

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



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8<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that this finds you well.

As we approach the end of another week, it is gratifying to report that our young people are continuing to exercise high levels of social responsibility within school with the wearing of face-coverings in corridors and communal areas being maintained at very high levels. Given the recent rise in positive COVID-19 cases across N.I., it is important that we continue to take every reasonable step to ensure the safety of our community. Translink has informed all schools in the area of some concern in respect of the wearing of face-coverings and I would ask that you remind your son/daughter of the necessity to wear face-coverings if they use school and/or public transport.

While addressing transport, the collection of pupils by cars presents challenges for the management of traffic, whether on or off the school site. We would ask that drivers adhere to signage or road markings such as double yellow lines and also use designated parking areas when in the school grounds. The school also enjoys positive relationships with our neighbours and so would ask that drivers in particular adhere to road markings on the Old Galgorm Road, as parking can cause a hazard, disruption to ease of traffic movement and inconvenience to local residents who need driveway access.

The school continues to review its procedures, in light of updated guidance from the Department of Education, and this has allowed improved access to ICT provision for pupils with many year groups already benefitting from this change. It is hoped that increased access for Junior classes to laboratories and workshops will also become possible in the foreseeable future.

From Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> October, we will revert to a more normal pattern at the start of the school day with all pupils being required to be present in school by **9.05 a.m.** each morning (as is currently the case for pupils in Years 13 and 14). This will permit a more effective delivery method for a wide range of pastoral matters as an important component of our overall pastoral provision.

The re-introduction of some co-curricular activities has been very welcome and, in addition to activities already under way in sport, the last week has seen a resumption of the C.U. along with a number of musical ensembles and choirs. We trust that circumstances will permit us to “roll-out” additional activities in the weeks ahead.

Our Prize Day for 2019-2020 was originally scheduled to take place on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October with Mr. Robin Swan, MLA, Health Minister, as our Chief Guest. It is evident that Prize Day cannot run in its traditional format and therefore we have had to cancel our original plans. However, it is important that, while it will not be possible for parents to be present as normal, we seek to celebrate the many achievements of our young people during the previous academic year and we will facilitate this through an “on-line” event. Further details will follow in due course and the Prize List will be published to pupils tomorrow.

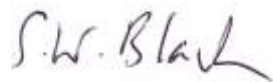
A UCAS/Careers Day will now be held on **Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October** with only pupils in **Year 14** required to attend. This will provide the opportunity for many aspects of careers work, including practice interviews, which would not otherwise be possible given social distancing requirements.

For parents of pupils in Years 11-14, and especially those in Years 12 and 14, there unacceptably remains uncertainty in regard to the format of examinations/assessment for 2020/2021. Following yesterday's announcement in Scotland that National 5 examinations (similar to GCSEs) are to be cancelled and replaced with teacher assessments and coursework while Higher and Advanced Higher examinations (similar to 'A' Level) will go ahead as usual, we anticipate an announcement imminently from the Education Minister, Mr. Peter Weir, MLA, on the proposed way forward for assessment in N.I. this year. It is likely that it will remain the intention to hold examinations at GCSE and 'A' Level, however, with modifications to assessment. I will seek to provide information to parents as soon as is practically possible but, in the interim, please be assured that our staff are working exceptionally hard to ensure that our pupils are being well-prepared for whatever assessments follow.

I thank you for your on-going support and offer best wishes to you and your family.

Take care.

Yours sincerely,



S.W. Black (Principal)



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