

PRINCIPAL: S.W. BLACK, M.Sc.

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Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope that this finds you and your family well and that, despite the “lockdown”, you have been able to find ways to enjoy the excellent weather which we are having.

As we approach the start of the Summer Term, I felt that it was important to remind you that on-line learning will re-commence from Monday. You will see some changes to this process as time evolves and we will keep you informed of those changes as they take place. I would again request your support in ensuring that pupils quickly re-engage with the learning process.

Over the Easter holiday, the school has continued to remain open, when required, to facilitate supervision of key workers’ children. Any parents wishing to avail of this facility in the days ahead should contact us in advance, either at [info@balacademy.ballymena.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@balacademy.ballymena.ni.sch.uk) or by telephoning the School Office. Our Technology Department has also been busy in recent days making visors using our 3D printer and we trust that these will provide support, in some way, to our frontline workers. As I have stated previously, it is vital that we, as a school, continue to do what we can to support those who are risking so much to support us.

On behalf of our senior pupils, we welcome the announcement by the Department of Education of its plans for the grading of A Levels, AS Levels and GCSEs in Northern Ireland. This is a system born out of necessity, but we believe that the plan for NI delivers a fair and consistent way of grading all qualifications in these challenging circumstances and, very importantly, should permit young people to progress to the next stage of their lives without hindrance. The Education Minister has made it clear that teachers will have a key role to play and teachers in Ballymena Academy have, as previously outlined, already been considering pupils' work and potential attainment with the utmost diligence.

I appreciate that this is an anxious time for all involved. Having had the opportunity to give the process detailed consideration, I will provide specific information early next week, on the mechanism for grading and on our approach to study in the coming weeks, to parents and pupils in each of the year groups affected (years 11 to 14). In the interim, there is nothing for pupils or parents to do with regards to this process for which further details can be found on the CCEA website [www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk) and through the attached letter which the CCEA Chief Executive has asked to be forwarded to you. However, we trust that the system will allow pupils to have confidence that the grades which they receive in August 2020 will reflect their hard work and permit appropriate progression.

We look forward to classrooms “opening” again on Monday and, with it, the opportunity to interact with our young people.

Please take care and stay safe.

Yours faithfully,

S.W. Black (Principal)



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