

# CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

**Principal:****J.A. Maxwell**

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BT38 7RA**Education Authority - North-Eastern Region**

27 March 2020

**Dear Parent / Guardian****Thank you**

This week Carrickfergus Grammar School has remained open for a small number of children of key workers. We have been pleased to be able to support those at the front line in these challenging times. On behalf of the school, we would like to show our deep appreciation and gratitude to all those in our health services and other key services who are supporting and protecting us all. Thank you.

I wish to pay tribute to the Carrickfergus Grammar School community at this time, including Governors, staff (teaching and non-teaching), students and parents. We have all been launched into a world which has unique constraints and new realities for each of us. Over the past few weeks we have had to adapt in so many new ways, to so many distinctive circumstances. The extraordinary resilience I have witnessed over the past weeks has been heart-warming and uplifting. We have appreciated the many words of support and encouragement. There is no doubt that the school community has entered into this with stoicism and determination.

I am extremely grateful for the tremendous work staff have undertaken to get the online learning platform up and running so quickly and effectively. Without exception, they have gone above and beyond in their dedication to offering our students the best possible experience of distance learning. They continue to do what they can for our students from afar, taking into account the new circumstances in which we all find ourselves.

I am also very proud of our students, and the resilience with which they are facing this new challenge. On the whole, they have embraced it with some aplomb, and many are working in as disciplined a manner as possible on the material set. I have enjoyed listening to anecdotes from staff about how pleased they have been with how many students have embraced the system so effectively – even to the point of sending words of thanks through the system to their teachers.

**FURTHER EXCELLENCE from PRESENT STRENGTHS****[www.carrickfergusgrammar.com](http://www.carrickfergusgrammar.com)****[info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk)**

## Routines and Expectations

We would like to make some suggestions at this stage which may help as we move forward.

- Students should be using their school Google accounts to log into Google Classroom, not their personal Google accounts. Their school account is their username with @c2ken.net at the end, eg [jbloggs756@c2ken.net](mailto:jbloggs756@c2ken.net);
- Students are asked to check e-mails on a very frequent basis, two or three times per day as far as possible;
- Students should endeavour to be signed up to websites which their teachers have asked them to, using usernames which allow teachers to recognise them immediately;
- Students should stick to their timetabled day as far as possible in relation to their learning. We appreciate that for a few students who may need to share technology, for example, this will not always be possible. **However, all students will still be expected to complete all work their teacher may wish them to.** We would be very grateful if parents could monitor this, to avoid school having to ring homes about this issue at this critical time. Likewise, students should complete and submit any assignments their teacher may have set for them. The best routines will probably involve trying to complete the work on the day it is set;
- Please establish agreed routines and expectations with your child to manage each day;
- Many teachers will have an online presence in the Google Classroom at the time your child is timetabled for that subject. This may not always be possible, for example when a teacher is ill;
- As I mentioned in my letter of Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, the highest levels of formality are expected from students in the online classrooms;
- Please endeavour to keep daily routines intact with your child, including when they get up and when they go to bed.

## External Exams

Having spoken to CCEA on Thursday afternoon and having received the latest communication from Ofqual also on Thursday, I can advise that there is as yet no further guidance and direction in relation to the process for grading external examinations this summer. School has, however, been told that this will be forthcoming next week. School commits to keeping everyone updated at the earliest opportunity, as and when guidance is issued.

## Free School Meals

Yesterday the Communities Minister said “Families will receive £2.70 per child per day for each day of term the schools are closed. This money will be paid to families on a fortnightly basis.” Education Minister, Peter Weir said “Starting next week, the Education Authority will process payments in the same way they do for uniform grants. The Education Authority already has the bank details for the vast majority of those in receipt of free school meals so there is no need for

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anyone to apply. There are however a number of families for whom bank details are not held. These families will be contacted via a text message early next week and advised to complete an online form which will then be available on the Education Authority website. It is vital that people respond to any request from the Education Authority to avoid delay in payment.

You can read more about this here: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/news/ministers-take-action-relation-free-school-meals-payment-0> .

### **Communication**

Information and updates regarding individual subjects will be posted in the respective Google Classrooms.

Parents can contact the school as usual via the school phone line on 028 93 363615 during the day or the additional number of 07395930976. As a school we will remain in regular contact with staff, parents and students. The general school e-mail account is [info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk) . Any general Google Classroom issues can be addressed by forwarding the query to [kcrooks461@c2kni.net](mailto:kcrooks461@c2kni.net) . Safeguarding issues will be dealt with as a matter of urgency. These, and any other pastoral issues, may be addressed by contacting [lkane502@c2kni.net](mailto:lkane502@c2kni.net) .

The school community is also asked to check the school website on a regular basis for further updates.

### **In Summary:**

Tel: 028 93 363615 // 07395930976

Email:

General: [info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk)

Google Classroom / IT: [kcrooks461@c2kni.net](mailto:kcrooks461@c2kni.net)

Pastoral / Safeguarding: [lkane502@c2kni.net](mailto:lkane502@c2kni.net)

Website: [www.carrickfergusgrammar.com](http://www.carrickfergusgrammar.com)

### **Conclusion**

Finally, may I thank you as parents for your tremendous support. The many e-mails and phone calls of commendation and encouragement have been shared with staff, and have helped to maintain morale at a very challenging time. Thank you.

**Yours faithfully**

**J. A. Maxwell**

**Principal**

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