

# CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

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

BA (Hons), PGCE, MSc., PQH (NI)

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22 May 2020

**Dear Parent / Guardian**

I trust that this new communication continues to find you and your loved ones well. Please find below and on subsequent pages some further updates.

**Centre Assessment Grades**

School is now finalising the process of collating Centre Assessment Grades for GCSE and A Level, ready for submission to the Exam Boards. We are expecting further technical details from CCEA early next week regarding how these grades are to be submitted. I wish to pay tribute to the hard work of staff throughout this unique endeavour. The process has been undertaken with great integrity and professionalism, and at all times in a child-centred manner. Once grades have been submitted to Exam Boards, they will go through further standardisation procedures. I would remind students and parents again that the grades school submits may not in all cases be the grades ultimately awarded to students. The final grades awarded in August will be the Exam Board grades.

**Online Learning**

School is very pleased with the engagement and performance of Year 11 and Year 13 students currently. We wish to acknowledge that and pay tribute to the great work being undertaken by the vast majority of students in these two year groups. In uncertain times, this exceptionally high level of engagement and robust standard of work bodes very, very well for next year.

We also wish to acknowledge that a large majority of students in Years 8-10 are also working exceptionally well and trying hard. It is a delight to note that many Merits are being awarded for hard work, great engagement and high standards of effort. School congratulates all students who are managing so well and who are giving of their best. We hope that such excellence will continue to be rewarded with Merits, congratulatory texts and phone calls home. We wish to continue to emphasise the many positives we are witnessing as regards students' attitudes, work ethic and standard of work. School also wishes to thank all parents again for their unwavering and solid support.

**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)**

However, it is also the case that a minority of students in Years 8-10 are not managing their work well enough and are not making enough effort to submit work punctually and engage effectively. This is evidenced in the fact that a small number of students are now accruing late work across numerous subjects. Where there are pastoral issues, health issues, unique technology issues or other extenuating circumstances which parents communicate to us, we will of course be sensitive and empathetic to that, and will support as best as we can from afar, and we will be flexible if necessary in the interests of supporting our students. However, where this is not the case, it is this school's full anticipation that students will engage and submit work to a standard in line with Carrickfergus Grammar School's high expectations.

The school has very robust systems in place for monitoring and tracking students' engagement and submission of work as they work remotely. Now that we have been working remotely for more than 8 weeks, there should no longer be any confusion or lack of understanding on students' part about how to submit work or use technology.

School will continue to monitor engagement and submission of work closely, and will continue to intervene quickly where necessary and when there are concerns. Again, we remain appreciative of the fact that parents continue to check with their children that work has been completed.

### **GCSE Subject Choices for Year 10**

The process of allocating Year 10 students into GCSE classes is nearing completion. If there were any issues with student choices, we will have spoken to your child about this or communicated with you. I am now pleased to advise that - following significant hard work on the part of the timetabling team and Mr Marshall - we have been able to allocate every Year 10 child their subject choices for GCSE.

We are delighted at this achievement, which is not the case in many other schools. In the unlikely event at this stage that your child may wish to change their mind about a particular GCSE subject, we cannot guarantee that they will get their choice of new subject, particularly if that subject is already full. English and Maths classes will be set by the end of June, and we will be communicating further with you about this process in due course.

### **Staffing**

Today we bade farewell to Mrs McCabe, teacher of Art and Photography. Mrs McCabe was covering the maternity leave of Mrs Beattie. Mrs McCabe has been an absolutely outstanding colleague - undertaking her work with great dedication, and building outstanding rapport with the students. Mrs McCabe went above and beyond in her capacity as a subject teacher and form teacher, and gave of her time in an extra-curricular capacity after school in order to enhance students' Art skills. On behalf of the entire school community, I want to pass on sincerest thanks and best wishes to Mrs McCabe.

We now look forward to welcoming Mrs Beattie back on Tuesday.

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## School Fund

School extends gratitude to the majority of our parents who make the contribution to pay annual school fund. The vast majority of parents have elected now to pay this annual contribution in five instalments. The fifth payment (£15 for most parents; rising to £25 for those families with three children at the school) is due for collection on **Friday 29 May**.

The present circumstances created by the Coronavirus pandemic may have massively impacted on the health of some families in our school community and some will have been affected financially. If you normally pay school fund by direct debit and your circumstances are such that you feel you do not wish the May payment to be taken from your account, please let us know before the end of **Monday 25 May** by emailing [info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@carrickfergusgrammar.carrickfergus.ni.sch.uk) and we will ensure this payment is not taken.

We hope that the majority of parents will feel able to continue to allow the payment of £15-£25 to proceed as previously agreed since the type of costs that school fund contributes towards have already been incurred in this school year, or continue to persist even when students are not in school. Some of the costs already paid for out of school fund this year include teaching resources (particularly those for practical subjects such as HE, Technology, Science etc), transport for school trips and visits, building maintenance, computer equipment and postage and printing costs. Given the uncertain times that we all face, we have decided that school fund will be maintained at the same level next year, as it has been for the past five years.

## Bank Holiday

The school community is reminded that school will observe the Bank Holiday on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020. There is therefore no obligation for students to be present in online classrooms on this date, however some students may wish to use the time to get caught up on some work. When school returns on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May, it will be a **Week 2 timetable**.

## Holidays 2020-2021

The holiday dates for next year have now been posted on the school website or by clicking [here](#).

## Survey

On Monday of this week we distributed an online survey to all student e-mail accounts. This survey was designed to give us feedback on access to technology within our student cohort, and to gauge their impressions about the current online learning system. We are grateful to the 300+ students who have responded to date. If any student still wishes to respond, we would ask that they do so by the end of school on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The results will help us to evolve our approach to remote learning in upcoming weeks and months.

## AQE Registration

Registration for the 2020 AQE assessments (for current P6 pupils) is now open. You can find further information on the AQE website at <https://aqe.org.uk/registration-2020/>.

## Communication

May I remind you again of various communication channels the school has in place to support and assist you and your child as far as possible.

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. 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

Our continued thanks for all your support.

Stay safe and take care

With every best wish

J. A. Maxwell  
Principal

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