



Enniskillen Royal Grammar School

Principal: Miss E. Armstrong BA (Hons) PGCE PQH(NI)

Please note action is required on:-

- The proposal form for the election of parent representatives to the Board of Governors which is to be returned by **Friday 16th October 2020**.
- The return of the signed ICT contract by **Tuesday 13th October 2020**.

October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As we move into October and our Autumn Term is well underway, I write to update you on several key aspects of school life. Our best wishes go to our Year 14 leavers as they move into the next stage of their educational pathway. We commend them for their excellent A2 examination results which enabled them to access a wide diversity of courses, some of which are among the most competitive and sought after: we commend them too for their resilience and perseverance in dealing with the uncertainties around the examinations and results processes. Individually and collectively as a year group, they exemplified throughout the process the twin strands of excellence and perseverance of our school motto: *Perstare et Praestare* and we wish them every success as they embark on the next stage in their lives. Our strong GCSE and AS results were also a source of much satisfaction for our pupils and their teachers and enabled our Year 12 and Year 13 pupils to move forward in their educational journey with well-deserved confidence.

At the time of writing **we await the Minister of Education's decision on the arrangements for GCSE, AS and A2 examinations for Summer 2021**, following the consultation process led by CCEA. We will update parents/guardians in Years 11-14 as soon as we are in receipt of this crucial information.

Our staff too exemplified the twin values of perseverance and excellence in their hard work and attention to detail in our preparations for the safe reopening of school after last term's lockdown. We were all very pleased to welcome our pupils back to school in the last week of August and the first week in September. A special word of welcome goes to our Year 8 pupils as they start their journey with us. We were also pleased to welcome a good number of entrants to the Sixth Form and to other year groups throughout the school: we wish them every success and happiness in their new school environment.

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We also welcomed some new members to our staff team this term. Ms Claire Hilliard joins the Modern Languages Department where she is covering Mrs Emma Maguire's career break; we also welcome Mr James White to the Mathematics department during Mrs Dorothy Maguire's absence. Miss Carol McKeown is covering Mrs Andrea Graham's maternity leave in the same department and Ms Caroline Orr is providing cover for our part-time Mathematics post until Ms Rachel Ellis joins us after half-term. Mr Noel Johnston returns to the Science department to cover Mrs Elaine McKenzie's maternity leave and Mr Mark Gallagher also returns to a part-time post in the same department. We are also very pleased to welcome Mr James Birney, Ms Eirinn Gillen, Ms Dervla Kelly, Ms Lorna McManus and Mr Colin Murray to our Year 8 Classroom assistant team: Mrs Eileen Edgar and Ms Jennifer Hutchinson join the Year 12 and Year 13 teams respectively and we are grateful to Mrs Doreen Hanna for her support in the Year 12 team on a temporary basis until Mrs Ingram returns to school.

There is no doubt our start to our new term was a very distinctive one this year due to COVID 19. I want to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of our school community most warmly for **the positive and responsible way in which they are embracing our COVID 19 hygiene and safety protocols**. As you are aware, we are in a **very fluid situation where we need to be constantly agile in our responses**. We appreciate greatly your support, patience and cooperation as we pull together as a school community to meet the educational needs of our young people in their widest sense, whilst ensuring the safety of our whole school community within our wider community. We are pleased that we have been able to take positive and safety-conscious steps in getting **our extra-curricular and co-curricular programmes underway**. In this as in everything we do, we are led by the regulations and guidance from the appropriate authorities; **the safety and well-being of our school community is paramount**. Thank you for your on-going support in this: **please check our app and school website regularly for updates and information we may need to share with you at short notice**. I remind you too that if you need to notify us of a COVID 19 positive case in your household outside normal office hours (Monday-Friday; 8.30 am to 4.30 pm), please use the bespoke e-mail address: ergscovid19@gmail.com. Please include the name and form of the pupil concerned and a telephone number at which we can contact you.

We are currently finalising our School Development Action Plan for 2020-21 which builds on our ongoing improvement work on developing the **quality of dialogues for learning and positive behaviour management through promoting active pupil engagement and self-awareness, higher level thinking skills, effective assessment for learning, and positive relationships at all levels in our school community**. Within this overarching framework we are also addressing the very specific needs of the current situation, taking careful account of the learning gained from the **feedback from our pupil, staff and parental questionnaires last term along with our pupil pastoral questionnaires** at the beginning of this term. In line with this feedback, we have a clear focus on **developing staff and pupil capacity in using the interactive aspects of Google Classroom in order to ensure that a blended learning approach is fully and consistently embedded into our classroom practice and Schemes of Work**. We are also reviewing our pastoral programmes and practices to ensure that we build **pupil and staff resilience and well-being in a supportive environment where there are clear lines of communication in a resilient school community characterised by mutual accountability and support**. Within this network of positive relationships, **our interaction with you as parents/guardians is key and we are currently giving careful thought as to how we can reformulate our parents' meetings in light of COVID 19 restrictions**. We will update you in due course: **we also plan to conduct online surveys with pupils and parents before the half-term break to gauge your views to date on the return to school to date**. In the meantime if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact your son/daughter's tutor, Head of Year or any member of the SLT. Our partnership with you is a central tenet of our school ethos and practice. Within this mailing you have received information about **the election of parent representatives to the new Board of**

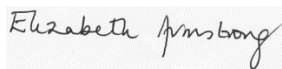
Governors in line with its statutory reconstitution every four years: may I encourage you to be actively involved in this process: I also pay tribute to the three parent representatives who served with distinction and commitment on the Board of Governors in the first four years of our new school.

I also draw your attention to three documents we have posted along with a copy of this letter on our website for your information. Firstly, we have posted **an updated copy of our school calendar for 2020-21 including additional school closure dates due to our earlier start in August and our INSET Days.** We have also included a summary of **our Pastoral Care arrangements and our Child Protection Policy which we send out to you every two years.** A full copy of the Child Protection Policy is available on our website or from school. You will also find a parent and school copy of our ICT contract which we have recently revised to ensure the safety of our school community in an environment where there is greater use of online resources within our blended learning programme. **I would be grateful if you could download the school copy of this ICT contract and read through it with your son/daughter before signing it and returning it as soon as possible via your son/daughter to reception at the relevant site.**

We have also amended our **Positive Behaviour Policy in line with DE guidance** to take account of possible COVID 19 offences: a revised copy of the policy is available on the website or from school.

Thank you for your patience in reading this long letter. Thank you too for all your support as we work together to meet successfully the challenges of 2020-21 in support of our young people and their learning and development. *Perstare et Praestare.*

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Armstrong". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Elizabeth Armstrong
Principal