



# BELFAST MODEL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Principal: Ms P Stuart, B. Ed, PQH NI, M. Ed

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6<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding, as we try to do our best to support the learning, pastoral care and wellbeing of your daughter(s). As this term unfolds, we staff are constantly reviewing our approach to find new ways of working which meet the ever changing restrictions in society and the emerging needs of our school community.

## Parent / Teacher Meetings

Given the current, relatively high risk of Covid-19 transmission between and among staff and parents, it would seem unwise to run traditional parent teacher meetings in Term 1 or 2. Parents of KS4 and 5 students will receive full and / or interim progress reports during this time. If the public health situation changes in Term 3, we shall reintroduce face to face parent / teacher meetings for KS3 students. Our relationship with you as a school, in respect of your daughter's progress, is a key priority. If at any stage you wish to contact a member of staff to discuss your daughter's general progress or progress within a specific subject, please do not hesitate to contact the school office or send an email to the member of staff. Please be reassured that if we have any concerns about your child, we will make contact with home as soon as we can.

## Quality Learning and Teaching

As a school, learning is our core business. Teachers are planning and resourcing significant banks of lessons to ensure we are adequately prepared for a partial lockdown, a full lockdown or significant internal disruption in school due to localised or internal outbreaks of Covid-19.

BMSG teaching staff are working even longer hours than before, with admirable dedication and expertise, as they understand the importance of this flexible, blended approach to learning and teaching. Teaching a full day, marking and assessing students' work and then also preparing online lessons for Google classroom is a very present pressure.

To support the further development of blended and remote learning, we have decided to use the following days in Term 1 as 'Home Learning' days for students, so as to try and test the arrangements we have put in place up until now. Students will have the opportunity to work independently, to navigate Google classroom and to follow their timetable on that day from home. Teachers will have prepared with the students in advance and set work for them to complete at home. This is not a day 'off' school and learning and schoolwork should be undertaken as per their normal school day timetable.

Staff will be on site, supporting learners remotely, training and further developing lessons and resources.





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## Belfast Model School for Girls - Home Learning Days

**Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020** - students DO NOT attend school

**Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020** - students DO NOT attend school

These dates have now been added to our School Calendar. I apologise for the relatively short notice of these changes and ask for your understanding in this regard. School will be as normal on the other days of that week.

## Examinations and Assessment

As of yet, schools have not received any clear guidance from Qualifications and Curriculum Authority or the examining boards as to the arrangements for 2021 GCSE and Advanced Level examinations. The CCEA public consultation in relation to these issues closed in late September 2020 and we still await guidance as to the What? When? How? students will be assessed and grades awarded.

Despite this lack of clarity, we are determined that our girls will not be disadvantaged. At KS4 and KS5, teachers are creating high frequency, low pressure assessment opportunities and tasks so that we can best track students' progress and achievement across the curriculum. I strongly encourage all students to do the best they can in every homework task, class test, assignment or project, as the outcomes may be used as evidence to award grades further down the line. We are also aware that Year 12 and Year 14 students have not had an opportunity to sit a formal examination at KS4 or 5. To address this situation and in advance of GCSE external examinations in English Language and Mathematics, scheduled respectively for the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021, Year 12 and Year 14 students will sit Pre Public Examinations in school between Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November - Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Year 11 and 13 students will follow their normal timetable throughout that week and KS3 students will learn from home.

## Reminder

Halloween Holidays are from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (inclusive). School will reopen again for all students on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 at 8.45 am.

There is no doubt that, in so many ways, these are difficult and challenging times. We are a 'needs led' school and we are determined to rise to the challenges ahead, in the best interests of our young people. In the meantime, school life continues as normally as possible. We are still tightly holding on to our school motto 'Achievement for All'. We are much encouraged by the resilience, maturity, compliance and good humour of our young people. They are a credit to you, their family and to BMSG.

Yours faithfully,

Paula Stuart  
Principal

