

Thursday 15th October 2020

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

I was shocked at the Minister of Education's statement issued yesterday that next week, starting the 19th October, should be an extended holiday. While I understand the rationale behind the 'circuit breaker', I think that a week of online learning would have been more appropriate. In normal circumstances teachers would be setting work for senior pupils during half term. Taking into consideration the amount of teaching time that has already been lost to our pupils, I have asked teachers to prioritise exam classes and to set work during this time for senior pupils. I think that this is in the best interest of our pupils and will help them achieve their best possible grade.

Work will be generally be set through our learning platform Show My Homework or Microsoft Teams. Please contact us if there is any difficulty in accessing work.

Excerpt from Peter Weir's Letter received to schools 15th October

I am very conscious that these are not ordinary circumstances and that education continues to be disrupted. The public health situation is changing quickly and after a very successful and positive reopening of schools, we are now facing rising numbers of cases of COVID-19. The changes I announced last week set out the initial arrangements for exams and assessments across GCSE and A Level qualifications. I want to reassure you that I will keep the position under review. I have commissioned CCEA, the body responsible for exams in Northern Ireland, to develop back-up plans, which will be ready if they are needed.

I give you my firm commitment that every effort will be made to ensure that young people will not be disadvantaged by the COVID-19 pandemic and that outcomes for young people sitting GCSEs and A Levels in 2020/21 will be similar to other years.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support. I hope that school will be opened safely on 2nd November for all pupils.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ANGELA PASSMORE', written in a cursive style.

Angela Passmore