents.**
- **Develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils.**
- **Identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the school and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils.**
- **Our aim for 2023-24 is to explore how we can support our parents and carers to support their children's learning.**

### **Pupil Support Faculty**

Our Principal Teacher of Pupil Support, Mrs Wood, is responsible for the staff who provide extra support for pupils with additional support needs (short or long term).

The Pupil Support Team offers various types of support:

- **Support at transition times**
- **In class support**

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- Targeted support can be on a one to one basis or in small groups. These difficulties may be academic, social, emotional or behavioural in nature.
- Support at break/lunch
- Homework club
- Assessment of pupils' needs
- Support to staff

Any targeted support will be planned, will have a specific aim and will be reviewed regularly (evidence of need will be used along the way). Any child who is receiving targeted support will be following an Individual Educational Programme (IEP), which is used to identify suitable targets for pupils. These targets are then used to create appropriate programmes of work. Targets are reviewed termly and will determine how long the support needs to continue for (short term or long term support).

The ethos of the department is to encourage self-esteem, social competence and independence while enabling pupils to be full members of the school community.

The Pupil Support Faculty works very closely with parents, staff, pupils, school Educational Psychologist and outside agencies to ensure the needs of each individual are met.

### **First Aid**

All of our Pupil Support Assistants have been trained as First Aiders. Pupils who are ill in school should tell their class teacher who will make contact with a First Aider. School staff are not permitted to dispense non-prescribed medication of any kind. Staff may dispense prescribed medication to a pupil after making a written agreement with parents. The participation of staff in this arrangement is voluntary.

Anyone who needs first aid should tell their teacher who will contact the first aid team on duty. Pupils should contact the school office who will contact the first aid team on duty. Any pupil feeling unwell during the school day should tell a teacher or the office staff as described above. First aid staff will contact home and then arrange with you to collect your son/daughter if necessary from school. It is understandable that young people will contact parents and carers if they are unwell, but if this happens please tell them to go to the office. This way we can ensure they are safe until they can be collected. We would respectfully ask that you do not arrange to collect your son/daughter without letting us know or encourage them to follow the procedure above.

### **Rewards System and Awards Ceremony**

We believe that a rewards system motivates pupils to do well, influence their behaviour and raise their self-esteem. It should encourage pupils of all abilities to feel good about themselves because their achievements are being recognised. Recognising pupil achievement has been proved to play an important role in raising standards and in creating a positive climate where effective learning and teaching can take place.

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Our rewards system seeks to recognise and reward good behaviour, effort and good citizenship. Pupils who meet the criteria will have their achievements recognised in a number of ways.

Staff are asked to note whether or not pupils have met the school code during a lesson. These totals are then collated each term with a Pupil Motivation ceremony held in PSE class to celebrate their achievements.

Praise Awards are also issued to pupils which let the pupils see that their efforts and achievements have been recognised. These could be for a particularly good piece of work, an improvement in attitude or representing the school in a positive light.

A highlight of the school year is the annual Bridge of Don Academy Awards Ceremony, held in June at the Beach Ballroom, which is designed to reward the success and achievement of our pupils. The event involves performances by the school orchestra and is attended by parents and other specially invited guests.

## **Buddies**

Buddies is a peer support scheme which consists of S5/S6 volunteers. The main objective of Buddies is to encourage younger pupils to respond in a positive manner to each other, thus contributing to the positive ethos of the school. Buddies are positive role models and are not necessarily prefects. Buddies wear purple 'smiley faced' badges and are known to younger pupils through introductions in Assembly/class contact. Training is provided by Mrs Beattie (Modern Studies) and the school has links with Childline who supplement the training programme.

There are various ways Buddies become involved with younger pupils, which may include:

- **To complete a duty in the library, playing games/offering help with homework**
- **Providing support as a one-to-one buddy • In the canteen/school grounds**
- **Attending a junior class.**

## **Peer Support**

This involves senior pupils in the school volunteering to take on the role of a Peer Helper. The tasks they may be involved in include:

- **helping first year pupils to settle into the Academy by acting as guides**
- **helping first and second year pupils with learning by supporting them in their classes**
- **reaching out to support troubled or lonely pupils by acting as a buddy to them.**

To facilitate this senior pupils go through a training programme which involves work on effective communication, developing listening skills and looking at decision making.

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Senior pupils also receive training in Paired Reading which is a technique used by more competent readers to help less skilled readers improve.

As the name implies, readers sit in a pair in a quiet situation and take turns to read from a book chosen by the pupil who wishes to improve. The helper is known as the tutor. Each session lasts about 10-15 minutes and ideally should take place twice weekly for a set number of weeks.

### **Child Protection**

Given ongoing concern on the subject of child abuse, and changes in the law, schools are now required to report if there is a suggestion that any child has come to harm as a consequence of possible abuse.

Each school now has a named senior member of staff appointed to be responsible for Child Protection matters. In our school, that person is

#### **Mrs Marshall, Depute Head Teacher**

Should you wish to talk further about Child Protection and the safety of children please feel free to contact Mrs Marshall at the school.

As a school, we have good contacts with medical officers, social workers and the police – any or all of whom may become involved if abuse is suspected.

### **Personal and Social Education**

All pupils in S1 to S6 follow a specific programme of Personal and Social Education (PSE) which is taught by Heads of House. This programme is seen as a life-skills course which encourages pupils to develop their awareness and understanding of a wide range of life situations, and the relevant skills and strategies for responsible decision-making. It is designed to help pupils examine, explore, clarify and, where appropriate, modify their personal values. Central to the programme is the involvement of pupils in planning what they learn at each key stage of secondary education.

The following themes run like strands through the entire PSE programme.

- **The development of increased self-esteem and self-confidence.**
- **The development of self-awareness and the skills of self-assessment.**
- **The importance of developing effective personal relationships and communication.**
- **The development of skills for creating and using opportunities (e.g. skills for sound, effective learning, developing a sense of personal responsibility, identifying opportunities to become involved in activities which contribute to the community).**
- **The development of skills for sound decision-making (e.g. in respect of healthy living and career choice).**

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- The development of an awareness of and skills for independence and interdependence. (This includes learning to take personal responsibility for their own learning).

As an example of the pattern of one session's programme below are details of the PSE syllabus for S1.

- **My New School**
- Friendships
- **Positive Behaviour**
- Sexual Health
- **Drugs Education**
- Responsible Citizenship

### **School Chaplain**

Our School Chaplain is the Rev Louis Kinsey, Minister of St Columba's Parish Church, Bridge of Don and is very supportive of the work of the school. Steph Fowler, Youth Worker at St Columba's Church, also plays an active role in the school, with an upbeat moral message aimed at encouraging youngsters to think about their role in society and their attitudes towards others. Steph plays a leading role in the school's popular Scripture Union group and is also the lead for a project called: Prayer Spaces in Schools. She always has a slot in our Christmas assemblies.

### **Student Council**

We recently made further changes to our student council to reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, we are currently focusing on the group and developing a new structure.

*Article 12: Respect the views of the child: You have the right to give your opinion, and for adults to listen and take it seriously.*

### **Cashless School Payment System**

We operate a cashless canteen, which means our canteen staff do not handle money, we operate with ParentPay which is an online payment management system. When your child joins Bridge of Don Academy they will be given a login and password for ParentPay please bare mind it can take up to five working days for the system to register your child and during this time they will be required to take a packed lunch to school. Once they are registered a letter will be sent home with the login details for funds to be added to the account.

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### Free School Meals and Uniform Grant

Pupils are eligible for free school meals if they attend an Aberdeen City Council school and their parents or carers receive one of the following benefits:

- **Income Support**
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance
- **Pension Credit (Guarantee Credits)**
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- **Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, with an income of less than £18,725**
- Both Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income of up to £8,717
- **Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £726
- **Universal Credit, with a single parent/carers working less than 16 hours per week with an annual earned income from employment of less than £18,725**
- Universal Credit, with both parents/carers working less than 24 hours per week with an annual earned income from employment of less than £18,725

Pupils are eligible for free school meals in their own right if they are between 16-18 and fall into any of these categories.

You can apply for a school clothing grant if you or your family receive any of these benefits:

- **Income Support**
- Income-based Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)
- **Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit, and your annual income is less than £18,725
- **Both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit and your annual income is under £8,717**
- **Universal Credit**, and your monthly earned income is not more than £726
- **Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- **Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction**

### Apply for free school meals and School Clothing Grant

You can apply for free school meals online. You will need to provide evidence of the benefit/s that you receive.

[Apply for free school meals and School Clothing Grant.](#)

You must provide evidence of the qualifying benefit each year in April. If you stop claiming the benefits you must notify the school. If you receive a free school meal to which you are not entitled, you may be asked to pay the money back.



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **School Philosophy and Ethos**

The well-being of every person in our school is important to us and we hope to provide a happy environment where everyone can be caring, be honest, be respected and be their best.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else by physical intimidation. It may be defined as the unjustified display of aggressive or physical behaviour on the part of one individual or group towards another. Consequently, as part of the school's responsibility for the personal and social welfare of our pupils, we would hope to ensure as far as possible that no-one is being bullied.

### **Positive Management of Behaviour**

The school lays down expected standards of behaviour and specific school rules which are intended to be the basis for the operation of a well-ordered and caring school. These Standards of Behaviour, School Rules and the school's Disciplinary Procedures appear each year in the school prospectus.

### **Religious, Social and Moral Education**

Throughout the school pupils follow a programme of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies as well as Personal and Social Education. Within these two programmes emphasis is placed on the importance of caring for others in thought and action and encouraging an appreciation of the community, the environment and a concern for peoples in other parts of the world. Pupils are encouraged to tolerate, understand, appreciate and value the spiritual, moral, social and cultural beliefs of others.

### **Aspects of Social Behaviour**

Aspects of social behaviour are dealt with across a wide range of subjects. Each term a Values Assembly is held to reinforce the school's values:

***"Be Respectful, Be Honest, Be Caring, Be Your Best"***

### **Cyber Bullying**

Bridge of Don Academy actively supports pupils in their learning by providing them with opportunities to learn in new innovative ways through the use of ICT. We also recognise that pupils, teachers and parents/guardians may need some help to know how to stay safe while using ICT, in particular when using Social Networking sites such as X (Twitter) and Facebook.

Social Networking sites can very useful for pupils to keep in touch, share ideas and collaborate on projects. However, increasingly they are being used for online bullying and harassment. Smartphones and tablets allow pupils access to seemingly anonymous methods of bullying such as sending malicious text messages and posting embarrassing photos on the Internet. Cyber-bullying can spread rumours and lies to a very large audience

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at the touch of a button. As with other forms of bullying, the victim may not be in any physical danger but can still feel very upset, afraid or depressed.

Bridge of Don Academy takes all forms of bullying very seriously and cyber-bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. In cyber-bullying cases, where threats have been posted on the internet and may amount to criminal activity, parents and pupils should download the evidence and report it to the police who have various existing acts to allow prosecution:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence to send a communication with the intention of causing distress or anxiety;
- Under section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 it is an offence to send an electronic message that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character;
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 covers threatening behaviour or harassment, including online and offline stalking.

Parents are advised not to add to posts where cyber-bullying has taken place. This can also lead to parents being involved in prosecution.

We would direct parents and pupils to the Safer Schools Bridge of Don Academy mobile app which provides up-to-date advice and resources to support anyone caught up in cyber-bullying.

### **Key Elements in Action Against Bullying**

To combat bullying effectively it is important that there is:

- a general belief within the school community that bullying is an issue which must be taken seriously and tackled positively;
- open discussion about what counts as bullying;
- an ethos which encourages victims and witnesses to speak up freely;
- a school and classroom ethos which promotes respect for the individual;
- a readiness to treat incidents seriously, however trivial they may seem at first glance, and to take swift and positive action whenever bullying is reported or evident;
- a clear lead given in this area by the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team;
- a sense of ownership of the policy by all members of the school community – teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and pupils.

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## Recognition of Bullies and Victims

There is no ready-made list of specific characteristics that go to make a bully. It is important, therefore, that we should not ignore reports from pupils of alleged bullying where the bully does not fit the commonly accepted stereotype e.g. big, aggressive, male.

It is accepted that bullies pick on vulnerable people, but it is not always easy to judge in advance who might be seen as vulnerable. We should, however, be particularly vigilant in respect of those pupils who:

- are new to the class or school
- are different in appearance, speech or background from other pupils
- suffer from low self-esteem
- are nervous or anxious
- display extreme attention-seeking behaviour
- show deterioration in their work

## Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

The single most important factor in the prevention of bullying is a school ethos in which pupils are encouraged to speak out about bullying. They should be regularly reminded that it is right to tell an adult about any type of bullying behaviour.

To enable this to take place all staff should encourage

- victims to tell
- witnesses to tell
- parents to tell
- open discussion

If we are to be seen to take the issue of bullying seriously then we should:

- listen to and offer support for anyone who claims to be the victim of bullying;
- never dismiss the victim of bullying as “weak” or a “tell-tale”;
- listen to and offer appropriate support for the bully, making it clear that it is the bullying behaviour of which we disapprove and not the bully him/herself;
- punish the bully, where this is seen to be appropriate, explaining clearly why the punishment is being given;
- help pupils to offer suggestions for dealing with bullying and to keep the situation under constant review;
- contact at an early stage the parents of an alleged victim, invite them into school to discuss the matter and offer appropriate support;

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- Inform at an early stage the parents of an alleged bully, invite them into school to discuss the matter and offer support agreeing, where appropriate, on a form of sanction. (The school's expected standards of behaviour and discipline policy should be referred to in this context and it should be made clear to the parents that it is the behaviour which is disapproved of and not the pupil);
- Have clear in-school procedures for dealing with reported incidents of bullying.

These procedures are:

- Where a teacher is informed of an alleged act of bullying, the teacher concerned should note briefly in writing the details of the allegation and refer the matter as soon as possible to the appropriate Principal Teacher of Guidance, who will then take action as detailed above;
- Guidance staff should keep detailed records of all referrals of this nature including notes of interviews;
- Guidance staff should advise appropriate members of the senior management team of all incidents of confirmed bullying;
- Year Heads will keep detailed records of all such confirmed incidents of bullying. Details should include – Date, People Involved, Incident, Action Taken, and Outcome.

### **Guidance for Parents**

As part of our whole-school approach to the problem of bullying, we would give the following advice/information to parents:

- Discuss regularly with your child how he/she is getting on at school. (Discuss particularly friendships, lunchtimes and intervals);
- Be alert to signs of distress – reluctance to go to school, sore stomachs, bruising, taking extra money;
- Watch for your child bringing home extra money or property;
- Encourage your child to speak out if he/she is being bullied and listen carefully to the information he/she may volunteer;
- If you think your child is being bullied contact the school as soon as possible and arrange to speak to his/her Guidance Teacher. (It can be beneficial in some cases for the parents to contact the school without their child's knowledge so that the situation can be quietly monitored);
- Where it is confirmed that a pupil has been involved in bullying, the school will invite the parents to come into school and discuss the situation;
- Be aware that, in many instances, bullying is reported by a pupil where the "victim" him/herself has played a major role in creating the problem. In such instances, it may be necessary to provide the victim with support and guidance on how to establish better relations with others.

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## School Uniform

Pupils, parents and staff strongly support the wearing of school uniform for a number of reasons:

- It helps to promote a sense of identity with the school.
- It reduces competitive peer dressing and expensive fashion dressing
- The wearing of uniform creates a working atmosphere which supports pupils' learning.
- The school badge, incorporated into items of uniform, enables the easy identification of pupils and therefore assists the operation of school security measures.

Visiting parents, members of the public and staff working in other establishments have praised the school for its standard of dress and courteousness of the pupils. The school uniform is detailed on the following page. All badged items can be purchased locally or online. Blazers are part of the S5 and S6 uniform but can be worn by pupils from S1 to S4 if they wish.

Parents of pupils are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's dress code and we urge you to help us in seeing that our pupils continue to come to school smartly turned out in school uniform. Pupils who do not represent the school during the school day will not be allowed to represent the school on out of school conferences, exhibitions or extra-curricular excursions, including trips abroad during Activities Week.

A uniform check is carried out each morning by register teachers. They will be logged and may be asked to wear a school sweatshirt from a stock held in school.

### What happens if you wear full uniform all the time?

- House points will be awarded for wearing full uniform;
- There will be two prizes in the summer term of outings with registration teachers. One for the class in S1/S2 with the best uniform record and one for the class in S3/4 with the best uniform record.

### What happens if you don't come to school in uniform?

- Registration teachers will send pupils without uniform to the School Office to see Senior Managers at the end of registration;
- Pupils will be given a uniform sweater from a stock kept for this purpose;
- Senior managers will log the names of those without uniform;
- Letters will be sent home to parents of persistent offenders. There will be a reminder in the letter that pupils will not be allowed on outings, residential trips etc. if they have not been wearing uniform;
- Any pupil arriving in class without uniform should be sent to the school office. Office staff will contact a member of the Senior Management Team who will deal with the pupil.

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Teachers will not allow pupils to be in their classes without proper uniform. Pupils going out on visits or representing the school in any way will be expected to wear school uniform.

<b>S1 – S4 Uniform Expectations</b>	
<b>BOYS</b>	<b>GIRLS</b>
White shirt with school tie Or White Shirt with school badge **Shirts should be plain with no patterns**	White shirt with school tie Or White Shirt with school badge **Shirts should be plain with no patterns**
Black sweatshirt or Black “ V” neck Or Black zipper front top with badge	Black sweatshirt or Black “ V” neck Or Black zipper front top with badge
Smart black trousers *No Jeans *No Combat Trousers * No Large Fashion Accessories	Smart black trousers or Knee length skirt *No Jeans *No Combat Trousers *No Leggings * No Large Fashion Accessories
Plain black shoes or boots *No white coloured flashes or logos	Plain black shoes or boots *No white coloured flashes or logos
<b>S5 – S6 Uniform Expectations</b>	
Black or white shirt with red Senior school tie Shirts should be plain with no patterns School Blazer with badge	Black or white shirt with red Senior school tie Shirts should be plain with no patterns School Blazer with badge
Smart black trousers *No Jeans *No Combat Trousers * No Large Fashion Accessories	Smart black trousers or Knee length skirt *No Jeans *No Combat Trousers *No Leggings * No Large Fashion Accessories
Plain black shoes or boots *No white coloured flashes or logos	Plain black shoes or boots *No white coloured flashes or logos



### **Jewellery**

There have been incidents in schools where pupils wearing items such as eyebrow studs or bolts have suffered serious injury as a result to the wearer from general movement in and around the school and during physical activity.

Subsequently, on the grounds of Health and Safety, pupils must not come to school with any form of body piercing on their face, or other parts of their body, which could pose a risk to themselves and to others. Pupils will be asked to remove such items and be given a letter home to remind parents of the risks to themselves and to others.

### **Mobile Technology**

Pupils are permitted to use mobile technology in the school canteen and school grounds before school, during interval and lunchtime only. These areas are denoted by green signs. The use of mobile devices is **not** permitted in any teaching area of the school unless there has been specific permission granted by the class teacher for specific educational purposes e.g. Google Translate, recording speaking assessments, using stopwatch facilities. These areas are indicated by orange signs. When moving around the school all earphones should be removed and out of sight. All phones should be in bags or pockets all cables/headphones should be out of sight at all times. This is a health and safety matter when moving around the building as pupils cannot hear as well with earphones in. Areas where the use of a mobile device is denoted by a red sign. Anyone found to be using a mobile phone in a non-permitted area will:

- On the first occasion – have the item removed and it will be placed in the School Office until the end of the day. This information will be recorded in the Mobile Phone Folder in the School Office.
- On the second occasion – have the item removed and it will be placed in the School Office until the end of the day. This information will be recorded in the Mobile Phone Folder in the School Office. Pupils will be allowed to collect their mobile phone from the School Office at the end of the day however as they are a repeat offender they will be required to hand in their mobile phone to the School Office at the beginning of each day (and collect at the end) until the end of that week.
- On the third occasion – have the item removed and it will be placed in the School Office until the end of the day. Pupils can collect their mobile phone from the School Office at the end of the day however as they are a repeat offender they will be required to hand in their mobile phone to the School Office at the beginning of each day (and collect at the end) until the end of that week. Parents will be contacted by a member of SMT and informed of this.

Inappropriate use of mobile phone technology in any area of the school building or its grounds is not permitted. For example: taking photographs, videos or cyber-bullying.

- Mobile phone devices, iPods or Smart Watches are not permitted in any exam room. Pupils found to have taken these items into the exam room, regardless of whether they are on or off, will result in the SQA allocating zero marks for that exam.

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- Pupils are not permitted to listen to music on any personal devices in any class - including study. This is a health and safety matter as staff will not be in a position to monitor: volume, content being accessed by pupils but also pupils will not be able to hear any instructions given by their teacher.
- Pupils who have been placed on an interval/ lunchtime detention at the School Office will not be permitted to access their mobile devices during this time.

## School Rules

### General Conduct

- Pupils are expected at all times to act in a disciplined and civilised way. They are expected to treat the fabric and furnishings of the buildings with respect, and all those who work in it with courtesy.
- Smoking is strictly forbidden on all Aberdeen City Council property and smoking materials should not be brought to school. This includes vaping materials.
- Card-playing and gambling are forbidden.
- There is a ban on chewing gum within the school.
- Pupils must not ride bicycles on footpaths or pedestrian areas within the school grounds.
- Ball games (including snowballing in the winter) must not be played close to the building.

### Attendance

- Pupils returning after absence must bring to their Register Teacher a note signed by a parent or guardian.
- No pupil may leave the school grounds during school hours without first receiving permission from the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teachers. This includes morning interval.

### Movement

- As a general rule pupils should keep to the left when moving about the school particularly on stairways.
- Pupils must observe the one-way system when moving along the first floor corridor of the teaching block.
- Within the building pupils should move at all times in an orderly manner and without running.
- Except at morning interval and the lunch-hour pupils should not visit the toilet without first asking permission of a teacher.
- During the morning interval and lunch-hour, pupils must not be in the Teaching Block or main stairways of the school, unless they are participating in a class or club arranged at that time. The Dining Room provides an area where pupils congregate at intervals and at lunchtimes. This area is always supervised at these times.

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- The lift must never be used except by pupils who have received special permission from Senior Staff.
- Pupils must only use the designated walkways when moving through the car park. For their own safety, and in respect of road users, they must not move between, in front of, or behind parked cars. Pupils should not loiter or play in the front or rear car parks during morning interval or lunchtime.

### **Property**

- No valuables should ever be left in bags or coats in the corridors changing rooms, dining hall or under stairways. Pupils bringing valuables into school do so at their own risk. The school does not accept liability for any items which have been lost or damaged while in school.
- When going to Physical Education, pupils should hand all valuables to their teacher for safekeeping.
- It is the Authority's policy that no pets owned by any member of staff, pupil, parent or guardian should be allowed into any part of the establishment. It must be understood that any part of the establishment includes playgrounds, car parks and playing fields.



## Discipline

Our School Rules and expected standards of behaviour have been formulated so that the School may function smoothly and safely for all who work in it, and so that all pupils can benefit from their educational opportunities. The vast majority of our pupils cooperate naturally and helpfully in the maintenance of good order. However, we do have a discipline policy for those pupils who deliberately break the rules or whose actions or words may threaten the safety, well-being or progress of others.

Throughout the school and in every classroom the discipline levels are displayed along with a poster displaying the behavioural expectations of the pupils.

The discipline policy consists of 7 levels as described in the table below.

Level	Action
1	Verbal warning.
2	Isolation within class or second verbal warning.
3	'Stop and Think' exercise issued, return date specified by teacher. If exercise is not returned by date, pupil will go straight onto Level 4.
4	Referral to Principal Teacher and Discipline Letter sent home. (Detention and/or Planned Time Out may also be issued at this point.)
5	Referral to Year Head. Warning of Exclusion issued.
6	Exclusion by Head Teacher.
7	Removal from School Roll.

If a pupil reaches level 3 on the Discipline Policy, a 'Stop and Think' exercise will either be issued directly to the pupil or sent home by the Class Teacher. This should be completed and returned by the specified date. Should a pupil reach level 4 or be 'Immediately Timed Out' of class a Discipline Letter will be sent home to explain what has happened to merit a pupil being placed on one of these levels.



Sanctions may be imposed as a result of indiscipline at these levels and may take the form of written work to be done at home or a lunchtime detention. Parents will be informed of any sanctions in the discipline letter.

If a pupil reaches level 5, parents will receive a copy of a Warning of Exclusion Letter and invited to school to discuss their child's behaviour, who will be timed out of the class until the meeting has taken place.

Occasionally, a pupil will be excluded by the Head Teacher if the pupil reaches level 6 and parents will receive a copy of an Exclusion Letter. They will be then invited into school to discuss their child's behaviour and how we can move forward.

Exclusions may result from a one off serious incident or through an accumulation of discipline incidents. Please note that this is a sanction available to Head Teachers and is used. However we work in an inclusive way with young people and their family to ensure it is a last resort.

If there are concerns regarding a pupil's organisational abilities, such as coming to school without the correct books, failure to meet deadlines or the non-completion of homework, parents will receive an "Information Letter" rather than a "Discipline Letter".

### **Positive Information**

Sanctions and the means of transmitting concerns to parents are a necessary part of the discipline structure but so too is the need to have a way of making parents aware of "good news". A Praise Award informs parents and the pupils themselves of what staff regard as a particularly praiseworthy work or behaviour. It may also recognise a situation where the pupil has promoted the school in an event or activity in or out of school time.

As well as using Praise Awards, staff record pupils who have consistently produced a high standard of effort and followed all points on the Pupil Code. A reward event is held for each House Group at the end of each term to celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements.

Almost all of our pupils share our aim of making the school a safe and pleasant place to work in, and are seldom involved in the disciplinary process. Even when sanctions are used, we would like to think that their imposition is always accompanied by a spirit of understanding and fairness.

### **Behaviour Support**

Pupils whose behaviour has been identified as giving cause for concern, will work with the school's Behaviour teacher Mr LeBlanc to develop strategies to improve their behaviour in class.

Parents have an important role in supporting the work of the Behaviour teacher in tackling the problems identified.



## Personal Information

At the beginning of each session, parents are asked to fill up an “Admission Form” and to return it to the School Office. The information given on these forms is particularly important when an emergency arises and immediate contact has to be made with a parent or guardian. Accordingly, it would be most helpful if any change of home address, place of work, Doctor or relevant telephone number(s) could be notified to Bridge of Don Academy, School Office, as soon as possible.

Emergency Procedures for Severe Weather and other Emergency Closures. We are always mindful of the difficulties and dangers which our country pupils might encounter as they journey to and from school during abnormal weather conditions.

As soon as we are aware of the onset or likely onset of severe weather conditions, we take the following action:

- Information to families about bus pick-ups, school opening time and possible school closure is given on the [School Information Line 0870 054 1999](tel:08700541999), PIN 011020. This will be updated before 7.00 am on days of severe weather.
- Information will also be updated by 7.00 am on the school website, [www.bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk](http://www.bridgeofdon.aberdeen.sch.uk) and the Aberdeen City Council website, [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk). This information is automatically transferred to local radio stations.
- Pupils who travel in taxis will be contacted by the taxi companies.

If the school is required to close during the school day due to severe weather or other emergencies, the following will apply:

- The school will remain open until all pupils have been returned home safely.
- Parents will be contacted via Group Call.
- The Information Line (see above) will be updated.
- The school and Aberdeen City Council websites will be updated.
- Local radio stations will be contacted.
- Pupils will be allowed to use their mobile phones to contact parents/carers. If they do not have one, they will use the school’s phones.
- Pupils have a responsibility to give accurate information regarding their safety and this information will be taken on trust.
- Bus pupils who are safe to be returned home early will be allowed to board buses.
- Bus pupils who do not have a parent/carer at home or do not have permission to return home from a parent/carer will be looked after in school until contact is made with a parent/carer.
- Local pupils will be allowed to go home early if there is someone at home or they have permission from a parent/carer to be at home unsupervised Pupils have responsibility to give accurate information regarding their safety and this will be taken on trust.

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- If pupils do not have a parent/carer at home and do not have permission from their parent/carer to be at home unsupervised then they will be kept safe in school until contact can be made with a parent/carer.

### Special Accommodation Arrangements

Where conditions are so severe that transport cannot be safely provided, it would be prudent for pupils not to attempt the journey home – unless parents collect them personally. This could mean that pupils might have to stay overnight at an address near the school. In order that such an arrangement can function smoothly, a register of available accommodation is kept. Parents who live at a distance from the school are asked each year to complete emergency contact details on the reverse of the Admission Form.

If a parent thinks that weather conditions are likely to deteriorate during any day to the extent that the pupil might have difficulty in getting home again safely, we would advise that the pupil does not come to school that morning.

### Valuables

We would prefer that valuables are not brought to school. Any valuables brought into school are the **pupils' responsibility**. Examples include expensive mobile phones and other electronic items, jewellery and even designer clothing.

Pupils who do so are responsible for safeguarding their own possessions. Teachers and the office staff will take valuables for safekeeping if necessary. During PE lessons, pupils have the option of leaving their valuables in the changing room or in the PE office. However, as neither are under continual supervision the school cannot accept responsibility for the loss or damage of valuables.

During SQA exams, pupils are advised to keep mobile phones at home or in lockers, but they may be kept in the school office if this is not possible.

The school will not be held responsible for loss or damage of valuables which pupils have not submitted to their teacher for safe keeping. Lockers are available for pupils to rent, but are offered on the basis of seniority within the school. There are a small number of S1 pupils who currently rent a locker. We recently fitted extra lockers in the school. All are available for pupils to rent on a first come, first served basis.

### Insurance

No insurance cover is held by Aberdeen City Council to provide automatic compensation in the event of a personal accident or death. It is your responsibility as a parent to insure your child for personal accident or death if you feel this is appropriate. Aberdeen City Council does hold third party liability insurance which indemnifies the Council for claims from third parties (e.g. parents of pupils) who have suffered injury, illness, loss or damage arising from the negligence of the Council or its employees. However, if there is no negligence, no claim would be accepted by the Council.



## Transition from Primary School

Transition from primary school to Bridge of Don Academy: a timeline of support for pupils and parents/carers.

- **November of Primary 7**  
Pupils with additional support needs visit Bridge of Don Academy for enhanced transition. S1 pupils visit P7 pupils in their primary classes to discuss their hopes, dreams, aspirations and fears about coming to secondary schools.
- **Spring of Primary 7**  
School prospectus is issued to P7 families.
- **February of Primary 7**  
Mathematics and numeracy day for all P7 pupils with Academy staff and pupils. First whole day induction visits for all P7 pupils to Bridge of Don Academy.
- **Spring of Primary 7**  
Heads of House (with Guidance role) begin a three month programme of visits to the associated primary schools.
- **June of Primary 7**  
Three day visits by all P7 pupils. P7 parents' evening – an opportunity to see the school and have questions answered.

In addition to the above, there are other support activities:

- **STEM Club – for P7 pupils; coordinated by the Science Faculty.**
- **Visits to P7 pupils by Maths and Modern Languages teachers (various times).**
- **Sports events for upper primary pupils organised by the PE Faculty, including the Bridge of Don Academy Summer Festival.**
- **Curriculum evening for P7 parents and pupils in September.**
- **Parents' Information Evening for P7 parents in June.**

### S1-S2 Curriculum

Curriculum for Excellence aims to achieve a transformation in education in Scotland by providing a coherent, more flexible and enriched curriculum from 3 to 18. More details about Curriculum for Excellence can be found at the Education Scotland website.

Pupils will follow courses within the following curricular areas:

- **English**
- **Mathematics**
- **Modern Languages (French, with option to add Spanish later)**
- **Social Subjects (Geography, History & Modern Studies)**
- **Technologies (Design & Technology, Information Technology)**

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- Science
- Expressive Arts (Art & Design, Drama and Music)
- Health & Wellbeing (Home Economics)
- Physical Education
- Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies
- Personal and Social Education.

All our associated primary schools teach French. All pupils will be expected to study French in S1 and S2 and continue with languages into S3. Other languages will be offered to pupils for study from S3 to S6.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
MON	English	French	Technical	IT	Maths	Science
TUE	English	Maths	Music	PSE	French	Modern
WED	Maths	RME	PE	Science	English	
THU	Art	History	Maths	English	French	
FRI	PE	Drama	Home Ec	Geography	Science	

### S3 Curriculum

In S3 pupils will have reduced the number of subjects studies to nine, but still choose courses from each curricular area.

S3 subject choice takes place in February and March with the opportunity for parents to find out more about the procedures at the Careers Evening in March. We would always advise pupils keep their choice of subjects broad, in order to address any change to their planned careers intentions as they move up through the school.

S3 is the bridge between the Broad General Education and the Senior Phase.



### S4-S6 Curriculum – The Senior Phase

After S3 pupils start courses leading to their first national examinations which are taken in the summer term – May and June.

These qualifications will help young people to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have learned at school. S4-S6 is an opportunity to gain qualifications to open the doors beyond school to employment, college and university.

The courses leading to the qualifications will contain work that is assessed and marked throughout the year by teachers. For example teachers will mark assessments such as PE performances, dishes prepared in Home Economics, essays completed in Art and Design and English talks. Qualifications at National 1 to 4 Level do not have external examinations. They are completely assessed in school by teachers whose marking is checked by SQA.

Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels will still include work which is assessed by schools but for these qualifications students will also have to pass an additional assessment – usually a question paper and/or an assignment – which is marked externally by the SQA and graded.

The SQA work with schools to make sure that there are robust quality assurance procedures in place that will ensure that all assessments are fair, consistent, and continue to meet national standards.

Level/Qualification Achieved	Progression
Level 2 / National 2	National 3 or SCQF Level 4
Level 3 / National 3	National 4 or SCQF Level 5
Level 4 / National 4	National 5 or SCQF Level 6
National 5	Higher or SCQF 7

### Core Skills

All of the school’s lessons and units of work are planned to include a range of core skills. The aim is to progressively develop these skills from S1 to S6. This approach is designed to help pupils reflect on their learning. The skills are for learning, life and work and include literacy, numeracy and health and well-being. These are developed in and out of the classroom. A summary of our core skills is shown below. The full set of skills, with definitions, can be found as appendix 1.





### Thinking skills

- Processing and Analysing
- Creating and Reasoning
- Evaluating

### Personal and Inter-personal skills

- Collaborating
- Responsibility
- Expressing Opinions
- Performing and Applying

### Communication Skills

- Talking and writing
- Reading and listening

### Assessment

A wide range of assessment techniques are used across the school. These include observation of pupils in class in terms of what they write, say, make or do; homework; class tests; self-assessment and peer assessment. It happens as part of ongoing learning and at various points along a pupils' journey.

Information from assessment it is used to plan the next steps in the child's learning. These could be identified by the teacher or by the pupils themselves, as part of taking responsibility for their own learning.

### Scottish National Standardised Assessments

(SNSA) In Scotland, all pupils in Primary 1, 4, 7 and in Secondary 3 complete online standardised assessments as part of their learning and teaching. The assessments are used to help identify children's progress, providing diagnostic information to support teachers' professional judgement. There is no pass or fail and youngsters are not required to prepare for these.

### Homework

#### The Value and Purpose of Homework

Homework is an integral part of all courses. The purpose of homework is:

- To encourage and develop good study habits in a progressive way from S1 to S6
- To promote pupil responsibility and encourage independent thinking
- To extend or remediate course work and to reinforce existing learning skills

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### **The Nature of Homework**

Homework may take many forms:

- Preparation for future classwork
- Enhancement/consolidation of work done in class
- Research/investigation for project work
- Revision/preparation for assessments
- Completion of work missed during absence

The frequency and amount will vary according to the subject and stage reached, but will increase steadily as pupil's progress through the school. We are aware of a growing number of pupils who have part-time jobs. While this is highly commendable, we would urge pupils to find a balance between employment, school work and social activities which does not harm their education or social development. Lunchtime study support classes are available for pupils who wish to complete homework at times when they have evening employment.

It should be noted that homework is not always teacher directed. The pupil who regularly revises work, whether it be present or past work, is reinforcing the learning experience and leads to improved exam performance. Pupils who take responsibility for their learning tend not to report that they "have no homework".

### **Support in School**

Pupils experiencing difficulty with completion of homework should seek the help of the teacher concerned at a mutually convenient time. It is for this reason that homework is best not left until the night before it is due. Tackling homework as early as possible allows the pupil time to discuss any problems with the teacher and ensure they submit work to as high a standard as possible.

### **Parental Involvement in Learning**

Parental engagement is a term that describes the interaction between parent and their child's learning. This does not apply solely to attendance at parents' evenings. It also includes working with the child at home, supporting in them in their learning out with the classroom. Research has concluded that parental engagement has a significant impact on the attainment and development of children as the progress through school.

- Providing the right environment for the child to work at home;
- Assisting in the management of time;
- Checking presentation, handwriting and spelling;
- Helping with revision by asking questions about what has been learned in school;

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- Reading with younger children, or even secondary school children whose literacy skills are comparable to those in primary.

Most of these do not require any knowledge of the work being undertaken. It should be added that a number of pupils may, when asked, suggest they do not have homework. A telephone call to their Head of House should be made if this is the case.

### Completion of Homework

All pupils are expected to complete homework on time.

Parents will be informed when a pupil fails to meet homework deadlines or produce work to a standard expected of them. Parents are normally appreciative of such advice and express a willingness to assist the school in addressing such issues.

A positive and organised approach to homework will help pupils gain confidence in their coursework and progress towards their individual goals.

It is advisable for pupils from S1 onwards in Modern Languages to have access to a French or Spanish dictionary at home to help in the completion of some homework tasks. Pupils are shown how to use them. These can be purchased through the department, sometimes at a reduced cost, if desired.

### Google Apps for Education

Google Classroom allows teachers to set up web-based classrooms for each of their classes through which pupils can be alerted to upcoming homework and assignments, submit work and receive feedback on submitted work. We have two trollies each with 30 devices which can be booked by class teachers and an additional trolley with 30 devices for use in study by S5 and S6 pupils.

Google Classroom can be installed on mobile phones giving pupils access to information such as notes, slides or homework at any time in or out of school. One advantage of this is that any absence should not result in missed notifications about work, homework or resources.

### Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies

A programme of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies is provided for all pupils in S1 to S3 and there is one full-time member of staff in the department.

The aim of Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies is **not** to convert pupils to a particular belief. What we endeavour to do are the following:

- To provide pupils with a basic knowledge and understanding of religions represented in the UK. We encourage respect and acceptance of the beliefs and practices of all religious and nonreligious people.
- To provide pupils with the philosophical skills necessary to explore the important questions relating to existence, knowledge and moral behaviour.

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- To encourage pupils to become aware of their own beliefs and values and to explore their reasons for holding these.

By reflecting on personal and social issues relating to religious and moral values, pupils are assisted in their own personal development and awareness of the spiritual dimension of life.

### **Physical Education Kit and Requirements**

All pupils are expected to wear appropriate sports clothing such as T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, tracksuit bottoms and appropriate trainers. Leggings are not acceptable as PE kit unless they are Sports Leggings. For indoor activities pupils must bring and wear a clean pair of indoor trainers. There will be times throughout the year where pupils will be participating in outdoor activities. Pupils will be given prior warning for these so they can wear suitable outdoor clothing. Pupils will be able to wear football boots or rugby boots when participating in these activities. Pupils are not permitted to wear any part of their school uniform, including their school trainers to their PE lessons.

If you cannot participate for any reason you must have a note informing your teacher, however, you are still expected to bring PE kit, as you may be required to assist your teacher within the class. If pupils have a note but fail to bring their PE kit it will be treated as a forgotten/inappropriate kit. Pupils will be offered the opportunity to borrow spare PE kit from the PE Department. This kit is laundered after each individual use.

If any pupil fails to bring all or part of their PE kit they will not be allowed to participate on the grounds of health, safety and hygiene. Failure to participate due to forgotten kit is dealt with in an organisational manner. In such circumstances pupil's progress through the levels as detailed below:



Level	Criteria	Action
1	First time pupil forgets their kit	Kept within class and used to perform alternative roles e.g. referee, time keeper
2	Second time pupil forgets their kit	Kept with class and given written work to complete. If class outside in inclement weather the pupil can be left with another class indoors on the agreement of the class teacher. A departmental detention shall be set for 20 minutes at lunchtime.
3	Third time pupil forgets their kit.	Kept with class and given written work as above. A Level 3 written exercise is handed out for completion at home and a second Detention is set for 20 minutes at lunchtime.
4	Fourth time pupil forgets their kit.	Class teacher sends pupil to time out with written work to complete and is referred to school nurse. PT refers pupil to Year Head.

### Medical Exemption

There may be occasions when pupils are unable to participate fully in the practical work due to injury or illness. In such cases a letter should be brought from home explaining the reason. Pupils are still expected to bring their PE kit however. This will enable the pupil to be involved in the lesson to a greater or a lesser extent by adopting alternative roles.

The importance of this is best illustrated using an example: if the class is outdoors for football all pupils must remain with their class under the supervision of the class teacher. In bringing an appropriate change of clothing the pupil prevents the possibility of their school clothes becoming wet/dirty. In addition, depending on the severity of the illness/injury the pupil may find themselves able to participate in some of the practical work to a lesser extent. Alternatively they provide themselves the opportunity to be involved in another role e.g. referee, timekeeper, scorer, observer. The importance of this in the creation of a positive and effective learning and teaching environment for all cannot be emphasised enough. Any pupil failing to bring alternative clothing will be recorded as having no kit, even if they bring a note.

It is appreciated by the school that there may be an occasion where an injury/illness is so severe that participation in any level of practical work is unacceptable. In such cases contact should be made with the school detailing the expected duration of the injury or illness. This will enable the class teacher to converse with the appropriate

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guidance teacher in order to make alternative arrangements for timetabled PE lessons.

### Health and Safety

The Health and Safety issue is one which has increased City wide, primarily due to the increase in the number of pupils with body piercings. Aberdeen City Council has issued a “Code of Practice for Personal Effects in Physical Education” which must be adhered to. While participating in Physical Education lessons and extracurricular activities, **all** pupils are expected to remove all items of jewellery. Although staff will remind classes of this at the start of lessons they **will not** undertake an inspection of every individual pupil. Therefore any pupil wearing any items of jewellery does so at their own risk. The school accepts no responsibility for injuries sustained as a result of pupils wearing jewellery.

When the curriculum requires pupils to be out of doors, warm and waterproof clothing may be a necessity for inclement weather. (Shell suits must **not** be worn as they are in breach of Health and

Safety regulations). For many of the activities taught in the Physical Education department at Bridge of Don Academy, pupils are advised to consider the use of personal safety equipment for participation. For example, when outside playing football, pupils are advised to wear shin guards as many of them wear studded boots. In swimming, pupils are advised to bring goggles for sensitive eyes. Similarly, pupils are informed of the benefits of a gum shield for hockey. It must be stressed that in all of these cases the safety equipment mentioned can never guarantee injury prevention. While the school works hard to ensure that pupils are provided with modern, up to date equipment, due to financial constraints all equipment is shared amongst all classes. The school is not in a position to provide individual pieces of equipment for every pupil for every activity. As you will appreciate, due to health and safety reasons, the school cannot provide gum shields for use by a number of different pupils. The provision of such equipment is at the discretion of parents.

### The Library Resource Centre

The Library Resource Centre is open from 8.10 am to 4.15 pm, Monday and Tuesday, and 8.10 am to 3.15 pm Wednesday to Friday.

The library aims to provide the school community with a resources and information service that supports learning and teaching, and helps enable pupils to achieve their goals, specifically by:

- promoting reading for enjoyment
- providing an appropriate range of resources to support learning and teaching
- promoting and supporting the development of learning skills
- providing and maintaining areas conducive to independent study
- providing resources to support applications to colleges and universities
- Providing resources to support investigations into GAP year options and activities.

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The library organises various events including author visits, Book Week Scotland, World Book Day, book fairs and the Grampian Children's Book Award

### **Raising Achievement**

The library enables pupils to develop and practise the research and investigative skills that they will require for the curriculum, external exams and life beyond school.

### **Personal Reading**

All pupils are actively encouraged to spend time at home on reading for enjoyment by borrowing books from the range of resources, which have been selected to suit a wide variety of interests and ability. Personal reading is actively promoted in the Learning Resources Centre. S1 – S3 pupils visit the library every two weeks with their English classes. During this time they select personal reading from a well-stocked and up to date fiction collection. Seniors are also provided with a wide choice of material.

The library has over 6000 resources, including fiction, non-fiction, a Reference Section, Careers Section and subscriptions to online reference material. Pupils can borrow and exchange books daily, either before or after school or at lunchtime, with the option to extend loans when required. There are nine networked computers, which can be booked by classes or individual pupils

### **Activities Week**

Activities Week takes place for all pupils in S1 to S3 at the end of May. This includes the offer of a residential trip only for S3 pupils only that is designed to build skills that will be valuable as they progress into the senior phase of their schooling and for later life.

Activities Week takes place during a week where the normal timetable is suspended to allow for these activities to take place. Attendance at school remains compulsory.

All of the experiences and activities have been and will be planned to enhance and support the learning that happens every day in school.

Should any parent feel that their child cannot participate in any activity due to financial restrictions, they are urged to contact the school who will endeavour to ensure a child does not miss out on any opportunity. There is a fund available to support the participation of young people whose families are experiencing financial hardship and there are also other ways we can help. We do not want finance to be a barrier to participation. Class work and teaching staff will be available for pupils who do not participate in any of the activities offered.

The programme offers progression of experience from S1-S3. In S1 all pupils have the opportunity to experience the same broad range of school and locally based activities; in S2 and S3 we want all young people to have the experience of a residential trip – and so we have included one residential in Scotland that is of lower cost. Trips are either residential or local. Typical residential trips include outdoor activities in the Cairngorms, Spanish water sports, Paris and Edinburgh. Local

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activities include day trips to venues such as Discovery World in Dundee, Alton Towers and visits to various local landmarks and a mixture of outdoor activities such as horse riding, golf, football and paintballing. School based activities include Let's Bake, Get Crafty and a range of indoor sports.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR**

Students at Bridge of Don Academy have the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities during their time at school — from sport, music and drama to additional study, personal development and community service programs. There are a whole range of benefits that come from involvement in these programs and we would encourage all students to take advantage of what is on offer. Some of these benefits may include:

- **Improved Academic Performance**

Lots of studies have been conducted on the relationship between extracurricular activities and academic performance, and they all show that students who participate in them have higher grades, more positive attitudes toward school and higher academic aspirations.

- **Explore Interests and Create Broader Perspectives**

Participating in multiple different activities will give students the opportunity to explore a range of interests and unlock passions they never knew they had. Plus, diversifying their interests subsequently broadens their world view.

- **Higher Self-esteem**

The more a student achieves success through activities they are passionate about, the more their self-confidence will improve. Working hard and mastering new skills in a fun, relaxed – and sometimes competitive – setting allows them to be successful without the pressure of getting a good grade.

- **Social Opportunities**

Coming into academy and making friends can be hard but one of the easiest ways to make friends is through extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, each extra-curricular activity a student engages in provides them with another opportunity to expand their social network, which will come in handy as they progress through school and beyond.

- **Essential Skills for Life and Work**

One of the greatest advantages extra-curricular activities give is a chance to further develop a student's employability skills. These skills include (but are not limited to): goal setting; teamwork; time management; commitment; prioritisation; problem solving; analytical thinking; leadership; public speaking; creative thinking and responsibility.

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