



7 January 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian

There has been considerable media coverage recently regarding public examinations. Whilst the cancellation of public examinations has been officially announced in Parliament and Stormont, the school has not received official confirmation of the arrangements for GCSEs, AS and A Levels. However, I write to inform you that the Year 12 Mathematics and English modules scheduled to take place next Monday and Tuesday, 11 & 12 January, will not take place and neither will the Controlled Assessment in English for Year 11, which was due to take place on Tuesday 12 January. I understand that this decision is extremely frustrating and the uncertainty will cause anxiety for the young people in our care.

I apologise that I cannot provide absolute clarity at this time regarding the assessment arrangements for GCSE, AS and A Levels, but please be assured that I will continue to do my utmost to ensure that all of our pupils achieve the outcomes they deserve. The school will continue to work tirelessly to ensure your son/daughter is supported throughout this period and I take this opportunity to thank you for your tremendous support. Please ensure that your son/daughter continues to work under the direction of their teacher on the specifications because it is apparent that there will be other forms of assessment that will be used later in the year to inform the grading process. Our priority, at this time, must be to remain focused on the specification detail to ensure that we are prepared for any eventuality.

As you are aware from my communication, 2 January 2021, all post-primary pupils are currently being taught remotely and it is now apparent that this will continue to Half-Term, February. Obviously the NI Executive will consider the public health situation closer to that time to determine if pupils should return to face-to-face teaching post the Half-Term break. We all understand the crucial importance of face-to-face teaching and schools remaining open, however, the health and well-being of our pupils, colleagues and wider society must be paramount.

I take this opportunity to thank my teaching and non-teaching colleagues for all of their efforts in preparing for this period of remote learning and encourage all parents and pupils to follow the guidance for pupils during remote learning that we issued yesterday, a copy of which is available on the school website – Parental Information – Letters Home.

My thoughts and prayers remain with our pupils and parents, my colleagues and everyone in our community – together we will get through this very challenging period in our history.

Please take care.

Yours faithfully

R S McLoughlin
Principal
Banbridge Academy