



Speyside High School Newsletter



Start of Term

Please can I take the opportunity on behalf of all staff to say welcome back to the new term and I hope you and your family had an enjoyable autumn break.

Mrs P Goodbrand

Key Dates

Monday 16 November
Tuesday 15 December
Friday 18 December
Tuesday 5 January 2021

In-Service Closure Day
Christmas Concert, 7.00pm
End of Term
Start of Term



School Records/Annual Data Check

In the coming weeks you will receive a printout of the details which we currently hold about your child and your contact details. The letter accompanying the form will ask you to review and update these, make any relevant changes and return the form to school. Please can you return the documentation even if no updates are required.

I would like to draw your attention to the following important points:

- The **main point of contact** you give us will be the one used for common messages. Please note that this can only be one point of contact, ie a mobile, landline or email. To clarify, unfortunately we are unable to send messages to your mobile, plus your landline and also to your email address.
- A **winter emergency address** in Aberlour or on a main bus route could be useful if travel home from school is not possible because of road conditions.
- It is **important** that we also have your **e-mail address**.
- It is **important** that you inform us at the earliest opportunity if you **change** your phone number or e-mail address.

Parentsportal

Last term we launched a new online facility for parents and carers to communicate with the school. Further details are available via the link www.moray.gov.uk/parentsportal where you can create your account. As we try to move away from too much paper based communication the parentsportal does allow this opportunity and we would really appreciate your support in bringing this forward. Please can we take the opportunity to remind you of some of the benefits of parentsportal which are detailed below:

- Inform us of any changes to your contact details, eg mobile and home telephone numbers
- Inform us if your child will be absent from school
- View your child's timetable
- Directly link to iPay where you can add money to your child's lunch account, etc

Further areas that are currently being developed which will hopefully be available in the future are:

- Online booking appointments for parental evenings
- Electronic completion of the annual data check



At the moment the online annual data check facility currently exists but for this to be successful we really need more uptake and hopefully we can move to this in time for next year's check.

School Transport

Pupils should only be travelling on buses they have a pass for. The school is no longer able to issue temporary or privilege passes and should you have any requests for a young person to travel on a different bus, you need to contact The Public Transport Unit at Moray Council either by email (transport@moray.gov.uk) or via the webpage. http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_1680.html.

We will conduct checks on all buses during November to ensure pupils are on the correct buses and have their passes.

Winter Emergency Arrangements: We are once again at the point of preparing for winter and the weather hazards which it can present to school transport. We wanted to provide you with some details about the potential impact of severe weather on the school and how we plan to manage its unpredictable circumstances.

The weather conditions across our catchment area can be very varied at any one time. Detailed weather forecasts for particular parts are not available and we have to depend largely on observations at Kinloss and Aviemore. This means that information from parents, primary schools, local residents, the Police and Roads Department staff are very important in making decisions. Please do not hesitate to contact the school regarding local conditions which cause concern.

Sometimes a decision has to be taken to close the school, either for all pupils or for those from certain areas, prior to the start of the school day or before the opening of the school telephone switchboard at 8.00am. In these circumstances every effort is made to make use of both Moray Firth Radio and Radio Scotland (Grampian bulletin on FM) in notifying weather closures or transport difficulties. There is also a Moray Schools Information Line which carries a message about any weather-related problem in the Speyside area. To access this line dial 0870 054 9999 and, when requested, enter the PIN for Speyside High, which is 031070.

SCHOOL INFORMATION LINE:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

0870 054 9999

SPEYSIDE HIGH PIN 031070

As we are sure you will appreciate, the extent to which the information from any of these sources is up to date depends on several factors. A great deal of information has to be accurately passed on by a large number of people in a short period of time, and then all necessary telephone calls made to update messages. When this can be done depends on unpredictable circumstances. It is rare that local road conditions can be predicted on the evening before. This means that updates on conditions have to be gathered between 7.00 and 8.00am as effectively as we can, reflecting often varying local conditions across our extensive catchment area.

As it is often the case that your local weather and road conditions may be very different from those in Aberlour, it is important that you exercise your own judgement about whether it is safe for your child to travel to school. If you have a concern about your child's safety because of local conditions, then please feel free to decide whether you send him or her to school.

During the course of days when the school is open, but the weather and road conditions deteriorate, we aim to err on the side of caution in sending pupils home while the conditions still permit. Such decisions have to take account of the connecting journeys or walking that some pupils have to do after being dropped off on a main bus route. Weather conditions can sometimes worsen very rapidly and it takes some time to arrange for buses to come to school to collect pupils. In extreme circumstances, which might prevent safe travel from Aberlour, children would have to be accommodated in Aberlour. This occurred in 2002 during severe local flooding. It would be helpful if you were able to make plans for your child to stay with a friend or relative either in Aberlour or on a main bus route, if this were still open, in the event of an emergency. Any such address which you are able to provide should be included in the form that will be issued next week.

During the course of an emergency closure it is not possible for us to have a personal conversation with all parents whose children may be affected. This is because of the limitation on telephone lines available and the number of incoming calls which we may receive in these circumstances. We are able, however, to make use of an automated telephone messaging system to send a common message to a nominated point of contact (eg home telephone, email or a mobile phone) for all pupils travelling on a particular bus which might be sent home. We can also update information on Moray Council's web page <http://schoolclosures.moray.gov.uk/> the school website (www.speysidehighschool.net) and on our Twitter feed @SpeysideRector. We can also send a message to parents of pupils who do not travel on school transport. Pupils will, of course, be free to make use of personal mobile phones in the event of a school closure during the course of the day. All pupils should note that, in the event of a closure during the school day, they must not leave the school grounds without notifying the school office.

Should the school be closed for any length of time then work should be available on the school website www.speysidehighschool.net and pupils are asked to check this.

In summary, please note the following points:

- Do not send or bring your child to school if local conditions give you cause for concern.
- If you bring your child to school when normal school transport cannot run then it will be your responsibility to make arrangements for them to be taken home at the end of the day.
- The following options are available to check for relevant information:
 - The School Information Line: 0870 054 9999, PIN: 031070
 - Moray Council's School Closure webpage: <http://schoolclosures.moray.gov.uk/>
 - Speyside High School website: www.speysidehighschool.net
 - Our Twitter feed: @SpeysideRector
 - Moray Firth Radio or BBC Radio Scotland FM
- Please/.

- Please telephone the school during the day if local conditions give you concern.
- Arrange an emergency address in Aberlour or on a main bus route, if possible.
- Ensure that your son or daughter knows what to do and where to contact you if he or she is sent home early.
- Let us have the best number to send a telephone message to in the event of your son or daughter being sent home.

Common Messages



Our computerised records system provides us with the opportunity to send a text/voice message to a nominated mobile/landline telephone or an email, if that is your preferred point of contact. Further details about this will be included in a letter to be issued next week. Unfortunately the character limit is restricted for this facility therefore our messages may seem short and at times we cannot always include salutations. Please accept our apologies for this but we do try, where possible, to provide as much information in the text as we can.



Some of the circumstances that we will use the message facility are:

- To inform you if your child is being sent home because of weather conditions which might affect travel.
- At the beginning of a day on which the school will be closed because of road conditions, if we are able to.
- To inform you for plans for the next day following a school closure.
- If your child is absent from school during morning registration. This should purely be a confirmation of what you already know and there is no need for you to telephone the school. However, if you receive such a message, and you think that your child should be in school, please contact us as soon as possible. The purpose of the message is to secure the safety of children and to try to ensure that both you and we know where they are. If we confirm an absence which you feel we knew about in advance, please feel no need to respond.

The message facility works by sending a message to your preferred means of contact so please remember this when completing the form that will be issued next week.