

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



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26th February, 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that this finds you and your family safe and well.

Education has been at the forefront of much media coverage in recent days, particularly around the issues of the return of pupils to school and the awarding of this summer's GCSE and GCE grades.

On 18th February, the N.I. Executive confirmed that pupils from Years 12, 13 and 14 will resume face-to-face teaching on Monday 22nd March with remote learning continuing until the Easter holiday for pupils in all other year groups. While there continues to be political discussion of the issue, it appears unlikely that there will be any change to this position. While recognising that a balance must be struck with public health considerations, the Education Minister has affirmed that it remains his objective to have a full return of pupils as soon as is practically possible after the Easter break. We trust that conditions will have improved sufficiently to permit a safe return for all pupils in the near future.

In regard to the awarding of grades, it is disappointing to report that schools are yet to receive detailed Centre Guidance from CCEA or other awarding bodies. Despite this, we continue to develop arrangements in order that our young people will have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills in a manner which will allow them to achieve the grades which they deserve. We accept that it is an anxious time for all involved and we will communicate our plans for future assessments during next week. In the meantime, teachers will continue to ensure that pupils are being fully prepared for any assessments which they will undertake.

Our parental engagement continues this week with our Year 13 Parent Consultation Afternoon (by telephone) taking place on **Tuesday, 2nd March, 2021 (2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.)**. Due to the Parent Consultation Afternoon, no on-line teaching will take place from 1.00 pm on that date. This week will also see the commencement of **Year 12 Careers Interviews** while the **Year 11 Parent Consultation Afternoon** will take place on **Monday, 15th March, 2021**.

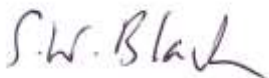
A new Text-a-Nurse service has been launched to provide young people with a secure and confidential text messaging service to a school nurse for advice and support. The service is aimed at 11 to 19 year olds and will be delivered by the School Nursing Teams. The service is part of the new 'Framework for Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education'. This new service will allow young people to seek advice anonymously about sensitive health issues without a face to face appointment. School nurses will provide help on a range of issues including, emotional health and wellbeing, alcohol and drugs, sexual health, bullying and general health issues. Asking for help or advice via a text message is less embarrassing than asking in person. This non-judgemental, confidential text service will allow young people to ask those questions that otherwise they may not have the confidence to ask. A qualified school nurse will respond to the messages using the secure ChatHealth web platform. Text-a-Nurse is manned by a team of school nurses between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays), they will respond to all messages within 24 hours Monday to Friday. The text number for the Northern Trust Area is 07480 635982.

As another week of remote learning draws to a close, I wish to once again thank you for your patience, support and guidance. I hope that the video, which you can access through the link <https://youtu.be/ADk4gKdATBY> provides some recognition of our appreciation for all that you have done in this area.

With signs of Spring appearing and with positive indicators that we are on a path towards normality, I trust that we can look forward to better times ahead.

Best wishes to you and your family for the weekend.

Yours faithfully,



S.W. Black (Principal)



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