



Ballyclare Secondary School

Doagh Road
Ballyclare
Co Antrim
BT39 9BG

Tel: 028 9332 2610

Principal: Mrs K O Bell BA Adv Cert Ed PQH

18th August 2023

Dear Ballyclare Secondary School families

Important Information:

Firstly, I hope you are enjoying a wonderful summer break despite the weather. I also hope you are relaxed, recharged and ready to start a new school year. As the Acting Principal of Ballyclare Secondary School, I look forward to welcoming all pupils back for another fantastic school year. Our highly skilled and devoted staff are already planning and preparing for your child(ren) to return to us. Our hardworking cleaning staff have spent the entire summer thoroughly washing and cleansing equipment and facilities.

Below is a reminder of return to school dates:

Wednesday 30th August 2023: Year 8 only from 8.40am to 11.45am (*school buses are not available*).

Thursday 31st August 2023: Years 8 & 13 from 8.40am to 2.55pm

Year 14 from 8.40am to 12.25pm (*please note this is a change to communication in June 2023*)

(school buses & canteen are not available, please make sure your child brings a packed lunch).

Friday 1st September 2023: All Year Groups return to school from 8.40am to 2.55pm

(school buses & canteen are operational from this date)

New staff

Each year brings positive change. This includes new additions to our staff. We are delighted to welcome a number of new staff into the Ballyclare Secondary School team...

New teaching staff:

- Mr David Campbell, Head of English Department.
- Mrs Roberta Strange, English teacher.
- Mr Daniel Wray, Science teacher.
- Mrs Jenny Harris, Science teacher.



- Mr Michael Ferguson, PE Teacher
- Mr Ian Latham, PE Teacher
- Miss Rebecca Drysdale, Art teacher.
- Mrs Patrice Truscott, ASC teacher.
- Mr Gareth Ney, History teacher.
- Mrs Gillian Hall, PE teacher
- Mrs Carmel Symes, ICT teacher (covering Mrs Rebecca Egan's maternity leave).
- Miss Catherine Agnew, Psychology teacher (covering Ms Shannon Ferguson's maternity leave).
- Mr Raymond Martin, History teacher (covering Mrs Rachel Hill's maternity leave).
- Mr Clint Thompson, Business Studies teacher (covering Mrs Sarah Emerson's maternity leave).

New non-teaching staff:

We officially welcome Mrs Nickola Montgomery to our office team who started in May 2023. Mr Angus McBride will be taking up the post of Art Technician. We have also increased our team of Learning Support Assistants. We said goodbye to Mrs Gillian Oliver, Mr Stephen McGuigan, Miss Lynsey Stewart, Mr Adam McCauley, other teaching staff members who were with us on a temporary capacity as well as some non-teaching members of staff, we wish them all well in their next venture/chapter. We also say goodbye to Mrs Cathryn Watson, PE teacher as she leaves us in August 2023 to start up a post in another school, we wish her well.

Facilities update

We are very pleased to inform you of an investment into an additional ASC classroom for the learning and teaching of pupils with additional needs. We are also very grateful to Abbey Kitchens & Bathrooms for the installation of our new 6th form centre kitchen, which looks absolutely amazing (photographs coming soon).

We will be continuing to operate a cashless system, ParentPay for the collection of monies within the school (this does not include money for purchases in the canteen). If you have not already signed up to this, we encourage you to do so.

We will also continue to communicate with you every Friday via SIMs Parent App, please read this important information. If you need to contact the school regarding anything that isn't urgent, please send an email to info@ballyclaresec.ballyclare.ni.sch.uk outlining a brief summary, your contact details and the name of the staff member you would like to make contact with.

Please remember for health & safety reasons cars are not to enter the school grounds to drop off and pick up your child. There is a small number of parents who have permission to do this for confidential reasons between them and school. This also includes the gate on Avondale Drive, as entering it or dropping your children off at the gate is dangerous due to the flow of traffic, it is an entrance for staff only.

Parental Voluntary Contribution

Unfortunately, school budgets continue to face pressures and as a school we are asking you to support us financially by paying a voluntary contribution of £50 per child or £75 per family. This contribution will enable us to enrich the learning experience of your child(ren). We are mindful of

the current economic climate, therefore, we have kept the contribution requested unchanged over the past couple of years. Financial support from you as a parent/carer is vitally important and appreciated. Please be assured that your voluntary contribution will only be used for the benefit of the children.

The term ahead

All of our staff work hard to make school a positive experience for all pupils. Ballyclare Secondary School is eagerly looking forward to enriching your child's life. Please understand that it may take a few weeks for a child to adjust to a new class, peer group, teacher and 2 week timetable. Any concerns should be communicated via our pastoral care structure.

We take the safeguarding of all of our pupils very seriously and all visitors must report to the visitor's reception to sign in.

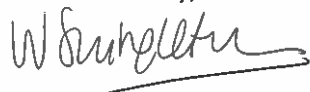
We ask for your support with high standards of attendance, behaviour, punctuality and uniform. Please remember school starts at 8.40am every morning. Pupils should arrive to school wearing the correct school uniform, our uniform policy is on our school website.

Policies

All school policies can be access on our school website and we would encourage you to read these. All policies will be kept under review and in doing so, you will be consulted at any time of change.

Thank you to all who are helping prepare for the new school year. We eagerly look forward to greeting our pupils and families. Together, we will make this school year one of achievement for all.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Wendy Shingleton
Acting Principal