



Information for Families in Lower School Session 2023- 2024

Head	Mrs Carol Chandler-Thompson
Senior Deputy & Head of Boarding	Mrs Jill Bryce
Business Director	Ms Fiona Duncanson
Deputy Head, Pastoral Care	Mr Peter Verrecchia
Deputy Head, Academic	Mrs Sonia Edwards
Head of Lower School	Miss Mel Benson
Head of Junior School	Mrs Lisa Nettleton

Lower School Leadership

Head of Lower School	Miss Mel Benson
Deputy Head of Lower School	Mrs Laura Taylor
Transition Tutor	Miss Antonia Hippisley
Lead Tutor	Mr Ross Fowles
Lower School Student Welfare Manager	Miss Natalie Pascal

Academic

Head of English	Miss Beth Turner
Head of Mathematics	Dr Frederica Vian
Head of Languages	Miss Annie Aitken
Head of Social Sciences	Ms Eleanor Patrick
Head of Art and Creative Technologies	Mr Sean Stewart
Director of Music	Mrs Jasmine Nicholson
Director of Sport	Mrs Christine Fourie
Head of Biology	Mrs Laura Scott
Head of Physics	Mr Andrew Roache
Head of Chemistry	Mrs Claire Hainsworth
Head of Support for Learning	Ms Juliet Vaughan

Contacting School

Lower School Office Telephone Number: 0131 811 8010

A positive relationship with all our families is very important to us, please do not hesitate to contact us with anything small or large.

Student Support is available from 8.30am-4.00pm and will be provided by Miss Pascual, the Lower School Student Welfare Manager (lsoffice@stge.org.uk).

The Lower School Student Welfare Manager has responsibilities which take her away from the Lower School office from time to time, in which case she leaves the answering machine on. However, any message will be taken before the end of the school day.

If you wish to speak to or make an appointment with any member of the Lower School leadership team, please telephone the above number or in an emergency telephone the main school number (0131 311 8000).

If your query is related to academic matters, please ask to speak to the relevant Head of Department from the list above in the first instance. If you wish to speak about a pastoral matter, please ask to be directed to the Lower School Leadership team.

If you would like to get a message to your child during the school day, please call Lower School Student Welfare Manager who will post a notice on the board outside her office. Students will be encouraged to check this noticeboard at regular intervals throughout the school day.

Information Systems and Communications

The school uses a small number of systems which have student, staff and family accounts.

- [ISAMs](#), including Parent Portal: the school management system, including links to the Parent Teacher Forum and whole school policies and where your contact data is stored.
- Schoolpost: the school mailing system to groups within the school community
- Office 365: windows based operational system used by students and staff
- [Website](#), [calendar](#), e-news and [social media](#): communication and celebration channel

The username and the password for the portal will be sent to you by our Systems Management IT team when you join. If you experience difficulty using this system, please get in touch with our Systems Management team directly using isams@stge.org.uk.

Day to Day Matters

Two sections from St George's Absence Policy:

Procedures

St George's School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with absences:

2.1 Illness or Other Legitimate absence

2.1.1 For all absences, parents are asked to email the absence line, email address for the specific section of school that relates to their daughter(s). If you are unable to send an email, please leave a voicemail on the dedicated absence line for that area of school.

Nursery – nursery@stge.org.uk or 0131 311 8030

Junior School – jsoffice@stge.org.uk or 0131 311 8030

Lower School – lsoffice@stge.org.uk or 0131 311 8050

Upper School – usoffice@stge.org.uk or 0131 311 8040

Please provide the following information - specifying the reason and dates, and times if applicable, for each period of absence, either by email or note to the relevant office.

2.1.2 If pupils are ill and unable to attend school, parents are requested to contact the school before 8.30am on the first, and each subsequent, morning of absence. We would ask that in the first instance contact is made using the relevant absence line numbers or email addresses as indicated in 2.1.1 above and will need to be followed by email or written confirmation.

2.1.3 If no contact is made the School will make contact with parents.

2.1.4 With this system, parents can be confident that their daughter has arrived safely at school.

2.1.5 Wherever possible routine appointments with the doctor, dentist, etc. should be arranged for outside school hours. If this is not possible parents should email the absence email address or give a note to their form teacher at least three days in advance. In these circumstances it is not necessary to telephone the school on the day of absence.

2.1.6 If a pupil is absent from school for reasons other than ill health, this must be discussed with the school on each separate occasion. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances, provided a written explanation is received.

2.1.7 During absences from school due to occasional or acute illness, work will not generally be provided for the pupil to complete at home. If a pupil is not well enough to attend school then she should rest at home until she is recovered. In the event of a longer period of absence, due to illness or an ongoing medical condition, parents should contact the pupil's Head of Year or Head of Section to discuss how she can best be supported in her studies.

2.1.8 If a student has been physically sick (vomiting), or suffering from diarrhoea, they should not return to school until 48 hours after the last episode.

2.2. Holidays

2.2.1 Please note that we ask parents not to make holiday arrangements that require their daughters to miss days during term-time. Holiday leave in term time will not be granted

unless circumstances are exceptional. Term dates can be found on the school website:
[St George's Term Dates - All Girls Independent Day & Boarding School](#)

2.2.2 If a child needs to be away from school in exceptional circumstances, a letter requesting permission should be sent to the relevant Head of Section (Head of Junior School, Head of Lower School and Deputy Head-Pastoral for Upper School) at least three days in advance.

With the issue of school attendance and the safeguarding of your daughter being of such importance, phone requests of this nature are not considered appropriate by the school. In every case, a letter signed by a parent/guardian, or an email from the parent/guardian's email address, will be required to authenticate the request.

6.3 Role of Head of Year/ Head of Section

The Head of Year or Head of Section will become involved and make direct contact with parents, if there is a need to discuss in further detail, a concern about a regular pattern of absence, an extended period of absence which is not explained prior to the school or if the student's attendance falls below 95%; either within a single week or over a term or year.

A full copy of the absence policy will be live in the parent portal from August.

The School Day

Students should be in their form room by 8.40am and not earlier than 8.30am. Any student arriving before 8.30am should go to the St George's Centre for Breakfast Club. The time from 8.45–8.50am is for administration and registration. If a student is not in the form room during this time they will be marked absent.

There is an assembly on at least one morning per week from 8.50–9.05am. Break is from 10.25 – 10.45am (10.10-10.30am on a Friday) and lunch is from 12.45–1.45pm (12.50-2.00pm on a Friday). Afternoon school finishes at 3.50pm.

Form Classes and Rooms

Students in Primary 6 are divided into two classes; Remove (Primary 7) into three and Lower 4 (S1) into four classes. These classes are arranged to contain a broad spectrum of students. Primary 6 are largely taught by class teachers in their classrooms but will also make use of specialist facilities and specialist teachers for a number of subjects. Once the term is underway, the students will be mixed up for Mathematics. Students in Remove and Lower 4 have a large locker each in which they can keep their books and general class equipment but they move from room to room for different classes. Students also use the Robertson Music Centre, the Art Department and the Sports Hall as well as the games fields in the Upper School.

Crossings

The use of areas on the Upper School Campus requires the students to cross Garscube Terrace, whilst adhering to the school rules, on a regular basis. The crossing of the road is staffed whilst students move independently between the two campuses.

Dropping off & Collecting

We recommend using Ravelston Park for dropping off and collection; parking is free until 8.30am. Students can enter the school campus via the small gate at the end of Houldsworth House, using the school code. If you wish to drop off and collect at the main school entrance, please use Henderland Road to avoid dangerous congestion in Garscube Terrace or Coltbridge Terrace.

Safety

It is unsafe for students to wait at the end of the school drive if they arrive before 8.30am or, in the event of non-collection by parents, at the end of the school day. Students should go to the St George's Centre or come into the Lansdowne campus if they are early and, at the end of the day, they should go to Lansdowne House where there will be someone to help.

During winter months it is dark by the time students leave school and, even in groups, they are vulnerable. Students should not walk along the cycleway (Roseburn Path) alone at any time. We strongly advise students not to use the cycleway at all.

In no circumstances should families park or wait on areas of the road marked with zig-zags, hatching or other "no parking" signs.

After School Care (from 3.50pm)

Students in Primary 6, Remove (P7) and Lower 4 (S1) wishing to stay late after school, are supervised and have the opportunity to have a snack, relax, or participate in play and activities. Lower School students should not go to the St George's Centre at 3.50pm unless with a parent, guardian or sister who is in Upper School.

You will be required to book your child into After School Care one week ahead and the fees for this service will be added retrospectively.

Co-curriculum

There are a huge variety of clubs and activities on offer for our students. Before each term starts, a schedule of all the clubs and activities is published to families. Families and students are required to sign up to clubs using SOCS. In Lower School, we encourage every student to do at least one club per term and we encourage everyone to commit to their club/s with very good attendance rates.

Cancellation of Clubs

If a club is cancelled on the day, students will be notified and families will be contacted via School Post or SOCS. If a club is cancelled before the day then they should have already made alternative arrangements.

Travelling in bad weather

School is always kept open and warm until well after 3.50pm so there is no need for any student to leave before then. After 3.50pm students can go to After School Care. Should a student have a difficult journey, families should have made suitable arrangements and informed the school.

Illness/Accident

If your child feels unwell while at school, they will be looked after by the Nurse or a first aider. If they continue to feel unwell, we will contact you so that your child may be taken home. It is particularly important that we have a daytime contact telephone number for these situations and we would appreciate your help in updating us with any changes.

Cuts and bruises are dealt with by our nurses and first aiders, but in the event of a more serious accident or injury, we will contact you directly. There are very specific procedures which are then followed depending on the nature and extent of the injury. Please be assured that we shall look after your child with due care and attention in any circumstances.

Lost Property

We would appreciate it if you would name everything you possibly can. Watches should also be marked.

Lunches

The lunch menu is on the website available for everyone to see. Families should notify the Student Welfare Manager, Miss Pascual, in the first instance if you have any questions or queries regarding lunches.

Uniform & Dress Code

Students are expected to wear the uniform correctly, as per the uniform and dress code. There is a school uniform exchange based in the Sports Pavilion by Upper School, and dates and times of opening are advertised in the school calendar and on the school website: [Uniform Exchange » St George's School For Girls](#)

The full Uniform and Dress Code will be live in the Parent Portal from August.

School Transport System & Minibus Shuttle

St George's have recently started using a new transport system, Vectare. Bookings for all routes can be made via the dedicated transport website at <https://stge.vectare.co.uk/>. This website allows you to enter your postcode, find your closest stop, and see bespoke travel information for your child's journey to school. The website allows for bookings to be made 24/7, you can add your

child on the bus as a block booking or as a one off.

We have five morning bus routes, and three in the afternoon. We also provide a free shuttle bus service to and from Haymarket Train Station. For further details, including timetable and fare information you can find this on our website under the tab ['School Bus Guide'](#).

New families to St George's

Lower School is a key entry stage for new students joining St George's. It is our aim to make the transition from one school and settle into St George's as smooth as possible. Below is a guide to our transition programme:



Leadership and Student Voice

Lower School campus provides many wonderful opportunities, including leadership and student voice. We have our own Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl, student council and student committees, form captains, news reps, charities reps, house captains and vice house captains as well as our Lower 4 Champions roles. Leadership and student voice opportunities grow, starting in Primary 6 through to Lower 4, as student move their way through Lower School.

Academic Matters

Communication with Parents

In Lower School there is a Welcome Evening Family Barbecue early in the autumn term for families in Primary 6, Remove and Lower 4. Other opportunities include the following:

Primary 6

There is a more formal opportunity to meet class teachers at the end of September and May. You will receive a full written report in March. Personal Learning Profiles (PLPs) are sent home termly.

Remove

At the start of October, you will receive a brief Transition report which will be a general update on how your child has settled into secondary education, followed by a more formal opportunity to meet individual subject teachers for a parents' evening in Parent's Evening in December. You will receive a full written report in March and a progress report in June.

Lower 4

In December, you will receive a progress report with a general update on Lower 4, followed by a parents' evening in March. A full written report will be sent home in June.

We shall, of course, get in touch with you if we have any concerns and we hope that you will contact the school directly if you have any worries. Many problems can be dealt with quickly and effectively if we are given the opportunity to address them before they develop into major issues.

Curriculum

The curriculum is based on all timetabled activities that take place to promote learning, growth and development of all students. In addition, the hidden curriculum that students obtain from academic enrichment, assemblies, the school's ethos and the manner in they are treated and expected to behave is part of the curriculum. An extensive co-curriculum programme enhances the provision offered in the curriculum. St George's School provides a coherent all-through academic curriculum from Nursery to Sixth Form. The curriculum is broad and balanced, incorporating language, mathematical, scientific, technological, physical, social, religious and moral, and expressive education. It is based upon a 'Best of British' approach with the Curriculum for Excellence, Key Stage 3, GCSE and SQA qualifications forming elements of the outlined curriculum structure.

The curriculum policy will be live in the Parent Portal from August.

Approach to Learning

Staff have high expectations of Lower School students. Students should aim to be positive, respectful, organised, up for a challenge and determined to do their best at all times. Approach to Learning will be graded and reported on in Remove and Lower Four.

Our focus is on the learning journey; we aim to give quality feedback about how to progress and next steps – this does not always entail a percentage or grade (especially in Lower School). We know that one danger with focusing too hard on outcomes at this age, whilst it seems superficially motivating, students can place themselves in a 'can't do' box following one test or grade. Or the opposite can also happen - falsely inflated sense of 'natural ability' following isolated success can undermine work ethic. Another risk is that students get fixated on the grade or the percentage and do not listen or take in the feedback about what they need to do next, to progress towards excellence which we know they are all capable of. We focus on approach and attitude knowing that everyone's trajectory is different.

The best thing you can do to support your daughter is to focus on identifying what is great about your daughter's approach and encouraging that. When you see resilience, determination, organisation, seize it and praise what is good about it.

Finally, it is important to note that percentages and grades are not always comparable across the many different subjects.

Homework

Primary 6 students should have approximately 40 minutes of homework each night (Monday–Thursday) which will have an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with occasional assignments in other subjects. Students in Remove should have approximately one hour's homework in up to four subjects each evening and there is always 'ongoing homework' e.g. consolidating and extending what has been studied in class. In Lower 4 this will increase slightly to up to 90 minutes. Some students will require much longer for set homework than others. Please let the form teacher know if the quantity set seems too burdensome, or indeed if your child seems to have very little or no homework at all. At the start of session, both you and your child will receive a homework timetable outlining homework subjects for each day of the week.

From Remove upwards, all homework (both planned and ad hoc) will be issued as a Teams Assignment and added to students' Outlook Calendars.

This will allow students to use their Outlook Calendars to plan workload and anticipate crunch points, and parents to be kept apprised of homework issued and due, via a weekly email digest.

This applies to all planned homework tasks, whether digital or otherwise:

- Digital tasks submitted via Teams as normal – Word / OneNote / etc.
- Physical / handwritten tasks "submitted" on Teams when work is handed in in class

Students are expected to complete their homework and hand it in at the correct time. If a student repeatedly fails to fulfil their homework obligation, staff will follow the Homework policy for the next steps.

The full homework policy will be live on the Parent Portal from August.

Equipment

Books and notebooks will be given out at the start of the school year. Students will need to have some books and equipment of their own. Here is a list of what they should have. Please ensure that everything is named and replenished as required.

- pencil case
- 2 black or blue biro or fibre tip pens
- at least 2 sharp pencils
- a 30 cm ruler
- a rubber and a sharpener
- coloured pencils
- scissors
- a calculator
- a protractor
- a compass
- highlighter pens
- pritt or similar glue stick (not coloured)
- P6 only – homework folder (A4 size, expanding file)

Please note, no liquid Tipp-ex should be brought to school.

Students will also require specific items e.g. for Art, PE, games and swimming. Students will receive a homework planner that can host timetables to help them remember what they need.

Transition from Primary to Secondary Education

The Lower School team will host an event called 'Looking Ahead to Secondary Education' the term before your daughter embarks on her secondary education journey and ask any questions you may have.

Trips and Outings

Students are taken on educational visits and outings throughout the year. Trips offer the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom or other learning environments. Trips relevant to learning can help to develop a participant's knowledge and investigative skills, and longer trips, especially abroad, encourage greater independence. Trips may be within the immediate locality or further afield. Parents may be asked for a contribution towards travel or entrance expenses and this will be added to the fees once they have given permission.

The trips policy will be live in the parent portal from August.

Outdoor Education Trips

The focus of our Outdoor Education trips, in addition to acquiring new physical skills, is on developing mental skills (such as confidence and resilience), emotional (managing feelings) and social (such as sense of responsibility, working with others as part of a team, acquiring leadership skills and extending friendship groups). These trips are built into the curriculum of Lower School as they aim to develop cross-curricular skills. Students take part in Outdoor Education residential camps in Primary 6, Remove (P7) and Lower 4 (S1). Here is a run-through of where year groups went to for session 2022-2023:

Primary 6 residential camp to Lendrick Muir, Kinross

Primary 6 year group enjoy an action packed three-day residential experience at Lendrick Muir. They engage in a variety of outdoor activities including raft building, archery, ropes course and problem solving. Finishing their Primary experience on a high at St George's.

Remove (P7) residential camp to Lagganlia, Cairngorms National Park

The outdoor experience is extended to five days in Remove when the year group travel to Lagganlia near Glenfeshie in the Cairngorms National Park to engage in a wide range of activities such as mountain biking, gorge walking, abseiling, rock climbing, canoeing and kayaking. It comes as students start their secondary education at St George's so there is a focus on responsibility and organisation as well as developing social skills in new groups.

Lower 4 (S1) residential camp to Loch Eil Outward Bound Trust, Fort William

The Lower 4 Outdoor Education is the culmination of the students' outdoor education journey in Lower School. At Loch Eil the students engage in higher challenge activities, the students venture into the wild more focusing on journeys including a wild camp, as well as developing and reflecting on their meta-skills in preparation for their onward journey into Upper School.

IT and Devices

Lower School students are not allowed to use mobile phones, or cellular/internet enabled watches in school. They must be switched off when they arrive in school, put them in their lockable locker (or give to Primary 6 teacher if they are in Primary 6) and not switch them on again until 3.50pm as they leave. Throughout the year we will continue to address appropriate use of technology and social media and will follow up via schoolpost on how families can support this too. Please see the IT policies covering mobile phones, social media, digital media, devices and ICT use policies in the parent portal.

Instrumental Music Lessons

We operate a rotation system so that students learning a musical instrument have their lesson at a different time each week. This avoids the problem of them missing the same subject lesson every week but requires them to be attentive to the timetable on the music notice board. It is their responsibility to change any music lessons that may be problematic and to find out what work has been covered in their absence and if homework was set. Please resist the temptation to rush in with instruments or anything else that a student may have forgotten. They are less likely to remember the next time if they know you will run after them!

Attendance at PE/Sport

If a student is unable to take part in PE/Sport or swimming they should bring a note from home to the PE teacher on the day of the lesson. When possible, students should accompany the class to observe the lesson.

The Behaviour and Expectations Policy

The Behaviour and Expectations Policy is available to review in the Parent Portal from August each year. The policy outlines expected behaviour for students at St George's and provides details about any action that may be taken in the event that behaviour and expectations are not met.

Arrangements for the provision of Period Products

The school will ensure that sufficient period products are obtainable for free to meet the needs of students during term time. There is no limit to the amount of products an individual student can take and individuals do not need to provide a reason to access the products.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI)

St George's was founded on the principles of fairness and equality of opportunity. The student DEI Policy will be live in the parent portal from August.

Boarding

The boarding house is called Houldsworth House and operates three models: full-time boarding, flexi-boarding and ad hoc boarding. Please request the Boarders' Handbook from the boarding team at houldsworth@stge.org.uk.

Other ways to communicate with us and each other

The Parent/Teacher Forum (PTF)

The Parent/Teacher Forum (PTF) has a parents' representative in each class. It is a means for families to raise any general issues for discussion with the school and also supports in organising social events for families and the wider community. Uniform Exchange is also run by parent volunteers from PTF.

Names and contact details of parent reps will be circulated at the start of each session, once expressions of interest have been collected. There is a PTF section in the Parent Portal.

Parent WhatsApp groups/social media

We are aware that the usage of social media as a communication tool between parents is common and we appreciate that social media platforms such as WhatsApp can play a useful role in helping parents connect on a personal and private basis.

However, there are several dangers that using these platforms can pose. Inappropriate or inaccurate content can be accidentally or purposefully shared. Comments which are defamatory, or distress other members of the school community can be widely distributed and difficult to remove. Some platforms (such as WhatsApp) oblige users to share personal data to participate in a group. Some parents are not comfortable with this and hence will be excluded.

The school cannot therefore officially support use of WhatsApp or other non-inclusive platforms for communication by or for parent groups. The school will always use SchoolPost as a means of communicating with you directly.

If discussing school-related topics on any form of social media, we advise parents to take note of some basic ground rules:

- Treat all members of the school community with kindness and respect
- Check all information with a reliable source or directly with the school before sharing with others
- Try to resolve any issues directly with the school before sharing problems with others
- Ensure you have the consent of other parents before sharing any of their personal data within the group, including contact details
- Under no circumstances share personal information about pupils or others at the school outside of the group or in any way which may be searched online

We don't want to discourage families from connecting; the absolute opposite. We would hope all families can be included and welcomed as part of the school community. We will organise social elements to school events to enable families to get to know each other and exchange details and of course should you wish to connect via social media on a personal basis, that is entirely acceptable!

Complaints

St George's welcomes suggestions and comments from parents, and takes seriously concerns or complaints which may arise, as they can help us to improve the educational experience that we provide.

The Complaints and Concerns Policy can be found in the parent portal. It encourages an informal resolution of any difficulties in the first instance and sets out procedures thereafter, if this is not possible.