



Building Inspiring Caring

To: Parents/Guardians of Year 12 students

Cc: Bursar

### **GCSE Examinations**

Following a very long few days of deliberation on the back of months of indecision the Education Minister has announced today that GCSE examinations will be cancelled for the 2021 series. That includes planned examinations next week for Mathematics and English and also further planned modules in other GCSE subjects for May and June 2021.

At the minute this only applies to GCSE qualifications and does not include any other equivalences such as OCN qualifications, Occupational Studies, BTEC Qualifications, Essential Skills, Prince's Trust or CoPE.

We have received no indication yet as to how GCSE grades will be awarded or how the other qualifications listed above will be assessed. Form tutors and Senior Staff will be making calls to all Year 12 parents in the coming days when things become clearer to try and help with what comes next.

We share the huge frustrations that our young people must have today about the lack of clarity over what lies ahead and hope that we get more guidance as soon as possible. With Year 12 students now joining Years 8-11 in remote learning until the end of February all work will be available on Google Classroom during this period.

The best advice we can give at the minute is to reassure your child that as a College we will do everything we can to keep them informed. We will also work with them to provide as much guidance as we can to access the grades they are capable of at the end of this process. We have very high expectations for our students this year as regards GCSE grades and we need them to work with us so they achieve the skills and knowledge to progress on to their next stage of education after GCSE and the world of work.

We would emphasise the importance of all students working with teaching staff through Google Classroom now more than ever to work towards completing the tasks set in all subject areas. This will be very important in collating evidence of their level of work: also, in the other subjects listed above there are still many tasks set online that will need to be completed regardless of this decision. This work will then be completed when students return to school.

If you have any individual queries email [info@blackwateric.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@blackwateric.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk) and we will try and address them as best we can. Provision for Key Worker children and all SEN students in Year 12 is also available and the above email address can also be used to enquire about this.

Stephen Taylor  
Principal