

Grantown Grammar School

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THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
COMHAIRLE NA GAIDHEALTACHD

Mrs Claire McGonigal, Headteacher

16 November 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian

Social Gatherings

Over the weekend there were some disturbances in Grantown town centre. One of these involved the gathering of a large number of pupils. As we all know, currently there are very few activities for our young people to do in the evenings. The restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic means that most of the activities our children used to enjoy, the Youth Club, meeting up in friends' houses and so on are not permitted at present. One activity which young people can still do is meet up with a friend and go to the local shop for a juice and a snack. Unfortunately it seems that pretty much every young person in Grantown had the same idea on Friday night. None of these pupils were doing anything wrong but, since the dawn of time, when teenagers get together in large groups with no structure, daft things can happen. Some members of our community with less experience of teenagers can find such large groups intimidating and threatening. As we all know, large groups of teenagers can be quite loud! There were a number of calls to the police and although the police confirmed that the young people weren't doing anything criminal, it's important that we take the feelings of everyone in our community into consideration.

I am writing this letter to make you aware of this, as the likelihood of lots of small groups all going to the local shops at the same time isn't something I'd have thought of before the weekend. As a parent, I'd like to have it brought to my attention. Although I don't want our young people to have even more restrictions as a walk to the shops with a friend after school is a healthy and positive thing to do, it might be worth considering that you are perhaps more careful regarding curfews and where your child is meeting friends. Currently the Covid 19 Guidelines states: "Young people aged between 12 and 17 can meet up in groups of up to 6 at a time outdoors and are not subject to the 2 household limit. Physical distancing is required." This means that a group of 6 friends can meet in a back garden. It's also worth noting that Grantown Primary School and Grantown Grammar School should not be accessed by any pupils after school hours unless there is an organised activity. Secondary pupils should not access any of the 4 catchment Primary schools, Grantown, Carrbridge, Abernethy or Deshar at any time unless specifically invited to do so by staff at the school.

I'll be holding assemblies for all pupils to make them more aware of how lots of teenagers having a laugh and being noisy together can sometimes make members of our community, especially the elderly, nervous even though there's no reason for them to be. I'm sure that our pupils will respond positively and be more aware of how their actions can impact others in future.

I'll also be sharing this letter with community organisations to let them know the difficulties our young people face at present and how we are working together to solve the tensions in the town and surrounding areas.

As a school we are, like everyone, trying to come up with creative solutions to evening activities including looking at midnight football sessions and other Active Schools community lets. We are very much open to suggestions of evening activities which could be offered.

As the evenings get darker and we start to look forward to 'Grantown does Christmas', I'm sure that we can enjoy the seasonal celebrations together.

Yours faithfully

Claire McGonigal

Claire McGonigal
Headteacher