



St Thomas Aquinas R.C Secondary School
School Handbook 2018-19

Welcome to St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School

Dear Parent / Guardian

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your family to St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School.

In order to achieve these aims for our school community we need the support of our parents. Only by working together can we ensure that all the young people in our school community achieve their maximum potential.

As a Catholic School we describe our key mission as follows: “to develop as a community of faith and learning, providing the highest quality of education and supporting the formation of each young person through the promotion of Gospel values”. We aim to develop a school community that is welcoming, caring and inclusive.

St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary is a Roman Catholic, co-educational, secondary school based in the West End of Glasgow. With the largest catchment area of any school in Glasgow it is no surprise we serve a very diverse set of local communities from Drumchapel through Knightswood, Scotstoun, Partick and in to the city centre.

The continued success of St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School is supported by a very committed teaching staff led by an experienced senior leadership team.

If there are questions on any aspect of life in St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours faithfully

Andrew McSorley
Head Teacher

St Thomas Aquinas RC School Vision



St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School community will:

Promote moral, spiritual and religious values which are always consistent with those which are found in the Gospels and which are integral to the distinctive Catholic mission of the school.

Foster a spirit of cooperation, mutual support and communication amongst students, staff, parents, the Church and the wider community.

Care for all its members, respecting each person as an individual who has both rights and responsibilities to the rest of the community.

Prepare students to live as responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. Challenge all students to achieve their maximum potential.

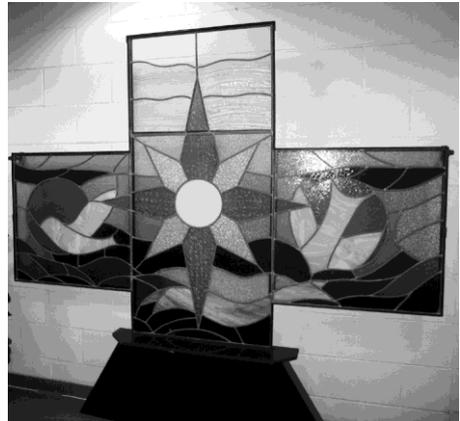
Seek to provide the widest range of opportunities for all staff to continue to develop their professional competence and expertise.

A CHARTER FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CATHOLIC EDUCATION SERVICE

The mission of the Catholic school is to develop as a community of faith and learning, providing the highest quality of education, and offering formation through the promotion of Gospel values, through celebration and worship, and through service to the common good.

All Catholic schools in Scotland, in honouring Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, will feature the following characteristics:



- A commitment to the integrated education and formation of the whole person, in close partnership with parents as the first educators of their young people;
- An inclusive ethos which aims to honour the life, dignity and voice of each person, made in the image of God;
- A commitment to the search for wisdom in life and to the pursuit of excellence, through the development of each person's unique God-given talents;
- A commitment to the spiritual formation of the school community, through the shared experience of prayer and liturgy, and in partnership with local parishes;
- The provision of religious education programmes which will enable young people to develop their understanding of Gospel values and of how to apply them to life;
- A commitment to uphold the moral teaching, faith tradition and sacramental life of the Catholic Church;
- A commitment to communicate Catholic social teaching and thereby to promote social justice and opportunity for all;
- A commitment to ecumenical action and the unity of Christians;
- The promotion of respect for different beliefs and cultures and for inter-faith dialogue;
- A commitment to support the continuing professional and spiritual development of staff.

All members of staff appointed to a Catholic school are expected to support and promote the aims, mission, values and ethos of the school, as illustrated in this Charter

School Information

You can cut out the following information and have it on your fridge, purse or work desk etc. for ease of finding the numbers required.

Contact Details:

112 Mitre Road

Glasgow

G14 9PP

Phone: 0141 582 0280

Email: headteacher@st-thomasaquinas-sec.glasgow.sch.uk

Web: www.st-thomasaquinas-sec.glasgow.sch.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/StThomasAqSec>

Background information:

- Co-educational school
- Denominational
- Stages taught: S1-S6
- Current Roll: 919
- Capacity: 950

School staff

A full list is available on the school website and parents will be updated on any changes as required.

The leadership team is as follows:

Headteacher: Mr A McSorley
Depute Head Teachers: Mrs C Wilson
Mr B Quinn
Miss C Meehan
Mrs L Kelly

Transferring from Primary to St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary

We recognise that the transfer from primary to secondary is a very important event for young people. We have a close and effective partnership with each of our 6 partner primary schools. This ensures that the move from primary to secondary is as smooth as possible for young people.

We welcome families from outwith our area. Families living outwith the school catchment area are welcome to make a placing request to attend St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary. Prospective parents are welcome to visit the school and should contact the school office.

Further information is available on

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18426>

The School Day

Session 2018-2019

	Period 1	Period 2	Interval	Period 3	Period 4	Period 5	Lunch	Period 6	Period 7
Mon									
Wed	08:45	09:35	10:25	10:40	11:30	12:20	13:10	13:50	14:40
Thur	09:35	10:25	10:40	11:30	12:20	13:10	13:50	14:40	15:30
	Period 1	Period 2	Interval	Period 3	Period 4	Lunch	Period 5	Period 6	
Tue	8:45	09:35	10:25	10:40	11:30	12:20	13:00	13:50	
Fri	09:35	10:25	10:40	11:30	12:20	13:00	13:50	14:40	

School Holidays

Details of holiday dates are available on the Glasgow City Council website:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17024>

Pupil Absence

Within St Thomas Aquinas R.C Secondary good attendance is encouraged at all times to ensure pupil success. Parents are asked to advise if their son or daughter is going to be absent. This should be done as early as possible on the first day of absence. All calls must be made to the **Pupil Absence Reporting Line on 0141 287 0039**. The line is open between 08.00-15.30 Monday to Friday. If the young person is going to be absent for some time, it would be helpful to know at the earliest opportunity.

The school uses daily text messaging to inform parents and carers of a young person's absence if no contact is made.

All unexplained absence is investigated by the school and appropriate action taken.

Family Holidays *During Term-Time* (other than in exceptional circumstances)

You have to get permission from the Head Teacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time.

You can only do this if:

- you make an application to the head teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with)
- there are exceptional circumstances

It's up to the Head Teacher how many days your child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Full details on Glasgow City Council's policy on absence is available on request, please contact the school office for further assistance.

Medical & Healthcare

The school nurse visits at various times during the year for routine health checks, vaccinations and medical examinations. Parents and carers are kept informed by letter.

If a young person becomes ill during the course of the school day, he/she may require to be sent home. Please ensure that you keep the school informed of all contact details and of any changes that may occur over the school year.

Parents and carers should inform the school of any medical requirements relating to their child. If a young person requires medication during the school day, parents must complete the appropriate medical form. This is available on request from the school office.

Emergencies

We make every effort to maintain a full educational service, but on some occasions circumstances arise which lead to disruption. Schools may be affected by, for example, severe weather, temporary interruption of transport, power failures or difficulties of fuel supply.

In such cases, we shall do all we can to let you know about the details of our closure or re-opening by using letters, texts and the local media etc.

School Dress Code

Our school uniform promotes a real sense of school identity, shared values, self-confidence and a shared sense of community. The uniform is actively supported by our pupils, parents and the Parent Council and is of great benefit to our young people.

The school uniform is:

- School blazer
- White school shirt/blouse
- Plain black jumper or cardigan
- School tie
- Black trousers/skirt (**not black jeans**)
- Black shoes (we strongly discourage trainers)

The official supplier of St Thomas Aquinas school uniform is Academy Uniforms Ltd

The school tie is available from the school office and all other items of school uniform is available from Academy Uniforms Ltd, who visits the school on an annual basis and can be ordered online: www.academyuniformsltd.com

The school office can advise on how to obtain a blazer outwith this time.

The main forms of dress that are unacceptable are:

- Football tops/scarves
- Clothing likely to cause offence (anti-religious symbols or political slogans)
- Clothing or jewellery likely to cause Health & Safety difficulties (e.g. dangling earrings, flammable material)
- Footwear likely to damage flooring
- Baseball caps
- Shorts or leggings
- Hooded tops

Students wearing any of the above items of clothing will be required to remove them or return home to change into acceptable school clothing

PE Kit

It is important that students come prepared to learn and for PE this requires appropriate clothing. All jewellery should be removed. Students who are not participating in PE must have a note or a medical certificate. Students who are unable to participate in practical PE should still bring their kit to allow them to assist in the lesson by refereeing, keeping scores or assisting with the distribution of equipment. This ensures that they are still able to take part in some way in the work of the class and do not miss out on the knowledge and understanding of the course

St Thomas Aquinas has a PE uniform which is composed of a sports (technical) top, shorts or skirt and is available from our uniform supplier, Academy Uniforms.

Clothing & Footwear Grants

Parents/Carers receiving Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based), Working Tax Credit (with a total annual income of less than £15,050*), Housing Benefit, or Council Tax Benefit will normally be entitled to monetary grants for footwear and clothing for their children. Information and application forms may be obtained from schools and at:

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17885>

School Meals

Our school provides a lunch service which offers a variety of meals and snacks within The Fuel Zone. A breakfast and mid-morning service is also available within The Fuel Zone. Special diets for children with medical requirements can be provided. Please inform the school office.

Young people who prefer to bring packed lunches are accommodated in the Fuel Zone

Children and young people of parents/carers receiving Income Support, income-based Job Seekers Allowance, Working Tax Credit (where income is less than £6,420*), Child Tax Credit only (where income is less than £16,150*) and income-related Employment and Support Allowance are entitled to a free midday meal.

Information and application forms for free school meals may be obtained from schools and at <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17885>

Transport

The education authority has a policy of providing free transport to all young people who live outwith a certain radius from their local school by the recognised shortest walking route. This means that the provision of transport could be reviewed at any time. Parents/Carers who consider they are eligible should obtain an application form from the school or at <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17882>

Communication with Parents

At St Thomas Aquinas R.C. Secondary School we strongly encourage all parents to become involved in the education of their children. We are always ready to listen to suggestions for new ways of stimulating parental interest. We contact and involve parents in many ways. For example:

Letters – further information which requires a response may be sent out in letter form.

School website/Twitter – are the main sources of on-going information about our school. It is a good idea to check these regularly.

Website Address: www.st-thomasaquinas-sec.glasgow.sch.uk

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/StThomasAqSec>

Text messaging – You will also receive text reminders about events/school closures, attendance, parents evenings etc.

Meetings - Parents and carers are welcome in the school to discuss any aspect of their child's development and progress. To avoid disappointment, it is advisable to make an appointment. There are various opportunities throughout the year when parents can discuss their child's progress with school staff.

Parents and carers are welcome at other events throughout the school year e.g. workshops, information evenings, class performances, award ceremonies, religious and other assemblies. The school website and Twitter will keep you informed.

Strong communication links between home and school ensure parents and carers are confident to address any concerns they may have about their child's education with Pastoral Care staff and the senior leadership team.

Emergency Contact Information

At the start of each school session, parents and carers will be issued with the annual data check form. Please ensure that this is completed and returned to the school. It is also important that you let us know if there are changes to your telephone number(s) or to those of your emergency contacts throughout the year.

Data Protection – use of information about children and young people and parents/carers

We collect information about children and young people attending school (and also about parents/carers, emergency contacts etc. provided in the annual data check) to allow us to carry out the Council's functions as the education authority for the City of Glasgow. This may sometimes involve releasing personal information to other agencies and other parts of the Council, particularly in relation to child protection issues or criminal investigations, and it may also be used for research purposes (see the link below for more details regarding this).

Information held by the school is, in legal terms, processed by Glasgow City Council. The Council is registered as a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 (number Z4871657) and all personal data is treated as confidential and used only in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the Information Use and Privacy Policy approved by the City Council. For more information on how we use personal information, or to see a copy of the Information Use and Privacy Policy, see www.glasgow.gov.uk/privacy.

Appointments During School Hours

If your child has an unavoidable appointment, please give them a letter for their Pastoral Care teacher to ensure that they have permission be absent from class.

Comments & Complaints

In ST Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School we aim to have positive relationships across our school community. However, if you have a comment or complaint about any aspect of school life, please contact the Headteacher in the first instance.

Glasgow City Council complaints procedures are available:
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=16133>

Customer Care Team
Customer & Business Services
Glasgow City Council
City Chambers
Glasgow G2 1DU

Tel: 0141 287 0900
e-mail: customercare@glasgow.gov.uk

The above website also includes information on data protection and freedom of information.

Curriculum

Curriculum for Excellence 3-18

Curriculum for Excellence has been introduced to raise standards of learning and teaching for all 3 to 18 year olds. It aims to help prepare children and young people with the knowledge and skills they need in an always changing world. As part of Curriculum for Excellence, all children from pre-school to the end of S3 will receive a rounded education known as a Broad General Education (BGE). Curriculum for Excellence is all about bringing real life into the classroom and taking lessons beyond it.

In line with their Curriculum for Excellence entitlement, students learn in all 8 curricular areas until the end of S3.

Expressive Arts	Health & Wellbeing	Languages	Mathematics
Religious & Moral	Sciences	Social Studies	Technologies

There is also a focus on developing literacy and numeracy and health and well-being across every subject area as well as Skills for Learning, Life and Work as young people prepare for their adult lives. In addition to discrete subject areas, learning takes place in the following ways:

- Inter-disciplinary experiences (working across a range of subjects to link learning)
- Learning through the ethos and life of the school
- Opportunities for personal achievement

The Senior Phase S4-S6

The Senior Phase offers opportunity for specialisation leading to qualifications. Young people aged 15 plus will have a wide range of opportunities to experience learning and achieve qualifications to the highest possible level during their senior phase.

Throughout S3, there is a programme of student support to assist students and their parents and carers with course choices for National 4 and National 5 awards. The student support programme seeks to advise students about:

- The range of courses available
- The student's own aptitudes, interests, strengths and weaknesses
- The importance of individual subjects
- Entrance qualifications & career opportunities

In advising students about course choices, we adhere to national guidelines and ensure that student choices result in their best chance of success.

The Senior Phase S4-S6 (cont)

In collaboration with the Scottish Qualifications Agency (SQA), we will assess National 1-4 qualifications. Individual courses at National 1-4 levels will not be graded but marked overall as pass or fail.

Courses at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher levels will continue to include work assessed by the school, but for these qualifications, students will also have to pass an additional assessment (usually a question paper or assignment) which will be marked externally by SQA.

The SQA website www.sqa.org.uk/cfeforparents contains useful information to help you understand national qualifications.

Courses available in S5 & S6

As an inclusive school, we aim to meet the needs of all students in S5 and S6. We have strong partnerships with local colleges, Universities and employers.

It is extremely important that senior students set challenging and realistic targets. To that end, we offer a rigorous options programme to support and inform student choice. Opportunities for personal development continue within and beyond the taught curriculum.

S6 in particular offers senior students a range of opportunities to build leadership, communication and team working skills through involvement in a wide range of school and community events in addition to formal SQA certificated Leadership courses.

Support for students leaving school

A Principal of Pastoral Care has a key responsibility to support Skills for Learning, Life & Work; this role is to support young people to make informed decisions and choices about their future and to ensure they reach positive destinations post-school.

The Religious Education Programme

Holding a central role in the religious formation of students is the Religious Education Programme. Students participate in two periods of Religious Education each week. A programme of study based on current advice from the Bishops of Scotland and the Catholic Education Commission (C.E.C.) is followed by all students. This develops their knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and doctrine and affords opportunities to study the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. Students are encouraged to develop a reflective response to the various topics studied and to examine their own faith commitment.

Religious Moral Philosophical Studies is offered as a subject for study at National 5 and Higher to Sixth Year students.

Called to Love

Additional to the in-house modules which support the delivery of core RE through all years, the department also delivers the "Called to Love" programme across all years. This national programme for the delivery of Relationships and Moral Education in

Catholic secondary schools across Scotland was developed by the Catholic Education Service

Religious Observance

As a community of faith, St Thomas Aquinas R.C. Secondary offers opportunities to celebrate together and to encounter God in prayer and worship. The Liturgical year is marked through paraliturgies, reflections and celebration of the sacraments appropriate to the season or time of year. Holy Mass is celebrated for all students on Holidays of Obligation.

The school has a purpose built Oratory where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Class Masses and the Sacrament of Confession are celebrated in the Oratory.

St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School desires that students feel part of the wider Church, that they have a sense of belonging to their particular parish communities. To this end the local Parish Priests are invited to participate in school celebrations, secular and sacred. Links with families are also strengthened through family celebrations such as the Advent Carol Service.

In addition, Parents and carers from religions other than Christianity may request that their children may be permitted to be absent from school in order to celebrate recognised religious events. Only written requests detailing the proposed arrangements will be considered. Appropriate requests will be granted on up to 3 occasions in any 1 school session.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious observance and should inform the school in writing.

Useful websites

www.curriculumforexcellencescotland.gov.uk

www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/index.asp

Assessment & Reporting

All young people are assessed both formally and informally throughout the school year. This allows young people and their teachers to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. A variety of assessment methods are used to enable staff to pass on information to parents and carers about the progress of their child. Assessment records are kept by teachers and form the basis of discussion at parents' meetings throughout the year.

Dates of all parents' meetings and the schedule for issuing written reports is included in the school calendar which is issued at the start of term and is available on the website.

If you have any concerns about your child's progress do not hesitate to contact their Pastoral Care teacher at any time.

Pupil Profiles

All S3 learners have a profile which reflects their progress in learning and achievement and emphasises their strengths. The profile documents their key achievements in school, at home and in the community and the content is decided by the young person. The profile provides a valuable way for learners to share information about their achievements with their parents, teachers and, in the future, staff in colleges, universities and employers. The profile also supports the transfer from S3 into the senior phase of secondary school.

Support for Pupils

The school has a duty to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, with appropriate support for their needs if required. This applies to the content of lessons, teaching strategies and minor adaptations to the school environment. There are a wide range of factors which may act as a barrier to learning. We are committed to working closely with parents and carers to ensure that they are fully involved in any decisions about support for their children's needs.

Any parent or carer seeking further advice regarding this policy should contact the Headteacher in the first instance.

Further information relating to additional support needs is available on the Glasgow City Council website –

<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18941>

Information on the Glasgow City Councils' Parental Involvement Strategy can also be found at <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=17870>

Pupil Support Staff

All staff in St Thomas Aquinas R.C. Secondary School have a clear responsibility for the welfare of young people. In addition, all young people are allocated a Pastoral Care teacher on entering the school.

This provides a vital link between home and school as the Pastoral Care teacher has an 'all-round' picture of a pupil's progress and general health and well-being. In almost all cases, a parent's first point of contact with the school will be the Pastoral Care teacher.

Other support for pupils (from First to Third Year) is provided by Personal Support tutors who meet with their pupils in small groups each week during the Personal Support Period.

We are fully committed to meeting the needs of all pupils and hold regular meetings at which we plan for those who might benefit from additional support. Full discussion is held with parents and carers and outcomes are planned and agreed in partnership.

GIRFEC and the Named Person

GIRFEC isn't an extra thing people have to do. It's a way for those who support children to work differently, making sure that they are all on the same page.

Where needed, GIRFEC links day-to-day work in education, health, policing, social work and the voluntary sector – in fact any organisation whose staff come into direct contact with children.

It makes it easier for those different organisations to communicate consistently with each other, and with parents, carers, children and young people.

GIRFEC provides a structure that helps people to work in the same way and use the same language. This allows discussions with the child and their family to focus on what is good in a child's life, and what might need attention or support.

It's the bedrock for all children's services and can also be used by practitioners in adult services who work with parents or carers.

The approach helps practitioners focus on what makes a positive difference for children and young people – and how they can act to deliver these improvements. Getting it right for every child is being threaded through all existing policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children, young people and their families.

What Getting it Right for Every Child means:

For children, young people and their families:

- They understand what is happening and why
- They have been listened to carefully and their wishes have been heard and understood
- They will feel confident about the help they are getting
- They are appropriately involved in discussions and decisions that affect them
- They can rely on appropriate help being available as soon as possible
- They will have experienced a more streamlined and co-ordinated response from practitioners.

For practitioners:

- Putting the child or young person at the centre and developing a shared understanding within and across agencies
- Using common tools, language and processes, considering the child or young person as a whole, and promoting closer working where necessary with other practitioners
- If you would like to access support from the Named Person Service, please contact the school.

Promoting Positive Behaviour

Children's Rights as outlined in the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) are fundamental to a good school ethos. Adults in our school will work with young people to ensure they are aware of their rights and fully respect the rights of others. Therefore, the approach within St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School is to build a positive ethos that demonstrates care and respect for all. St Thomas Aquinas achieved UNCRC 'Rights Respecting School' status in session 2017/18 at Bronze Level. In session 2018/19 St Thomas Aquinas will be working to achieve Silver Level.

The smooth running of St Thomas Aquinas R.C. Secondary School requires a high standard of behaviour from all within it. We appreciate the support of parents and carers in helping us to achieve this. All pupils are required to behave well and respect their own safety and that of others. This is also important on journeys to and from school.

Our expectations are clearly communicated to young people and breaches of discipline are dealt with in line with school policy. In most cases, a quiet reprimand is sufficient but in more serious or persistent cases parents will be invited to school to discuss the issue and agree a course of action.

Homework

Regular, effective homework is an important part of the school day. To this end, every young person in the school has been provided with a Homework Diary. Parents are asked to check this on a regular basis. Homework has many advantages:

- It reinforces work done in class
- It develops good study habits and a sense of personal discipline
- It develops areas of interest that can be followed up later in life and become a leisure pursuit
- It allows parents to see, help and become involved in their child's work

The amount of homework varies in length, nature and frequency depending on the subject. The amount of homework will increase as your child progresses through the school.

Supported Study

This is an important initiative which allows pupils to attend additional classes during lunchtimes, after school and during holiday periods. Large numbers of our staff give generously of their time in this area. Subjects on offer will depend on the staff available to deliver. Pupils will be kept informed of the arrangements.

Parent Council

We have a very active Parent Council that represents the views of all parents. All parents are welcome to attend Parent Council meetings and can become members at the AGM in September. Parent Council minutes are available on the Parent Council page of the school website and on request from the school office. A list of current members is also available on the website.

Student Council

Our Student Council is composed representatives from each House Group Council. This is an important group which ensures that the views of students are heard.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We have a wide range of activities that run between Monday – Thursday to extend the learning experience. At the last count, there were 54 lunchtime and afterschool activities on offer. The list constantly changes but our school website is updated to reflect this.

Good links with community organisations and our Active Schools Co-ordinator are vital for the success of these programmes.

School Improvement

On an annual basis, our Standards and Quality report will be posted online. Copies from previous years are available on the school website. The Standards and Quality report will be used to share the overall exam performance of the school and highlights progress in key curricular areas such as literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing. Our priorities for improvement are detailed in our School Improvement Plan which is discussed with our Parent Council. Any parent or carer seeking a copy of the plan can contact the school office or check out our website.

Useful addresses:

Education Services
City Chambers East
40 John Street
Glasgow G1 1JL

Tel: 0141 287 2000
www.glasgow.gov.uk

Skills Development Scotland
3 Byres Road
Glasgow G11 5RD
Tel: 0141 357 6250

School Career Advisers
Nicola Mearns/Martin Baillie
Tel: 0141 582 0280
nicola.mearns@sds.co.uk
martin.baillie@sds.co.uk

www.myworldofwork.co.uk

Although this information is correct at time of printing, there could be changes affecting any of the matters dealt within the document.