



June 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

At this time of the year I would normally be writing to wish you and your family well for the summer break and to outline plans for the start of the new academic year. I hope that you have a very relaxing and peaceful summer, however during these unprecedented times the definitive plan for the new academic year, across schools in Northern Ireland, still remains unclear. It is very important that pupils return to school, as soon as it is safe to do so in accordance with Government Guidance. Remote learning has facilitated, in the vast majority of cases, a continuity of learning, but it is not a substitute for pupils gaining a holistic education alongside their peers and friends, whilst having the opportunity to enjoy the extra and co-curricular life of the school. We all hope and pray that pupils, parents and colleagues will be able to return to 'normal life' as soon as the Government's scientific advisors assure us that it is safe to do so. Undoubtedly, our sense of togetherness has seen us through these challenging months. I wish to reiterate my thanks to our pupils, parents, my colleagues and the wider community for all of their considerable efforts in maintaining effective learning in our community during this difficult and uncertain period.

I'm sure that you will have read and heard many of the Covid-19 related articles in the media, however we understand notification from the Education Minister of the date on which schools will re-open for pupils is imminent. The Department of Education will also issue detailed guidance for all schools in the coming days. Therefore, the rest of term will be very busy for staff as they plan for the next academic year. Our main priority must now be to plan, in partnership, for a new way of working and learning - safely and effectively. As part of this process, we are arranging a series of meetings and training around remote learning and discussing key issues which will need to be addressed before pupils return to school. In order to create time for colleagues to undertake these important tasks, we are planning to scale back the work that teachers have been undertaking with their classes from Monday 22 June until the end of term. Project work will be set for students to complete in some subjects over this period, but there will be no formal expectation of contact between pupils and teachers. I trust that you understand and appreciate my reasons for reaching this decision.

I know that dates for returning to school, timetable and attendance structures, and remote learning are all pressing issues, however, at the moment, we do not have definitive answers. It is clear Years 12 & 14 (currently Years 11 & 13 - 2019/20 academic year) will return to school first, and other year groups will return at a later date when we are instructed that it is safe to increase the number of pupils in the building. The Minister and DE will inform schools specifically about the return of year group(s) and provide dates. I understand that this lack of clarity causes considerable frustration and indeed anxiety for pupils and parents/guardians. However, I will ensure that I keep you informed when we are aware of the exact details and facts. I do believe that it is not helpful to speculate about or pre-empt this information until it has been communicated to us by the relevant statutory authority. As I have endeavoured to do throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, I will update you with definitive information when it has been officially circulated to the School.

Induction programmes in August will need careful consideration on the basis of the DE Guidance, unfortunately, once again, I will only be able to write to our returning and new

pupils later in the summer, most likely at the start of August. Please note it is impossible to publish the usual Calendar of Events for 2020/21 at this time. We have placed a copy of the up-to-date uniform list on the school website (Policies/Documents section). I understand that some parents may be reluctant to purchase new items of uniform until return dates have been fully determined.

My thoughts and prayers continue to be with you and all of our pupils and indeed the new pupils that will be joining us in September. I empathise in particular with our current Year 14 pupils who have missed out on an important part of their final year in the school. I have asked the Senior Prefects to compile a presentation, which we will share online, outlining the educational journey of these outstanding young people.

Please note there is a bespoke year group message below.

Kind regards

R S McLoughlin
Principal
Banbridge Academy

Year 14 - please convey this message to your son/daughter

I was so glad that we were able to have a leaving buffet and a few speeches and farewells on our final full day in school, which seems so long ago. Francesca and Adam, our Head Girl and Head Boy, are working with the Senior Prefects to produce a photo/video presentation that we hope to post out, prior to the end of term, via our Twitter/school website.

My colleagues and I trust that you are all keeping well and looking forward to the future. In the Academy, we reflect on your time at school with a great deal of fondness and happiness. We would like to reiterate that we hold you in the highest regard and that your contribution to the School over the years has greatly enriched our lives and the wider community. We wish you every success for the future and hopefully we will be able to catch up again towards the end of 2020.

PIN numbers, for accessing the CCEA Results Portal on Results Day on 13 August 2020, will be available for collection in the Atrium at the times outlined below. Due to the secure nature of this information each pupil must collect this document in person. If unable to do so, another family member can be nominated by the pupil to collect it on their behalf; this must be done in advance via an email from your c2k email account to the main school account (info@banbridgeacademy.banbridge.org.uk) which clearly states who will be collecting the envelope. **The nominated person MUST bring photographic ID on the day and time outlined below in order to collect the PIN details.**

Due to social distancing measures, it is extremely important that students attend on the correct day and at the times outlined below, otherwise it may not be possible to provide them with their PIN details.

Year 14: Thursday 25 June

14A – 9.00 – 10.00am
14B – 10.00 – 11.00am
14C – 11.00 – 12.00pm
14D – 1.00 – 2.00pm
14E – 2.00 – 3.00pm

14F – 3.00 – 4.00pm

PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRUCIAL THAT TEXTBOOKS ARE RETURNED AT THE SAME TIME WHEN PIN INFORMATION IS COLLECTED. The School does not have the funding to replace the textbooks for subsequent pupils. Please bring all textbooks in a plastic carrier bag, with your name and a list of each subject studied clearly printed on a sheet of paper enclosed within the plastic bag. **Please note the School has no alternative but to issue an invoice for any unreturned textbooks.** Refunds for Biology and Chemistry books will also be made available on Thursday 25 June 2020.

Please follow the social distancing procedures which will be in place upon entering the building via the Atrium. After collecting your PIN and leaving your textbooks you must exit the building and maintain 2.0m social distancing as you leave the school premises.

I remind you that A & AS Level Examination results will be issued on 13 August 2020. We await detailed DE Guidance and no doubt this will be subject to change in July and August, therefore I will write again later in the summer regarding precise details of how results will be issued/collected in the school. We are legally obligated to collate all students' destinations, therefore we will devise an online system that will need to be populated following the results being issued - again further details will follow later in the summer.

Office 365 forwarding rule - available to Year 14 Students for incoming UCAS email - available to Year 14 Students for incoming UCAS email (Guidance is on our school website in the Letters Home section). The Office 365 forwarding rule can be used by Year 14 Students who have used their C2k email address for their UCAS application to facilitate incoming emails from UCAS. The forwarding facility will be operational for 3 months from 30 June - 30 September and during this period Year 14 Students should update their email address with all contacts to their non C2k address.

Please note Senior Staff will be available, if required, on the Results Day to provide Careers Guidance. However, if anyone has concerns regarding their career path/university destination, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Cromie or Mrs Gilpin who can be reached via the main school email until the end of June, and again from mid-August.

Please note **we strongly encourage pupils to collect their results in person** on the dates indicated above, as Careers and Senior Staff will be available on the Results Day to offer any assistance that may be required. **If a student cannot collect their results in person and they wish them to be posted out, an A5/C5 stamped addressed envelope must be posted in another envelope to the School Office for this purpose.** Please note that due to Covid-19 restrictions it is not possible to call in person to the School Office at this time. Due to General Data Protection Regulations, we are unable to forward examination results to any parent and/or relative without written permission which states precisely who will collect the results. In addition, we will require **photographic ID to be presented by the person named in the letter when they call to collect the results.** **Please note that we are unable to issue any results over the telephone or via electronic communication at any stage.**

Best wishes from everyone at the Academy.