

21 August 2020

Start of Term 2020/21

Dear Parent/Guardian

Further to my letter last week I write to emphasise some of the key Government advice and guidance and to remind parents of the dates and times for pupil induction. I am really looking forward to welcoming your son/daughter back to school for what I hope will be a fulfilling academic year as we continue to provide the highest possible quality of education for your child.

I encourage you to read with your son/daughter the letter that I forwarded last week, which is available on our school website, Parental Information – Letters Home – August 2020 - Start of Term 2020. As I have outlined on a number of occasions, we will follow the guidance issued by the Department of Education and other relevant Governmental agencies. Therefore, **it is essential that all pupils and their parents/guardians also follow the Government advice and guidance, parents should not congregate at the school gate and/or enter the school site, either in person or in a vehicle, without an appointment. If an appointment has been arranged, a visitor to the school must wear a face covering prior to entering the building. If you have any queries, please contact the school via telephone or email at any stage.**

Please note we had originally arranged for all Year 12 and 14 to come all day on Monday 24 but on reflection a detailed induction can only be completed with one year group at a time therefore, please note below the induction arrangements for each year group.

August

Year 12 - 9.30am – 12.00 noon on Monday 24 August

Year 14 – 12.30pm – 3.00pm on Monday 24 August (note the start time 12.30pm)

Years 12 & 14 in class – Tuesday 25 & Wednesday 26 August

Year 11 – 9.30am – 12.00 noon on Thursday 27 August

Year 13 – 1.00pm – 3.30pm on Thursday 27 August

Year 8 – as outlined in my previous letter on Friday 28 August

September

Year 9 – 9.30am – 12.00 noon on Tuesday 1 September

Year 10 – 1.00pm – 3.30pm on Tuesday 1 September

All Year Groups in class full-time – Wednesday 2 September

School uniform must be worn by all pupils on these Induction Days.

We have now received specific guidance regarding home to school transport for schools during Covid-19. I would encourage you to read this detailed guidance with your son/daughter. For your convenience I have placed this on the school website – Parental Information – Letters Home – August 2020 – Transport Guidance.

In addition, the Minister of Education, Mr Peter Weir MLA, has written a letter to all parents/carers. Yet again I would encourage you to read this letter with your son/daughter. For your convenience I have placed this on the school website – Parental Information – Letters Home – August 2020 – Letter from the Minister of Education.

Likewise, the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct have been updated to reflect the Governmental advice and guidance. Both will be covered in detail with your son/daughter in induction sessions and they are located on our school website – Parental Information – Policies/Documents – School Policies.

The Education Authority Catering Department has informed the school that no lunches will be available until Tuesday 1 September onwards, therefore Year 12 and 14 should bring a packed lunch on Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 August. Obviously in accordance with the induction procedures outlined above, pupils will only be in school at lunchtime from Wednesday 2 September onwards. For the remainder of this week all Years 8 – 10 must bring a packed lunch i.e. Wednesday 2 – Friday 4 September inclusive. Years 11 – 14 may bring a packed lunch but the Dining Hall will be available for these Year Groups from Wednesday 2 September. Detailed arrangements for lunch and break will be explained to your son/daughter during the induction sessions.

I seek your support with a number of issues:

- **If your child, or anyone else in your household, shows COVID-19 symptoms, you should not send them to school, but should instead follow Government guidance in relation to testing and isolation, and notify the school. If your child develops symptoms at school, they will be sent home immediately and Government guidance should be followed.**
- **Pupils are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings** when they are moving around the school, in the corridors, confined spaces and in the classrooms when they are face-to-face and separated by less than a metre. In all classrooms we are providing the greatest practicable social distancing for pupils and a definitive 2m social distancing for teachers.
- It is mandatory for all pupils aged 13 and over to wear a face covering on public transport. It is also strongly recommended that all pupils, regardless of age, should wear a face covering on all buses, trains or taxis for the journey to school.
- Pupils will be required to adhere to the Government guidance in relation to good hand and respiratory hygiene. Hand sanitisers will be available in the school, however, the scientific advice is clear - washing your hands with soap and water is the most effective way of minimising any potential risk. Pupils should bring their own personal hand sanitiser, tissues and we strongly encourage a face covering.
- Pupils should bring their own water as the water stations around the school have been decommissioned to avoid cross contamination issues.
- Pupils are no longer allowed to share equipment, therefore the list attached to my letter last week must be purchased prior to the start of the academic year.

I take this opportunity to wish your son/daughter every success in the year ahead.

Despite all the challenges we are determined to continue to provide the highest quality of education possible to the young people in our care. It is extremely important that we work together, accept collective responsibility to strictly adhere to the Government guidance in relation to hand and respiratory hygiene, and follow our Positive Behaviour Policy at all times.

Yours sincerely

R S McLoughlin
Principal