



Bloomfield Collegiate News

August 2019

Dear Parent / Guardian

With the new academic year almost upon us, it is my pleasant duty to inform you about arrangements for your daughter/ward's return to school. I trust that you and your family have had a restful and enjoyable break. The dates for the beginning of the new term are as follows:

- Monday 26 August is a school holiday.
- Year 8 induction will take place on Tuesday 27 August from 9.30 a.m. to 12 noon. Uniform should be worn.
- On Wednesday 29 August, Year 8 again attend from 9.00 a.m. to 12 noon. Year 14 begin at 9.00 a.m. and also finish at 12 noon.
- All other pupils join with Years 8 and 14 at 8.45 a.m. on Thursday 30 August and finish at 12 noon.
- Friday 31 August is a full school day for all pupils. Please note that the canteen will not be open on this day, and pupils should bring a packed lunch. Pupils who receive Free School Meals will be provided with a sandwich lunch which they can collect from the canteen at break time.

Please note that daily registration for pupils is at 8.45 a.m. Full attendance, where possible, is essential; see Department of Education advice here: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/miss-school-miss-out> Please return absence notes promptly so that accurate records can be maintained. Unless affected by holiday or other closures, school will be open until 5.00 p.m. Monday to Thursday and 4.30 p.m. each Friday for unsupervised study. Pupils must use the Library or Learning Centre, signing in as required.

STAFF NEWS

At the end of the summer term, we said goodbye to Dr Lindsey Finch, Vice-principal, who retired after 13 years of faithful service to the pupils and parents of Bloomfield Collegiate. Dr Finch's care for the individual and pastoral knowledge will be missed by all at BCS, and we wish her well.

We also said farewell to a number of temporary members of staff: Dr Bill McBride, Miss Rebecca Murray, Mrs Sharon Wilson, Mrs Linda Lane and Mrs Melissa Patterson. We wish them well as they embark on the next stage of their career.

This year, we welcome a number of new permanent members to the teaching staff: Mrs Nikki Mark, who is now permanent Head of Music, Mrs Hazel Khamanra (Head of Physics), Mr Christopher Turner (Head of Technology from November) and Mrs Naomi Lester (Geography). We wish these members of staff long and successful careers at Bloomfield Collegiate.

TRANSPORT

Information about bus routes is available in the prospectus online. Bus passes are not valid until 1 September and pupils travelling on service buses in August may be asked to pay a fare. On Thursday 29 August, the Comber and Newtownards buses will leave school at 12.15 p.m. and on Friday 30 August these buses will leave school at 3.30 p.m. There will be no school buses operating on Tuesday 27 and Wednesday 28 August.

For safety reasons, it is important that parents and others transporting pupils to/from school do not drive into school grounds. Due to limited space, pupils are not able to park on school grounds. If pupils or parents are parking nearby, we would ask them to show due consideration to the residents.

FIRST AID/HEALTH

A number of staff members are trained in First Aid. If you have any queries relating to this provision, or information relating to your daughter's health which may assist us in meeting her needs, please contact the School Nurse or your daughter's Head of Year. Such information will be treated with discretion. Please note that it is essential that no nuts or nut products are brought into school.

BEHAVIOUR

We expect the highest standards of behavior at all times and are glad to report that this is almost always the case. However, after-school detention, if required, takes place on Wednesday afternoons. Saturday detention, for more serious policy breaches, takes place approximately once per term. If your daughter is placed in detention, please ensure the form is signed and returned to the Office in sufficient time to allow her to attend.

UNIFORM

Our School Uniform is listed on the School website and in the prospectus. Please assist us in ensuring the following:

- Hair is naturally coloured and summer holiday braiding discreet/hidden until grown out;
- All fake nails and polish are removed;
- Only one plain stud is worn in earlobes – all other facial jewellery (including clear retainers) are not permitted;
- Black leather school shoes must be worn. Other footwear can only be worn with submission of medical evidence of need. Note that black canvas trainers are not permissible, primarily for health and safety reasons in practical subjects;
- If worn in PE or other school activities, leggings must be school Kukri issue – all other leggings are not permitted. PE kit should only be worn to and from school with the explicit permission of the Head of PE.

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS/FINGERPRINTING

Parents/guardians have been asked to give written permission for the taking of their child's photograph in school activities and use of fingerprinting for access/cashless canteen system. If you wish to change your mind and grant or rescind permission for such, you may do so by writing to the school. If written contact is not made, we will assume that your previous decision regarding photograph permission and fingerprinting will remain in force.

LOCKERS/VALUABLES

Every pupil has access to their own locker. Lockers enable pupils to organise books and equipment and be prepared for class. All pupils have been instructed that bags should be locked securely in lockers when unattended. All valuables – purses, mobile phones etc – must be stored in lockers or handed to reception for safe-keeping. School cannot be responsible for loss of items stored in unlocked lockers or left elsewhere. Therefore, each pupil must have a padlock (combination or key-operated) to secure her locker. The shackle must be thick enough to prevent the latch opening - about 6mm seems ideal. Suitable padlocks can be purchased from the School at a cost of £4.00. Locks will not be forced open without the consent of a parent.

COUNSELLING

We are pleased to continue to provide a counselling service in school. Family Works provides a weekly service for pupils who can either self-refer or be referred by a Head of Year or senior member of staff. Feel free to contact a member of staff if you feel that your daughter would benefit from engaging with a counsellor.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are not allowed to be used in school between the hours of 8.45 a.m. and 3.20 p.m. In-keeping with other schools with this policy, there are a number of reasons for this:

- We are encouraging conversation and friendships beyond the need for social media;
- There have been an increasing number of inappropriate uses of recording devices/internet in schools, many reportedly linked to bullying incidents;
- Pupils are downloading Virtual Private Networks to bypass the protective filtering systems and so are using schools' wifi networks to access material normally blocked by the education authority; see these links for further information on how easy it is to download a VPN and what it can be used for:
 - <https://www.vpnusrus.com/best-vpn-for-school-wifi-to-unblock-media-networks-top-5-reviews-in-2017/>
 - <https://protectyoungeyes.com/vpn-explained-virtual-private-network-parent-guide/>

Please note the VPNs do not simply speed up internet speeds - their use also side-steps parental controls on data usage.

A full guide to the use of mobile phones in school will be sent home soon. Pupils who need to contact a parent can do so at reception, and parents can send messages to their children by contacting school. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

COMMUNICATION

One of our key priorities for the coming year is the improvement of communication and parental engagement. This Year we will be introducing mobile phone/PC apps which will be used for sharing information, reporting on assessments and collecting money. In preparation for this, it is essential that the contact details we hold are up to date. Please let us know if you change postal address, phone numbers or email address.

Also, please note that this e-mail account (bloomfield233@bloomfield.belfast.ni.sch.uk) is not monitored regularly, and is used mainly for outgoing correspondence. Should you wish to email school, please use the info@bloomfield.belfast.ni.sch.uk address.

Finally, may I wish you and your daughter/ward a happy and successful academic year. I look forward to meeting you at one of the numerous events over the coming year.

Yours sincerely



Gary Greer
Principal