



## JANUARY 2021

Following the decision to move students to online learning since 5th January we find ourselves again in a situation where our students are forced to learn from home. We fully understand this is a difficult time for parents who may have a number of children at home and are juggling all of this with work commitments. We do feel much better placed than when we were put in lockdown in March with students much better prepared for the use of Google Classroom and devices loaned out to many students to assist with this.

We are always looking at new ways to adapt and offering a variety of different ways for students to learn. One thing we have tried to do that is key is to provide a constant steady stream of work on a daily basis similar to what students would do on a day in school. This will be in a range of subjects and it is important that students work across a range of subjects and not just in one or two areas they like best. The times students work at and the length of time spent working may vary from student to student based on personal circumstances and we understand this but staff will try and be available during school hours for replying to any questions and giving assistance. This is something we will keep under review and we will be seeking feedback from parents next week.

At present as a school we are still open for students of Key Workers and vulnerable children which will continue through lockdown. We are very happy to support these children in this way and if you feel this provision applies to you then please get in touch. This does cause some issues with staff being in school covering students and also trying to deliver online support and lessons and if sometimes it takes a short time for a response to a query we hope that you understand we are doing our best to meet all our commitments.

In this bulletin we will try and give some helpful pointers in the use of Google Classroom with your child. We will also keep in regular contact with you through form tutors and members of our pastoral staff to address any individual queries.

I would like to thank students, staff and parents for their understanding at this time and reassure you that we are all working to make sure your child gets as much support as possible in very difficult circumstances.

**Mr S Taylor - Principal**



# GCSE and Year 12 Qualifications



We know that amidst all of the uncertainty around at the minute our Year 12 students have been greatly affected in their studies. With GCSE examinations not taking place it is difficult for students to have something to focus on.

It is very important however that despite examinations not taking place that students continue to engage with their teachers and work through all of the work set to the best of their ability.

The minister has indicated that he plans to outline plans on how grades will be awarded by the end of January but there will be no doubts that students will have to continue through and complete their courses regardless of what decisions are made.

# IT and Internet Access

We hope that this is much less of an issue than during the first lockdown where we had many students without any access to Google Classroom through poor WiFi or access to devices.

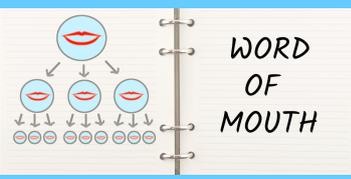
We have allowed many students to borrow iPads from the College since Sept 2020 and surveyed students several times to ensure all have access to a device at home. If for any reason your child does not have access to a device please contact the College and we will do what we can to help.

We have also managed to get SIM cards courtesy of Vodafone to allow students to access Google Classroom from their phones or tablets and if you would like to get one of these for your child again please get in touch using the contact details below.

## Being creative at home



Well done to Mrs Mallon's 9LSC History class below who made some excellent native American Headdresses and submitted pictures of their work through Google Classroom



## 2021 Admissions

With Open Nights cancelled this year schools are having to look upon new ways to promote themselves to prospective parents and students and Blackwater IC is no different. We have produced a new prospectus and a promotional video which we will be sending around all local feeder Primary schools.

We know that our parents are very happy with their child's education at Blackwater IC because you regularly tell us. Sometimes we feel we don't shout about this loudly enough so we would ask you to help us through 'word of mouth' which is often the strongest tool in parental decision making.

We believe we offer an all ability education for our students, allowing them to show their talents and access an education that is suited to their needs and aspirations. We do not feel students are disadvantaged by not going to a grammar school, unlike our Minister for Education, and that all ability schools allow students to access an excellent education providing opportunities and challenges.

## Contact us:

Phone: 028 4461 2115 (10am - 12.00 daily)  
email: [info@blackwateric.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@blackwateric.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk)  
Message: on our Facebook page





# Guide to Remote Learning

## Is it important to engage in Remote Learning?

Yes, it is very important you engage in remote learning. Our school community will eventually go back to normal and it is important that you have a good foundation to build upon when you return to school.



Remote Learning lessons have been designed by your teachers to continue your studies. These lessons will include a variety of platforms, including Google Meet, Video Demonstrations or Activities for you to work through independently.

## Google Meet EXPECTATIONS



Be on Time



Cameras On



Mics Muted at the start



Find a Quiet Space



Dress Appropriately



Use the Chat Feature to Ask Questions



Do not take Pictures or Screenshots



Raise Your Hand to Speak in Chat



Engage, Interact & Chat

Stay Safe in Remote Learning

## What does Remote Learning mean for you?

- Getting up early and logging into your Google Classrooms.
- Establishing a daily routine and sticking to it.
- Engaging with Google Classroom / Meet or whatever activity your teacher has created to allow you to continue your studies.
- Completing and Submitting ALL work as requested.
- Keeping on top of your school work so you don't fall behind.
- Asking for help when you need it.
- Acting on / following up with teacher feedback.

 remote learning TIPS	 Avoid procrastinating	 Stay off social media when you are learning	 Have a dedicated workspace
 Create a schedule	 Video chat with your friends about class	 Know when to stop for the day	 Make lists and celebrate as you complete tasks