



Ashfield Girls' High School
Holywood Road
Belfast
BT4 2LY

Principal: Mrs Louise Hanvey BSc (Hons) PGCE, PQHNI, PGDH



14 September 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I would like to thank you for your continued support. As I mentioned in my communication on 6th September 2020, Ashfield Girls' High School has settled well into its new normal. All schools are not operating as they were pre-Covid 19 and this is likely to continue throughout the school year. We are learning to live with the virus.

All communication regarding a confirmed Covid 19 case should be sent directly to my e-mail lhavvey783@c2kni.net. Currently, the majority of my time is taken up with managing Health and Safety, and in particular Covid 19. Please continue to use the school's communication procedures for all other communications.

Communication Procedures

General online enquiry using the Contact Us form on the school website - your enquiry will be directed to the relevant member of staff on a daily basis. Once received by the relevant member of staff they will aim to respond within 24 hours after receiving your enquiry (please be aware that a number of staff work part time).

Other query - please telephone the school reception.

Request for a member of staff to contact you – please telephone the reception. The receptionist will take a message and e-mail the relevant member of staff. Teachers teach a full timetable and will aim to return your call within 24 hours of receiving the e-mail. Telephone calls will not be put through to classrooms.

Requesting a meeting – face to face meetings will only take place in exceptional circumstances and will be by prior appointment. If you feel that your situation is an exceptional circumstance you should telephone the school reception and ask to make an appointment through the Principal's Secretary. If a face to face meeting is considered necessary by the Principal, an appointment will be made.

I will send out a weekly update. The update will either be in the form of a letter or message on the SIMS Parent App.

Tel: 028 90471744 • Fax: 028 90672416 • E-Mail: info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk • Internet: www.ashfieldgirls.org





Weekly Update

Covid19

The latest information from the Chief Medical Officer states that;

If your daughter tests positive for Covid 19 you should:

- keep your daughter at home and follow the advice given to you by PHA;
- inform the Principal by e-mail on lhavvey783@c2kni.net (please provide the name of your daughter, her form class and the date of the test result).

If your daughter is sent home as a precautionary measure following notification that a pupil in school has tested positive for Covid 19, your daughter should remain at home for the following two days. If your daughter is subsequently confirmed as a close contact, you will receive a message via the SIMS Parent App by 5pm on the second day, after being sent home, instructing your daughter to self-isolate for 14 days (all close contacts have to self-isolate even if they have no symptoms or have had a negative test result). If you are not contacted by SIMS Parent App, then your daughter has not been identified as a close contact and can return to school. Please note that any absence related to Covid 19 or self-isolation is coded differently and will not impact on your daughter's attendance record.

If your daughter is identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for Covid 19:

- your daughter must self-isolate for 14 days (from school and all other people);
- you should expect to be contacted by the PHA Contact Tracing Service from (028) 95368888. Please be aware that it may take a number of days for the PHA Contact Tracing Service to make direct contact with you;
- PHA states that, if your daughter is self-isolating, other members of the household do not need to self-isolate unless your daughter subsequently develops Covid 19 symptoms. If this happens, then your daughter will be required to obtain a test and the household members will have to self-isolate for 14 days (along with any other close contacts of your daughter outside of the household). PHA will provide advice in this situation.

Just to clarify the PHA's definition of a close contact is:

- a) a person who has been within 2 metres of the positive case for more than 15 minutes;
- b) a person who has had face to face contact within 1 metre (being coughed on accidentally, sneezed on accidentally, had any conversation within 1 metre, a person who has been within 1m of a confirmed case for 1 minute or longer, a person who has had skin-to-skin contact with a confirmed case);
- c) a person who has travelled by car with a confirmed case;
- d) a person who has travelled by bus/ train/ aeroplane within 2 metres of a confirmed case.



It is the aim of all school staff to work tirelessly to keep Ashfield Girls' High School as safe as possible. In doing that, we can continue to provide face to face teaching. However, it is likely that a single confirmed Covid 19 case will result in an entire year group having to self-isolate for 14 days. This has already happened in a number of schools. I would encourage you to continue to reinforce the following with your daughter:

- your daughter must keep a 1m social distance from other pupils, at all times, when not in form class / G group bubbles. This is particularly important on the journey to school, when walking to and from classrooms, at lunchtime and on the journey home from school;
- your daughter should wash her hands regularly and particularly before eating;
- your daughter should sanitise her hands regularly;
- your daughter should not touch her mouth, nose or eyes, unless her hands are washed;
- your daughter should follow 'catch it, kill it bin it', with regard to respiratory hygiene;
- face coverings should be worn for the entire journey on the bus / train;
- face coverings should be worn in corridors and communal areas (when not in a classroom, eating or playing outside);
- those pupils who are medically exempt from a wearing face covering should wear a lanyard provided by your GP (staff have no other way of quickly identifying who should or should not be wearing a face covering);
- your daughter must remain in year group bubbles (queueing for lunch, lunch bubble seating arrangements, toilet blocks and separate playgrounds) at lunchtime.

While school have no authority outside of school, the actions of the wider community will directly impact on school. A number of year groups in some schools have already had to self-isolate due to social gatherings not following PHA advice.

If we keep to the above measures in school and follow all PHA advice outside school, then, I am confident that we can maintain face to face teaching.

The Strategic Leadership Team agreed on Friday 11th September, that while we appreciate that having a mobile phone with your daughter as they travel to and from school can be reassuring for both parents / carers and their daughter, she is posing risk to both physical and emotional health throughout the school day. At lunch in particular, pupils continue to share phones in school. I have witnessed many pupils eating their lunch and then getting their phone out of their bag and then returning to eating again without washing their hands. This undermines all the good work undertaken to wash hands and using sanitiser. Therefore, from Monday 14th September 2020, mobile telephones are not permitted to be used in school, during the school day, for any reason. If you wish for your child to carry a mobile phone with them for communication before and after the school day, then please remind them to turn their mobile phone off from 8.40am – 3.20pm (or relevant staggered start / finish





times) and keep their phone safely in their school bag / blazer pocket. This is in line with the majority of post-primary schools. As lockdown has shown society in general, face to face interaction with either teachers, support staff and peers, is critical to wellbeing. We will give pupils one week to get used to this health and safety mitigation measure and from Monday 21st September 2020 all mobile phones that are not turned off in school or taken out from school bags / blazer pockets, will be confiscated for collection at the end of the school day.

If you need to send an urgent message to your daughter, you can contact the school reception and the receptionist will forward your message. I appreciate that this is not what pupils will want, however, school is for learning and I welcome your full and continuing support on this issue.

Lunches

As we move into the third full week (week beginning 14th September), we will start to serve hot meals at lunch to pupils entitled to free school meals. All other pupils should bring a packed lunch. If this works well, then, we will aim to serve hot meals at lunch next week (week beginning 21st September) to all pupils. This provision will be continually reviewed.

School Fund

Thank you to all parents / carers for their school fund contributions last year (and over the previous years). We have also received the majority of school fund contributions from Year 8. We have purchased additional dining furniture for lunch time. We have purchased new outdoor benches and picnic tables for outside (still awaiting delivery). We are also hoping to purchase additional furniture for Sixth Form break out areas. Following the School Council request for more decals around the school, we purchased three beautiful and inspirational decals for the pod areas. These purchases are in addition to the cost for school trips and events such as the Year 8 Sausage Sizzle and Library Tea Party.

Item	Cost	Benefit
Dining furniture	£10,000	All pupils
Outdoor benches and picnic tables	£12,000	All pupils
Sixth Form break out area (6 tables, 24 chairs, 8 leather 2 seater sofas and 4 coffee tables)	£5,000	Sixth Form
Decal (full wall image of Mourne Mountains, Giants Causeway and ICT)	£5,000	All pupils
School trips (2019 / 2020)	£2,000	Different groups
Events (2019/ 2020)	£3,500	Different groups



Ashfield Girls' High School
Holywood Road
Belfast
BT4 2LY

Principal: Mrs Louise Hanvey BSc (Hons) PGCE, PQHNI, PGDH

We would appreciate your support in contributing once again this year to our school fund. The many benefits and beautiful learning environment that your daughter now benefits from has been funded by the generous school fund contributions that previous parents / carers have made. All school fund money is used to directly improve the educational experience of the pupils of Ashfield Girls' High School.

Year 8	£30 (the majority of this has already been paid by parents on the Year 8 registration day)
Year 9 – Year 12	£30
Year 13	£50
Year 14	£50

If you have two or more daughters at Ashfield Girls High School in Year 8 – 12, the family school fund total is £40. We fully appreciate that these are very challenging times and if a parent / carer would prefer, they may make a school fund payment in monthly instalments. This can be paid on the Parent Pay App.

It is lovely to see the girls in school. They are learning together with the support of their teachers. Friendship groups provide the social interaction that is necessary to support the highly complex adolescence developmental stage. The initial apprehension that was evident at the beginning of term, is dissipating. Please be reassured that, while this current pandemic presents the most challenging time in my school career, it is also an opportunity to reflect on what is important in society. We need to work together to keep your daughter as safe as possible and in school. This is my main priority, and I thank you in advance of your continued support.

Mrs L Hanvey
Principal

Tel: 028 90471744 • Fax: 028 90672416 • E-Mail: info@ashgirls.belfast.ni.sch.uk • Internet: www.ashfieldgirls.org

