



2 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope this message finds you and your family well. Apologies for sending a message at the end of the Christmas holidays but, as you will be aware from the media, the Education Minister issued revised arrangements in respect of the return to school in 2021. Following this announcement the Department of Education and the Education Authority issued guidance on New Year's Eve and Day.

It is evident that the public health and scientific advice now clearly indicates that re-opening schools for all pupils is not possible at this time. We understand the crucial importance of school remaining open, however, the health and wellbeing of our pupils, colleagues and wider society must be paramount. The details of the Minister's announcement can be accessed at the following link – <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/weir-announces-changes-schools-reopening-arrangements>

In summary, post-primary pupils will be taught remotely during the first week of January. From

Monday 11 January pupils in Years 8 to 11 will continue to be taught remotely until the end of January while pupils in Years 12 to 14 can attend school for face-to-face teaching from Monday 11 January. Face-to-face teaching of pupils in Years 8 – 11 is expected to resume on Monday 1 February. Please note Year 12 will sit their GCSE Mathematics and English modules on Monday and Tuesday 11 & 12 January, as outlined prior to Christmas and then return to face-to-face teaching each day. Years 13 & 14 will resume face-to-face teaching on Monday 11 January.

Vulnerable children and children of key workers may attend school if necessary (The definition of a key worker is provided through the link above). Please note, due to the demands of maintaining remote learning for all pupils, we will only be able to provide supervision in school for these pupils. If your child is in this category and you would wish him/her to attend school during the week commencing Monday 4 January, please email the school, info@banbridgeacademy.banbridge.ni.sch.uk.

The Education Authority and Department of Education has indicated that the first day of term, Monday 4 January, can be used in planning for remote learning so there is no requirement for pupils to be involved in remote learning on that date.

Thankfully we managed to hold our full Winter Examinations prior to Christmas. However, it is important to note that the Year 12 public GCSE module examinations in the week beginning 11 January will proceed as planned. Further details will follow at the start of next week for Year 12, regarding study time that will be made available in the first week of term to assist pupils with their preparation.

If and when I receive more detailed information I will communicate directly with you but hopefully this message provides you with sufficient guidance for your own planning in the

interim. If you have any queries, please contact us via the school email account, info@banbridgeacademy.banbridge.ni.sch.uk.

Best wishes for the remainder of the holiday and my thoughts and prayers are with you all, as we hope for a better year in 2021.

Yours sincerely

R S McLoughlin
Principal
Banbridge Academy