

Ballyclare Secondary School



Keeping Safe – GCSE Examinations

January 2021

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Dear parent/carer,

In recent communication Mr P Weir, Minister of Education has been clear that it is the Department of Education's priority to ensure that public exams go ahead. It is important that following the cancellation of exams last summer pupils have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills through the examination process, which is a valid and reliable way to generate outcomes.

In **January 2021** there are GCSE modules in English and Mathematics. **Years 11 and 12 pupils** will be involved in these examinations.

We have significant numbers of pupils sitting the exams and we will be following all COVID-19 guidelines to ensure that we keep all pupils and the staff invigilating the exams safe. We will need to make use of a large number of classrooms in addition to our examination halls to accommodate all the pupils. We have plans in place to ensure that the examinations will be carried out in a safe environment for pupils and staff.

The GCSE examinations in English and Mathematics will take place on **11th and 12th January 2021**. Year 12 are involved on 11th January 2021 and Years 11 and 12 on 12th January 2021.

I am aware that the recent announcement by the minister stated that all pupils will access their learning remotely for the week beginning Monday 4th January 2021. This will mean that pupils in Years 11 and 12 will not be in class to avail of final preparations before these important examinations. Whilst I fully understand and support the reasons behind this decision, I am also cognisant that many pupils want to be in school to access face-to face teaching before the examinations.

To facilitate this and ensure that our pupils have the best possible opportunity for success in the examinations we will be holding focus GCSE revision lessons for Year 12 Mathematics, Year 12 English and Year 11 English. A special timetable has been drawn up for **Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January 2021** and is detailed below:

Thursday 7th January 2021

Morning session Time: 9.00 am to 11.45 am (Break time will be 10.15 am to 10.30 am and pupils should bring a snack and a drink with them)	<u>All</u> Year 12 Maths Classes should attend Year 11 English the following classes should attend: 11X1 Miss Stevenson 11X2 Mrs Oliver 11X3 Mrs McKeeman/Mrs Black 11W1 Mrs Massey 11W2 Mr Hennessy 11W3 Miss Dunwoody
Afternoon session	Year 12 English the following classes

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Time: 12.15 pm to 2.45 pm	should attend: 12X1 Mrs Oliver 12X2 Mr Hennessy 12X3 Miss Stevenson 12W1 Mrs Massey 12W2 Miss Dunlop 12W3 Miss Dunwoody
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Friday 8th January 2021

Morning session Time: 9.00 am to 11.45 am (Break time will be 10.15 am to 10.30 am and pupils should bring a snack and a drink with them)	All Year 12 Maths Classes should attend Year 11 English the following classes should attend: 11Y1 Mr Hennessy 11Y2 Miss McBride 11Y3 Miss Dunlop 11Y4 Mrs Massey
Afternoon session Time: 12.15 pm to 2.45 pm	Year 12 English the following classes should attend: 12Y1 Miss Dunlop 12Y2 Mrs McKeeman/Mrs Black 12Y3 Miss McBride 12Y4 Mrs Oliver

Points to note:

Attendance at Revision Classes

Managing the COVID-19 pandemic remains a very challenging and worrying time for all and attendance at the planned revision classes is not compulsory. Ballyclare Secondary School will be a COVID-Safe, welcoming and supportive environment however, I appreciate that there may be considerable anxiety around returning to school and you may prefer for your child to continue to prepare for the examinations at home.

If your child is attending, it is **vitaly important** that pupils who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, **do not attend school. This is to protect everyone.**

School Uniform

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Pupils should wear **full school uniform as normal**.

Face Coverings

COVID-19 usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. These droplets can also be picked up from surfaces, if you touch a surface and then your face without washing your hands first.

All pupils must wear a face mask in the corridors and in classrooms. Please ensure that your child brings a face mask with them to school. Pupils will also be required to wear a face mask in the examination halls.

Please be aware that a small number of pupils and staff are exempt from wearing face masks. It is important that we all respect one another and remember the reasons for not wearing a face covering may not always be visible.

Transport

At this point information from the Education Authority states that school transport services will be operating as normal, however, where possible, **please bring your child to school and collect them from school.** This will greatly reduce the opportunity for pupils to mix in a less structured environment and will reduce the opportunity for the COVID-19 virus to spread and keep everyone safe.

School Meals

The school canteen will be open on Thursday 7th and Friday 8th January 2021 for all pupils.

Track and Trace

It is important that we follow the PHA guidance for Track and Trace and we need to have an accurate record of pupils in school. Please confirm your child's attendance by contacting school by phone or email.

Thank you in anticipation of your support as we ensure that our young people have the best possible opportunity to complete their examinations in a safe environment.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Bell

Mrs K Bell
Principal

3rd January 2021