

20 March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

I know that this is an extremely challenging time for you and your family. My thoughts and prayers are with our pupils and everyone in our community. I will continue to ensure that as a school we will support your son/daughter, as best as possible, throughout this difficult time.

As you are aware the First and Deputy First Ministers have announced that schools across Northern Ireland will close today until further notice. There have been subsequent announcements to confirm that there will be no public examinations but grades will still be awarded. There remains a number of unanswered questions and I understand there is a great deal of anxiety and concern amongst our pupils and our parents, however, until we are given definitive guidance we cannot be specific in relation to how grades will be awarded. Last night I tweeted, from our school account, the links to the letters from the Minister and the Chief Executive of CCEA regarding the school closure details and the current thinking regarding how examination grades will be awarded - both letters are available online in the Parental Information - Letters Home section of our school website.

Please be assured that teachers are aware of the academic potential of our pupils and the school will work tirelessly to ensure that pupils achieve the outcomes that they deserve.

It is clear that there will be no A Level or GCSE Examinations. However, AS Examinations may be rescheduled for the Autumn term or moved to later in the Year 14 year. Therefore, it is imperative that Year 13 continue to work as normal over the coming weeks. In addition, we will most likely start to develop online resources to start teaching A2 content in May and June of the current academic year. The teaching and learning time is normally extremely pressurised in Year 14 and if time is 'removed' to facilitate AS Examinations, we must ensure pupils are progressing in their studies.

All pupils should continue, until further notice, to follow the guidance regarding online learning resources as outlined in my previous correspondence. I have also copied a document with useful pastoral contact details to the Parental Information - Letters Home section of our school website. In addition, remote provision is currently being investigated by the School Counselling Service. The school building will be open from Monday for the children in Years 8-10 of key workers. Later this morning we will issue a further communication on behalf of all Post-Primary Schools in the Banbridge Area Learning Community.

I will continue to pray for you and your families in the weeks and months ahead.
Please take care.

R S McLoughlin
Principal