

Start of Term 2019/20

Dear Parent/Guardian

I should like to welcome your son/daughter to the start of the new school year in Banbridge Academy. We wish all of our pupils well as they commence the new academic year.

The new term begins for **Year 13 and Year 14 pupils with a half day of induction on Thursday 29 August starting at 9.15am and finishing around 1.00pm. All Year 14 pupils should note that school photographs will be taken on this date and full school uniform in accordance with the school rules must be worn. New Year 13 pupils** will have an opportunity to have lunch and a brief tour of the school immediately after this induction morning. There will be no school for Year 13 and Year 14 on Friday 30 August.

**The induction day for Year 8 pupils will be held on Friday 30 August, commencing at 9.15am and finishing at 12 noon. School uniform must be worn by pupils on the induction days.** As school transport will not be available on these days of induction, the help of parents in making appropriate transport arrangements would be much appreciated.

**On Monday 2 September all pupils begin school at 9.00am and finish at 3.25pm. Please note that dining facilities and school buses will operate as normal on this day.**

#### **School Day**

Our school day commences at **9.00am with Registration and Assembly**. To ensure your child's development it is crucial that your son/daughter attends school and is punctual. There are **only two entrances through which pupils may enter school in the morning:** the Atrium and the Lecture Theatre. Pupils who arrive after 9.05am may only enter school at the **Lecture Theatre Entrance** from where they will be directed to the **Late Room** where lateness will be recorded. **Parents are reminded that they must not drive up to the front of the school to drop off or collect pupils at the start or at the end of the school day.** Apart from causing congestion at busy times, this also creates a considerable Health and Safety risk.

#### **Finance**

We are extremely grateful to all parents who **annually assist us by contributing to our School Fund** which helps to offset the cost of the many activities and opportunities which we provide for our pupils. **Please note that the School Fund is used for the benefit of all pupils throughout the school. The parental contribution enables us to provide a wide range of extra and co-curricular activities which contribute significantly to a child's education as well as to the ethos of Banbridge Academy.** The School Fund helps to facilitate music, drama, sport and other clubs and societies across the school as well as subsidising educational visits, field trips, entry fees for competitions, the hire of buses and the costs associated with the supervision of pupils participating in such activities. In addition, it provides insurance for injury to pupils (please note the scheme only provides limited cover and further details are available from the School Office) and a lost property compensation scheme which provides half the replacement value of items lost on school premises.

The Board of Governors has decided that the parental voluntary contribution for the academic year 2019/20 will be - £100 for a child enrolled, £150 for two children currently enrolled from the same family and a maximum of £175 per family, if there are three or more children currently enrolled from the same family. I should like to highlight that this compares very favourably to the parental contribution/fees requested by other schools. To facilitate the administration of these contributions, we ask that payment be made, if possible, by cheque only (payable to Banbridge Academy). Please enclose the cheque in an envelope, labelled "School Fund", with the pupil's name and Form Class clearly marked on the outside. **Please send the payment to your son/daughter's**

**Form Teacher on the first full day of school in September.** Should you prefer to send cash, you may of course do so, enclosing the correct amount and following the instructions above. Where there is more than one child in the family, the total amount may be sent to the Form Teacher of the oldest child.

### **Contact Details**

**Please ensure that you review and amend accordingly, via the Parent App, the current data held on the SIMS system.** Please note that this review is not required for Year 8 and new pupils entering other year groups.

Banbridge Academy exists to serve the needs of our pupils. We work in partnership with both pupils and their parents/guardians. **If an issue arises and there is a need to contact school, parents should, in the first instance, contact the class teacher for academic matters or the Form Teacher/Year Head for pastoral matters. To avoid disruption to learning, phone calls will not be put through to classrooms during teaching time, but a message will be sent and the teacher will respond as soon as possible.** For obvious reasons email addresses and mobile phone numbers will not be given out by the office staff. If parents need to speak to a member of staff in person, they should make an appointment for a mutually convenient time via the School Office.

### **Text Alert Emergency Contact**

Our **Text Alert** emergency contact system is a very useful way to issue alerts to parents e.g. in the case of an emergency closure or when issuing reminders of forthcoming events such as Parents' Meetings. As in previous years, **a text message will ONLY be sent to the Emergency Contact 1 mobile number to convey the necessary information.** I would like to reassure parents that no other contact details held in school will be shared with the company who will transmit such text messages. Nor for that matter will the service be used by the school to make contact with individual families.

### **Mobile phones**

We recognise the usefulness of mobile phones but school policy is clear. While pupils may bring mobile phones to school, we cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage and it is for parents to assess any health risk. **If a mobile phone is brought to school, it must neither be used nor produced during the school day, without the explicit permission of a member of the teaching staff. Phones which are produced in school, during class or at break or lunchtime, will be confiscated and will only be available for collection by the pupil on the following Friday afternoon or will be returned to a parent who must collect it in person from the School Office. In addition, an appropriate sanction will be applied.**

### **Photographs**

**Photographs must not be taken by pupils in school, either using a conventional camera or one combined with a mobile phone.** We are concerned at the use of the camera function, in school and indeed outside school, to record and transmit images which have been taken without the permission of the other party and which, in some cases, have been used to intimidate and bully other pupils. **This is strictly prohibited** and pupils who engage in such activities or who send messages and/or images which cause offence to members of the school community, whether initiated inside or outside school, will be dealt with very seriously. **This also applies to any messages or images posted anywhere online.**

### **Health & Safety**

Should you wish to speak to Mrs H Singer, our Pupil Welfare Auxiliary, about any aspect of your son/daughter's health, please do not hesitate to contact her at the school. I should like to assure you that we respect the confidentiality of such information. Mrs Singer is primarily there for those pupils who become ill or who are injured during the school day, as well as providing support for pupils with ongoing medical conditions. **Parents are asked not to send pupils to school who are unwell before leaving home.** This will also avoid the risk of spreading illness and infection among others. In relation to the matter of pupil health and wellbeing, I should like to ask for your assistance in ensuring that we receive written notification of medical conditions which arise during the course of the school year. **Please note pupils who become ill during the school day and who need to go home must first report to the Pupil Welfare Auxiliary, who will make contact with a**

**parent/guardian. Under no circumstances should pupils make their own transport arrangements.**

A number of our pupils **suffer from a very serious nut allergy** and although our staff are trained to give appropriate first aid should that be required, I appeal to all parents **not to send products containing nuts to school**, either for snacks or in packed lunches, as such items may pose serious health risks for these young people.

I should also like to remind you that **pupils must not bring aerosol sprays to school**. Some of our pupils have medical conditions which can be triggered or aggravated by inhaling the spray from such aerosols and we do not want to put any of our pupils at risk, especially when acceptable, safer alternatives are available. Please give attention to this matter and assist us in ensuring that this important safety message is strictly adhered to.

**Please note it is the parents' responsibility to inform the Pupil Welfare Auxiliary of any changes to the current medical information held while their child is a pupil of the school – for your convenience a Medical Consent Form can be downloaded from the school website and it is also available in hard copy from the School Office.** New pupils have already completed this form as part of their induction.

### **School Uniform**

School uniform is a very important aspect of school life and we ask for your support in ensuring that **full and correct uniform, as highlighted in the uniform list (available on the school website), is worn by pupils at all times, including to and from school.** I should like to remind you in particular that our school rules state that no jewellery or nail varnish may be worn and there must not be extremes of hair colour and style.

### **Absence and Lateness**

I would urge you please, in the event of absence, to ensure that a note explaining the circumstances is sent to the Form Teacher on the **first day of return** to school. This is essential as **unexplained** absences are considered as **unauthorised** by the Department of Education, as are absences which arise from pupils being taken on holiday during term time. **Please do not arrange such holidays** as they disrupt education, place additional pressures on teaching staff and, apart from the most exceptional circumstances, cannot be authorised by the school. Pupils who arrive late (i.e. after 9.05am), must produce a note of explanation either on arrival or by the following day.

### **Medical and Other Appointments**

**Parents are requested, please, where possible to make such appointments outside the normal school day and, where this is unavoidable, to inform the school in advance.** Occasionally parents arrive in school during the day with an expectation of having a son/daughter released from class. This causes considerable disruption to classes and inevitably there will be a delay in facilitating such requests.

### **Valuables**

Please ensure that all items of equipment and clothing are clearly marked with the pupil's name. At the end of every school year we are left with many unclaimed items without identifying marks to enable them to be returned to their owners.

### **Independent Counselling Service**

An Independent Counselling Service will be available in school each week. Referrals can be made by pupils themselves or by parents. To obtain further information about this important service, please contact Mrs Evans (Vice Principal, Pastoral).

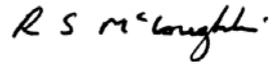
### **Safeguarding Arrangements**

At Banbridge Academy we aim to work closely with parents/guardians in supporting all aspects of your child's development and well-being. Any concerns parents/guardians may have will be taken seriously and dealt with in a professional manner. If parents/guardians have a concern regarding a safeguarding issue, they should report the matter directly to Mrs Evans (Designated Teacher for Child Protection) or the Principal.

Please make a point of regularly visiting our school website, [www.banbridgeacademy.org.uk](http://www.banbridgeacademy.org.uk), to be kept up-to-date about news and important events in school.

Finally, I should like to take this opportunity to wish your son/daughter well in the year ahead and I look forward to seeing you at Parents' Meetings and our many other activities throughout the year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R S McLoughlin". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

R S McLoughlin  
Principal

NAME OF PUPIL: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM: \_\_\_\_\_

Checklist below is for your own use and all items listed should be returned to **your son/daughter's Form Teacher on the first day of term**

I have enclosed the contribution to the School Fund

I have reviewed, via the Parent App, the current data held on the SIMS system   
(not required for new pupils joining the school this year)

If changes are required, I have enclosed a Medication Consent Form   
(A Medication Consent Form can be downloaded from the school website)

**Please note it is the parents' responsibility to inform the Pupil Welfare Auxiliary of any changes to this information while your child is a pupil of the School.**