



BELFAST MODEL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

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

19th September 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian

Examination Results

I am delighted to inform you that this year's examination cohort has performed exceptionally well, both at GCSE and A Level, and that the trend of improvement continues. We are very proud of those students, commend the staff for all their hard work, care and support and are grateful to parents and guardians for their continuing partnership. It was a real team effort. I have included a table of the results for your perusal.

Uniform

As the new school year begins, I wish to thank you for the way you have sent your child back to school. The students look immaculate in their uniform and are wonderful ambassadors for their school and home. I know you appreciate the importance of high standards of uniform and we are grateful for your continuing effort and support with this issue. Please ensure that your child complies with our school expectations in terms of piercings and nails.

Piercings

ONE pair of stud earrings - one stud in the lobe of each ear
ONE nose stud only - NO rings, bars, bolts or hooks

Nails

For reasons of Health and Safety and access to learning, nails must be kept short in length. Nails can be coloured if so wished.

Promoting Wellbeing

I also wish to take this opportunity to ask for your continuing support in encouraging your child to eat healthily. Once again, we will be actively supporting the students to follow 'Healthy Eating Guidelines'. The importance of health and nutrition is becoming a major issue for all of us, with frequent reports and advice appearing on television and in the press and magazines.

In the school dining centre, which we refer to as 'The Dunowen', we serve 'Healthy Options' which comply with the Nutritional Guidelines set out for schools by the Education Authority (EA). We want to extend our healthy eating to include what the students bring to school to eat and drink for their break time snack or packed lunch. All of our partner primary schools have a 'Healthy Eating' approach to break and lunch and so many of the students already bring healthy options to school. However, I am particularly concerned by what the students bring to eat and drink during their break and lunch time.





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PLEASE NOTE: We have students in school who suffer from extreme allergies

1. NUT allergy
2. ORANGES allergy
3. COCONUT allergy

Exposure to these foods or any extract of them will cause a severe allergic reaction in these students and could place them in grave danger. ALL STUDENTS ARE ASKED NOT TO BRING THESE FOODS TO SCHOOL AT ANY STAGE DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.

To support and encourage the students to make healthier choices the following arrangements are in place:

Students are only allowed to drink the following in the school:

- Water
- Milk
- Fruit juice – **not orange juice or other flavours containing oranges**
- Drinks provided by The Dunowen

Students **will not** be allowed to bring the following unhealthy drinks to school:

- Any fizzy / sugary drink e.g. Coke, Fanta, Pepsi
- Any energy drink e.g. Boost; RPM; Lucozade etc.

Students with unhealthy drinks will be asked to put them into the bin and the school will provide them with a replacement bottle of water to drink.

Students should not be chewing gum on school premises at any time and will be asked to remove gum and put it directly into one of the bins provided.

I thank you in advance for your anticipated support with these issues.

I have also recently met with the management from EA School Meals to discuss plans in moving forward to expand our school meals provision to include a breakfast club and to explore how we can bring even greater support to all families at this challenging time amidst the current cost of living crisis.

I am delighted to inform you that Breakfast Club will begin on **Monday 26th September 2022** – 8.15am – 8.40am. A **complimentary** breakfast will be available to **ALL** students during this time.

From **Monday 4th October 2022** a **complimentary** lunch (hot or cold) will be available to all students from this date until 1st March 2022.





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Attendance and Punctuality

We set every student a minimum attendance target of 95%, with the aim that attendance is as close to 100% as possible.

Therefore, I am very grateful for your support with this by ensuring that absence is kept to a minimum and that all non-urgent appointments are made outside of school hours. From my own experience I do appreciate this can be difficult, however pupils finish at 2.25pm on Thursday and Friday which does allow most of Thursday and Friday afternoons for non-urgent appointments.

Appointments and Illness during the school day

If an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, we do require written notice of any planned appointments. Should we receive a phone call to inform us that a pupil is to be taken out of school for an emergency appointment, we will ring back on one of the numbers we have on the system to verify the appointment with you. All pupils in Years 8-12 must be collected from the school reception by an adult from the family. A change to this, on the basis of parent and student feedback, is that Sixth Form students are no longer required to be collected from the school and may make their way to their appointment after signing out at the school. Sixth Formers must still bring written confirmation of the appointment and we will seek to verify appointments for Sixth Form students in the way described above.

Access to school site

As previously advised, visitors, including parents, will not be permitted onto the premises unless their business is essential and **strictly by appointment only** or in the case of an emergency. Parents/guardians should not gather at doors or park their car outside or near gates or attempt to enter the school site / building unless they have a pre-arranged appointment.

Furthermore, it is imperative that whilst on the school premises, smoking and vaping are prohibited.

Please note: The school has put measures in place to control vehicular access to the school site, both in the morning and afternoon. To avoid congestion and to aid traffic management we STRONGLY advise that if you bring your daughter to school by car that you leave her off at the bottom of Dunowen Gardens as turning space at the top is limited and school buses access the school site via this route. In the afternoons, the gates opening onto Dunkeld Gardens will also be open for students to leave the school site so you may wish to collect them from there. **You will not be able to drive through the school grounds.**





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Senior Student Leadership Team

Finally, I am delighted to inform you that Elisha Cassidy has been appointed Head Girl for 2022/2023. She will be very well supported by her three Deputy Head Girls, Aimee Armstrong, Katie Cahoon and Jessica Graham. Full details of the full Student School Leadership Team (SSLT) are available from our school website www.belfastgms.org. I am looking forward to working with the girls in their new roles.

I also want to thank you for attending our various Induction Seminars and review meetings. We are delighted to welcome parents in such large numbers back onto our school site. As ever, please do not hesitate to contact the school directly if you have any concerns about your child within the school. Depending on your concern/query, it will be passed to the appropriate member of staff namely the Form Tutor or Subject Teacher.

Please note, our policy is that staff will return your call within 48 hours.

We are very hopeful that the new term will bring even greater normality and that students and staff will settle back into school having had a safe and restful summer break.

Yours faithfully,

Ms P Stuart
(Principal)

