



12 January 2021

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope you and your family are keeping well and staying safe through these difficult and challenging times. As a parent myself, I am fully aware of the current challenges that online learning provides and all we can do is try our best.

You will be aware that the Education Minister, Mr Peter Weir, announced on Wednesday 6 January 2021 that all CCEA GCSE, AS and A-Level examinations would be cancelled this academic year. As yet we have no further guidance on how pupils will be awarded GCSE and A Level grades this year. The Department of Education in England has already indicated that they will award grades based on Teacher Assessments, so it is likely that Northern Ireland will do likewise.

As a school we can assure you that our staff will continue to teach the remainder of the content for each examination specification, as far as possible. We are aware that our pupils need to be adequately prepared for the transition to the next stage of their education and need to have covered sufficient content to be able to access qualifications at a higher level. For these reasons it is vital that your daughter continues to engage fully in our remote learning on Microsoft Teams and any other platforms used by our school. The key message I want to convey is that **even though Summer examinations may have been cancelled, the teaching of our examination courses has not stopped and will continue.**

Upon our return to school for further face-to-face teaching it would be our intention to continue with further assessments where possible, in order to assist with teacher assessed grades. Please be aware that our recent Winter examinations will only be part of any teacher assessment we are asked to make. The Department of Education are aiming to have a more uniform approach across schools, based on best practice approaches used for the 2020 awarding of grades. Detailed guidance will be provided by all Exam Boards in due course and once the school receives this guidance for a way forward we will inform you with more details.

Finally, I want to reassure you and your daughter that we will guide you through the whole process in due course.

Yours faithfully

Paul McClintock
Vice Principal