



Information for Families in Upper School Session 2023- 2024

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

Contacting Upper School

Upper School Reception 0131 311 8000
Upper School Welfare Manager: Mrs Elaine Ford 0131 311 8040

Pastoral

Head of Upper 4: Mrs Jennifer Dickson
Head of Lower 5: Miss Alison Strathdee
Head of Upper 5: Mrs Annette Mackinnon
Head of Sixth Form: Mrs Jo Mushat

Academic

Head of English: Miss Beth Turner
Head of Mathematics: Dr Federica 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

Upper School Office Telephone Number: 0131 311 8040

You are welcome to contact us; we value our relationships with families.

Student Support is available from 8.30am – 4.00pm and will be provided by Mrs Ford, Upper School Student Welfare Manager (usoffice@stge.org.uk).

If you wish to speak to, or make an appointment with any member of staff, please telephone the above number or email office@stge.org.uk. 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 relevant Head of Year in the first instance. If you would like to get a message to your child during the school day, please call Reception or the Upper School Student Welfare Manager who will locate your daughter for you.

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 timetable and policies
- SchoolPost: the school mailing system to groups within the school community
- [SOCS](#): the school co-curriculum system for clubs, activities and fixtures
- Office 365: windows based operational system used by students and staff
- [Website](#), [calendar](#), e-news and [social media](#): communication and celebration channels

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

Absence Policy

Details outlined below are taken from St George's School Absence Policy which is available to review in the Parent Portal from August.

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 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.

The School Day

Students should be in their form room by 8.40am. 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 for Upper School on at least one morning per week from 8.50 -9.05am, as well as flexible weekly or fortnightly morning assemblies for each year group, vital in passing on information by the Head of Year and time to bond as a year group and consider age-appropriate issues. Break is from 10.25 – 10.45am (10.10-10.30am on a Friday) and lunch is from 12.05 – 1.05pm (12.15-1.25pm on a Friday). Afternoon school finishes at 3.50pm.

Form Classes

Students in Upper School are registered in form classes. In Upper 4 (S2) there are four classes arranged to contain a broad spectrum of students who are taught together for all subjects, with the exception of English, mathematics and languages other than English. In Lower 5 (S1) to Upper 6 (S6), students are registered in form classes and then attend subjects based on their examination course choices. From Upper 4 to Upper 6 a large lockable locker in which they store their sports equipment and they bring in the subject material required for lessons each day. There is no provision of space for storage of subject material in Upper School.

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

In the interests of safety, we would ask that if students are being picked up at the end of the day, that they should go to the St George's Centre or wait in the Upper School building, to reduce large groups gathering on narrow pavements.

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 Roseburn Path (cycle path) alone at any time. We strongly advise students not to use the Roseburn Path at all.

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

After school arrangements in Upper School

The Upper School site closes at 5.30pm (Monday to Thursday) and at 4pm on Friday. On Monday to Thursday from 4pm onwards Upper School students must be at a co-curricular activity, signed in at the Upper School library or based in the St George's Centre, where there is no direct supervision of students.

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.

Cancellation of co-curriculum activities

If a club is cancelled on the day, students will be notified and parents will be contacted via SchoolPost 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 if parents are delayed in collecting. We monitor travel conditions and will communicate by SchoolPost on the rare occasions when there is a need to send students home early. Unless absolutely necessary, parents are requested not to telephone school in bad weather conditions, as the lines become congested.

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 checking/completing our contact information at the beginning of the school year.

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 too should be

marked.

Uniform & Dress Code

Students are expected to wear the uniform correctly, as per the Uniform and Dress Code, which is available to review in the Parent Portal from August each year.

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](#)

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 young person on the bus as a block booking or as a one off. We have five morning bus routes, and three in the afternoon. For further details, including timetable and fare information you can find this on our website under the tab '[School Bus Guide](#)'.

We also provide a free minibus shuttle service to and from Haymarket Train Station. Priority for use of this service is given to students who use trains.

Academic Matters

Communication with Parents

In Upper School there is a Welcome Evening early in the autumn term for parents of young people in Upper 4 to Upper 6. Other opportunities include the following:

Upper 4

A progress report is provided in November, with an online parents' evening in January and a full report in the summer term following Upper 4 examinations. In session 2023-2024 the Upper 4 examinations will be from Monday 25 March to Thursday 28 March.

Lower 5

In the autumn term there is an online parents' evening in November, followed by a progress report in March and a full report in the summer term following Lower 5 examinations. In session 2023-

2024 the Lower 5 examinations will be from Monday 22 April to Monday 29 April.

Upper 5

There will be two parents' evenings during the course of the year, one in the autumn online and an in-person meeting in the spring term following the mock examinations. In session 2023-2023 the Upper 5 mock examinations will be from Monday 20 November to Friday 1 December, with English Language and additional modern language examinations between Wednesday 10 January and Friday 12 January.

Lower 6 and Upper 6

There will be two parents' evening during the course of the year, one in the autumn online and an in-person meeting in the spring term following the mock examinations. In session 2023-2024 the Lower 6 and Upper 6 mock examinations will be from Monday 15 January to Friday 26 January.

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. The Remove to Upper 6 Reporting Policy will be available to review in the Parent Portal in August.

Approach to Learning

Staff have high expectations of all our students. Students should aim to be positive, respectful, organised, up for a challenge and determined to do their best at all times in their work. Approach to Learning will be reported on in Upper 4 to Upper 6.

Options

Upper School is a time when decisions are made about next steps in relation to examination options for GCSE, Higher and Advanced Higher. A programme of preparation is put in place for all students and an Options Evening will be held on Thursday 8 February 2024.

In addition, Upper 4 Options Interviews will be during the week commencing Monday 19 February 2024, with subject options submitted on Thursday 29 February 2024.

Upper 5 Options Interviews will be during the week commencing Monday 26 February 2024, with subject options submitted on Monday 11 March 2024.

In Lower 6, Options Interviews will be during the week commencing Monday 4 March 2024, with subject options submitted on Monday 11 March 2024.

Homework

Students are expected to complete their homework and hand it in at the correct time. If a student fails to fulfil their homework obligation, staff will follow the Homework Policy for the next steps, a copy of the policy is available to review in the Parent Portal from August. Details of all homework set will be issued to parents during the course of each week, along with details of upcoming assessments or other deadlines.

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

Equipment

All Upper 4 to Upper 6 students should have their own personal device in line with the published information for each year group.

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.

- 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
- pritt or similar glue stick

Please note, no liquid tipp-ex should be brought to school. Students will also require specific items e.g. for Art, PE and games.

IT and Devices

Please review the IT policies in the Parent Portal, these cover acceptable use, social media, digital media, bring your own device (Lower 5 to Upper 6) and managed devices (Upper 4).

All students in Upper School should bring a fully charged device into school every day for access when required to enhance learning. Mobile phones are accessible during the school day to access timetable details and on occasion to support learning, but their use must fall within the IT policies outlined above and it is expected that all members of the Upper School community will adhere to appropriate use.

Trips and Outings

Students are taken on educational visits and outings throughout the year. These may be within the immediate locality or further afield. For all trips, parents are notified in advance and asked to complete a permission slip. 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.

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

It is expected that all students will attend PE/Sport lessons. 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.

Pastoral matters

Behaviour and Expectations

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 at St George's School, Edinburgh

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 St George's DEI (students) Policy can be reviewed 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.