

6th January 2021

Covid 19 Response- The new term

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Finally, as a result of the Education Minister addressing the NI Assembly, I am in a position to provide you with some clarity in relation to the education of your child. I can now confirm the following:

- GCSE, AS and A-Level examinations are **cancelled** for this academic year. An alternative system for awarding grades is being developed by DE and CCEA, so it is important that all pupils in Years 11-14 continue with all remote learning to ensure evidence of academic attainment is available. There has been no announcement in relation to BTEC and other vocational qualifications, so pupils should continue to complete all coursework and assessments from home under guidance of teachers providing online learning.
- From 6th January all pupils will be taught remotely until half term. Pupils should follow their normal timetable where possible until our bespoke remotely learning timetable is complete. The remote learning timetable will be introduced no later than Monday 11th January. The timetable will feature 3 x 45 minute live lessons per day and will include a 30-minute space between lessons. Pupils should use this 30 minutes to complete independent learning and take a short break.

Our online programme will be much more interactive this time. Some lessons will feature live streaming using Google Meet, videos and live conversation through the chatroom function. Online support will also be provided by classroom assistants for pupils with special educational needs. Once complete, the timetable will be shared on our website, emailed to all pupils and texted to parents/guardians. It is likely that we will encounter some teething problems, so do not panic. School will be open and staff will be available to take your calls or queries. Technical support will also be available.

Pupils unable to access Google Classroom should contact school on Monday or Tuesday so alternatives can be explored. Pupils who do not engage with their schooling at home will be regarded as educationally vulnerable and will be required to attend school each day to complete work.

- Schools will accommodate vulnerable children and the children of key workers from 6th January. This provision will be in place until half term. DE guidance states that this will not be face to face teaching, but supervised learning. If you wish for your child to attend supervised learning, you must contact the school office to make a formal request.
- School transport will be available as normal from 6th January. Face coverings must be worn at all times on school transport unless exempt. Pupils who breach the rules will be instructed to learn remotely.
- Free school meals payments for the week beginning 4th January will be paid retrospectively on week beginning 11th January.

It is hugely disappointing that we find ourselves back under such tight restrictions, but we must do our best to beat the virus. Please ensure you Stay Home; Protect the NHS; Save Lives.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

M Allen
Principal

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