



1 July 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Last week marked not only the end of the summer term at Glenlola Collegiate, but also the end of a period of unprecedented disruption to the education of your children.

I want to thank you for the guidance and encouragement that you have provided for them at home over the past few months. It has been vital in helping your daughter to continue her education during the shutdown period. I also congratulate our pupils on their courageous efforts to adapt to a changing world. It has been difficult enough for those of us with more than a few decades of life experience to make sense of what has taken place, but that challenge has been even greater for the young.

I also pay tribute to the staff of Glenlola Collegiate for the professionalism and dedication that they have exhibited since March. Support staff have kept the school functioning efficiently while the teaching staff have worked tirelessly throughout to maintain the learning of their pupils.

In November of 2019, Dr. Larmour and I joined a group of school leaders on an educational Erasmus visit to schools in Finland and Estonia where we saw at first hand the innovative ways in which digital technologies were being used to enhance the independent learning of children. With hindsight now, it is clear that this visit along with the follow up work we carried out in order to secure a Digital Schools Award, was serendipitous. We could not possibly have known then that we were preparing ourselves for an unimaginable challenge and yet that is what we were doing.

In the 18 months prior to March 2020, our Pastoral Team has been busy. Again, with hindsight, it seems that they have, fortuitously, been preparing for this crisis. We have converted an area of the lower school into a Wellness Centre, trained senior pupils as peer listeners and key staff have undertaken accredited training in the delivery of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) so that girls who need a more specialised level of pastoral support will receive it.

We are now well advanced in our planning for a return to school in August and the guidance issued by the Department of Education on 19th June is allowing us to finalise the many details relating to timetable, pupil and staff movement, hygiene routines, policy reviews and other areas in our plan. Rather than issuing information and guidance on the August return in multiple pieces over a period of weeks, we have decided to make them available in the form of a dedicated E-Booklet for parents. When this is ready in late July or early August, a link will be placed on the school website and sent out to all parents. This will enable you to access all of the planning details and information that you

need and it will be updated regularly.

We will continue to communicate with you regarding other matters in the usual ways as necessary.

However, I do appreciate that there is some basic information that you will need sooner rather than later so I can confirm that **it is currently our intention for all pupils to be in school every day**, with some pupils finishing earlier than others on given days depending on the year group.

School will begin on 24th and 25th August for pupils in Years 8, 12 and 14. More details for these and other Year groups will be made available in the E-Booklet in early August.
When pupils do return, they will be required to wear **normal school uniform**.

We intend to minimise the use of cash so I should be grateful if you would make a specific point of registering for SIMSpay (instructions are on the School website) in the next few weeks if you have not already done so.

I strongly urge pupils who have fallen behind in their work since March to make full use of the time available over the summer to catch up so that they are ready to resume lessons when they return and I appeal to parents to play their critical role in this.

We are working hard to construct a 'new normal' for our return to school and, in the absence of a vaccine for COVID-19, we cannot say how long it will be before it is safe to return to the 'old normal'.

In Glenlola Collegiate, the central parts of any 'normal', old or new, were and will continue to be shared trust and a determination to support one another.

Take care and enjoy the summer break.



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