



Enniskillen Royal Grammar School

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

December 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

As we move towards the end of the Autumn Term 2020 may I take this opportunity to thank you warmly for all your support through this busy and productive term. I pay a warm tribute also to your sons/daughters in Year 12 for their cheerful determination and resilience as together we have worked as a school community to meet the challenges of a COVID 19 learning situation.

We are very aware of the many pressures on our Year 12 pupils in this GCSE year and we are mindful of the need to work with them to minimise the unavoidable impact of COVID 19 on their studies. In light of this, subject departments have been revising and planning their delivery of their schemes of work to maximise the time available with their pupils in line with CCEA's revised assessment arrangements for the GCSE examinations.

I enclose with this letter a Year 12 Subject Information booklet which identifies the units being assessed and taught in each subject along with details of each department's assessment plans and timeframe. I hope you will find this overview helpful.

You will also be aware that your son/daughter has GCSE Modules in January in English and Mathematics in the week beginning 11th January 2021 along with mock examinations in their other subjects beginning on Friday 15th January 2021. Pupils have been given individual timetables for their CCEA modules along with a copy of the CCEA examination regulations. I enclose a copy of the Year 12 mock examination timetable for your information.

In speaking to Year 12 about these forthcoming examinations we have encouraged them to plan their revision schedule sensibly and wisely over the coming weeks to ensure that they have a good balance between productive study and relaxation and that they are active in identifying effective revision strategies for them as individuals. **I enclose a copy of 'Exam Stress-Busting Advice' which highlights key pointers: this is also available for pupils in the Year 12 Pastoral Google Classroom.**

Lough Shore Site
1 Lough Shore Road
Portora, Enniskillen
BT74 5HD

028 6632 2658



info@enniskillenroyalgs.com
www.enniskillenroyalgs.com

Cooper Crescent Site
1 Cooper Crescent
Enniskillen
BT74 6DQ

028 6632 2165

We have also highlighted with the pupils that these January examinations are a useful 'practice run' for the GCSE examinations in May/June 2021 and we are keen that our Year 12 pupils take full advantage of the learning experience they offer.

In light of this and, mindful of the emerging information about the possible COVID 19 situation in early January 2021, we have decided to extend our usual period of Study Leave during the examination period to include the first four days of term, Tuesday 5th January 2021 to Friday 8th January 2021. Pupils will therefore be permitted to work from home for the period Tuesday 5th January 2021 to Friday 22nd January 2021 except when they have examinations when they will be required to be in school. If on a day, they have examinations during both morning and afternoon sessions, they are committed to staying in school the entire day and will not have permission to leave school during the period between the examinations.

During this period we are very aware of the need to ensure good communication and contact between pupils and their teachers.

In the first week of term from 5th to 8th January 2021 staff will make contact with their classes through Google Classroom to provide examination preparation and/or revision. Staff will outline the planned contact/work for the week on the day when they would normally have their first lesson of the week. If your son/daughter's teacher is teaching on line/live streaming during this week pupils are expected to attend this lesson and a normal attendance register will be taken. Any pupil who cannot access online material can request a copy of the work from their teachers.

During the period Monday 11th January 2021 to Friday 22nd January 2021 there will be no examination preparation or revision within Google Classroom and the focus for the pupils will be their own individual study/revision. If they have a query/concern they may contact their teachers through Google classroom. Normal classes for Year 12 will resume on Monday 25th January 2021.

In speaking to pupils and parents over the past term, I am aware that Year 12 pupils are very conscious of the fact that GCSE public examinations in Summer 2019 were cancelled and grades were awarded through the Centre Assessed Grade process and that this has created a degree of uncertainty for them. **I would highlight that the Minister of Education, Peter Weir, and CCEA have consistently stated that their firm intention is that public examinations will take place in Summer 2021 and that, while they have to work on contingency plans as a fall-back position, we are asked to plan and work forward in the expectation that public examinations will take place in Summer 2021.** It is also important to state that our Centre Assessed Grades in Summer 2020 were the product of a rigorous and robust five stage process which took into account a range of assessment information from throughout the year (and not based on one set of assessments only) and which were subject to a rigorous internal standardisation and checking process. In the unlikely event of having to repeat the process this year we have a tried and tested system in place.

Pupils and parents are also understandably keen to know how CCEA will take account of particular circumstances in individual schools, such as pupils or staff being required to self-isolate for a period or periods of time during this school year, in order to ensure robust and fair outcomes for all students.

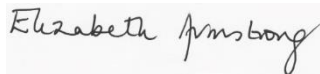
CCEA have advised that they are working on contingency arrangements to allow them to take account of circumstances in individual schools, such as pupils or staff being required to self-isolate for a period or periods of time. We will let you know the details of these contingency arrangements as soon as CCEA releases the details of their plans.

I enclose for your information the Minister of Education's recent letter regarding changes to CCEA GCSE, AS and A Level qualifications in 2021 and a copy of a FAQ document in respect of GCSE examinations.

I hope that this lengthy letter has provided some useful information and clarity for you. Since our return to school we have consistently advised our Year 12 pupils to 'control what they can control' as a positive antidote to the inevitable uncertainty of a COVID 19 scenario. It is my wish and hope that they will find time during the Christmas holidays for a healthy and simple balance of rest, relaxation, family fun and some study in preparation for the new challenges of 2021.

Wishing you and yours a safe and joyous Christmas.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Armstrong". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light grey rectangular background.

Elizabeth Armstrong

Principal

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