



DALRIADA SCHOOL

Year 12 Parents' Information

Post GCSE Options

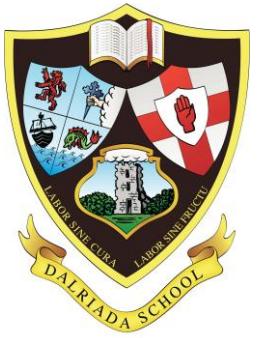
COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE



Panel



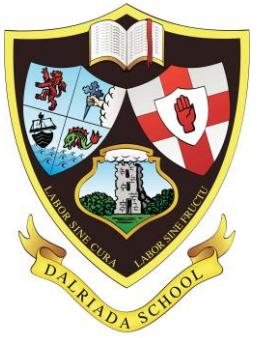
- Mrs L. Aitcheson (Principal)
- Mrs C. Kelly (Head of Careers)
- Mrs A. Williamson (Head of Sixth Form)
- Mr J. Devlin (Head of Year 12)



What are my Post-16 options?

- A Level Studies
- A Level and BTEC Courses
- Level 3 Extended BTEC Diploma
- Apprenticeships
- Employment





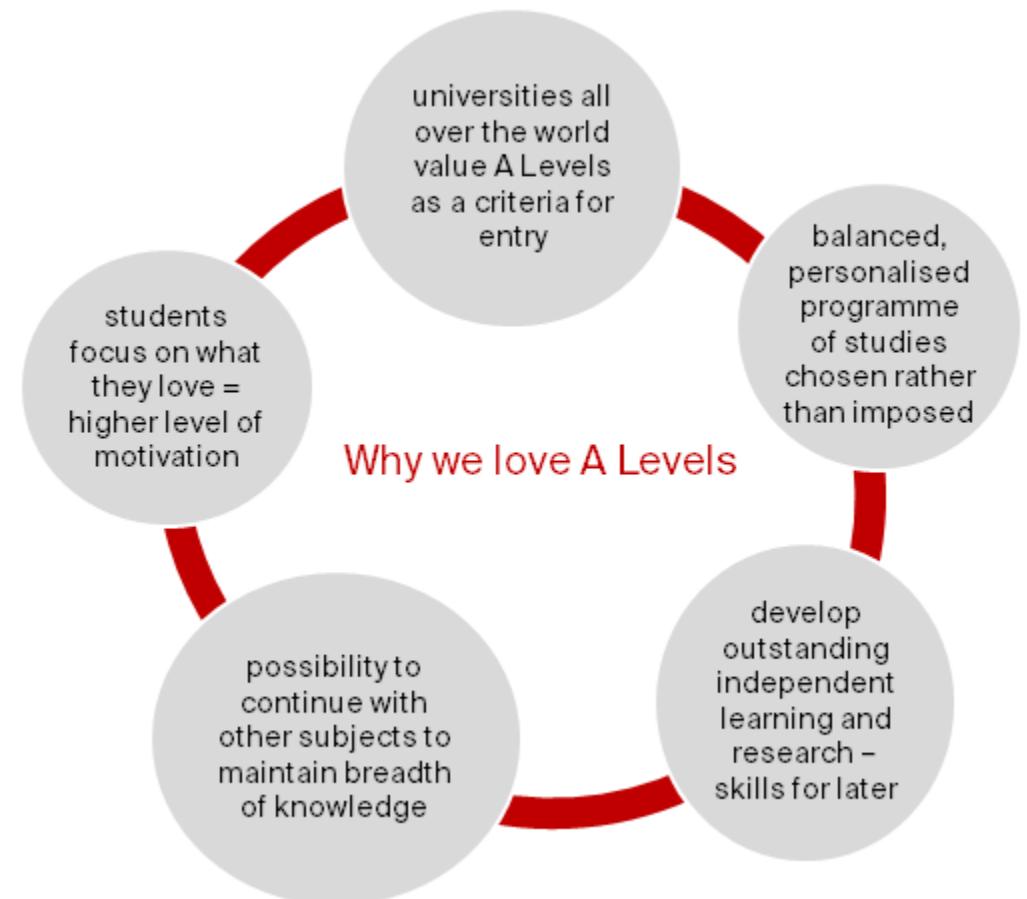
Are A Levels the right choice for me?

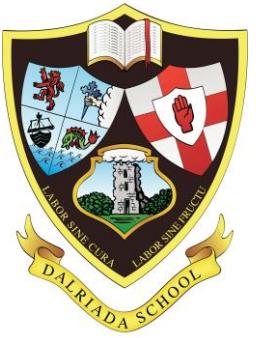
- Academic Depth and Specialisation
- Pathways to University and Careers
- Flexibility & Subject Choice
- Skill Development



Are A Levels the right choice for me?

- Academic Depth and Specialisation
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Are A Levels the right choice for me?

- Do I enjoy studying?
- What am I good at?
- Is it the best pathway for me?
- Do I have any clear ideas about my future plans?



Is staying at Dalriada the right choice for me?



- Familiar and Supportive Environment
- High Quality Teaching
- Smooth Academic Progression
- Established Friendships and Networks – Extra-Curricular
- Boundaries and Accountability



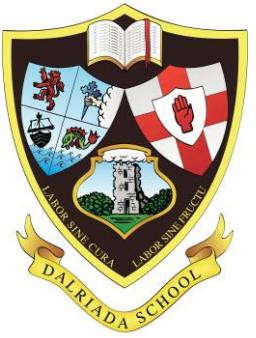
Entrance Criteria for Year 13

- Pupils must demonstrate that they have the potential to succeed in their chosen courses
- We will consider school reports, record of behaviour and attendance information
- Minimum requirements – 3 B Grades and 2 C Grades
- Pupils should have at least a Grade C in both GCSE English and Mathematics
- Specific Entrance Criteria for each Subject must also be met.



Entrance Criteria for Year 14

- At least a 90% attendance record
- A good behavioural record
- At least an E grade in all 3 AS Levels, AND a minimum of 6 points (A-5, B-4, C-3, D-2, E-1)



The Way Forward

1. We would expect students to select 3 AS subjects
2. If they feel the need to select 4 subjects their application will be considered by a 6th Form Entry Panel. Vast majority of Universities do not require 4
3. Build in the usual flexibility to change in the Autumn Term.



Subjects offered at Dalriada School

- Art & Design – Combined
- Art & Design – Photography
- Biology
- Business Studies
- Chemistry
- Classical Civilisation
- Computer Science
- Digital Technology (ICT)
- English Literature
- French
- Geography
- German
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Mathematics
- Moving Image Arts
- Music
- Nutrition & Food Science
- Performing Arts
- Physics
- Religious Studies
- Spanish
- Sport & Exercise Science BTEC
- Technology



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Please read our specific Subject Entry Requirements

A-Level Entry Requirements (Subjects) – 2026-2027

Subject	Min. GCSE Criteria	Notes (Including advice for external applications)	<p>The following guidance is a <u>brief summary of Entrance Requirements for 2026-2027</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students are advised to take on only one 'new' subject if they have not previously studied at GCSE (identified in bold typeface). No more than 2 new subjects will be allowed. In the event of any of the subjects
Art & Design – Combined Studies	B in Art and Design	In exceptional circumstances we may accept a pupil who has not done GCSE Art on submission of a portfolio of their own artwork.	
Art & Design – Photography	B in Art and Design	For pupils who have not done GCSE Art they can be accepted to the GCE Photography option by submitting a portfolio of their own photography. NOTE - All photography students must have their own DLSR camera.	
Biology	<p>1 - It is essential that students taking Biology at AS or A level should have achieved an A grade in GCSE Biology.</p> <p>2 - Students are advised that to study AS/A2 Biology they should have studied Chemistry at GCSE level.</p>	<p>1 - If coming from another school, grades AA in GCSE Science (Double Award) is essential. If coming from a Double Award background, the student must have sat higher tier Units not foundation tier Units.</p> <p>2 - Double Award students must be able to provide evidence of obtaining an A standard in units B1 and B2 <u>in order</u> to meet the demands of the AS course.</p> <p>3 - Single Award Science is not a suitable background for AS or A2 Biology, so unfortunately, students who have this as their qualification will not be permitted on the AS/A2 Biology course.</p>	

If any students apply with the following

New A-Level Subjects not offered at GCSE



Classical Civilisation

Grade B in either History OR English Literature

BTEC Sports Studies

Grade B in GCSE PE or GCSE Biology (DA Biology Units AA)

Subjects offered via Learning Community



Available Subjects at BALLYMONEY HIGH

A Level Life & Health Sciences: Single Award

A Level Life & Health Sciences: Double Award

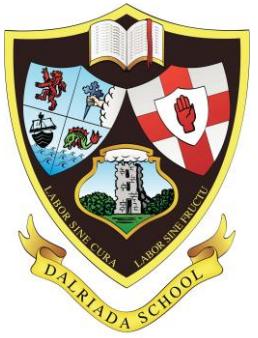
BTEC Level 3 Agriculture

BTEC Level 3 Psychology



Careers Education

Where will my qualifications take me?



Whether you select A levels or a BTEC next year, following GCSEs, there is a wide range of qualifications available.

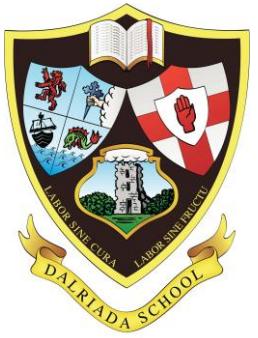
Some have specific requirements, some do not – some examples on the following slides – lists not exhaustive

Vocational Degrees



- Accountancy – English & a B in GCSE Maths; no specific A levels although Maths useful – also Business Studies
- Actuarial Science – English & a B in GCSE Maths; A level Maths required
- Architecture – Art GCSE preferred; Art and either Maths or Physics A level preferred
- Law – no specific subjects but humanities-based subjects recommended.

Vocational Degrees



Allied Health careers – one or two sciences required – check individual courses.

Dentistry/Medicine/Veterinary Science – 3 sciences at GCSE; A level Chemistry plus at least one other from Biology, Maths or Physics (usually Biology).

Nursing/Midwifery – Biology or Chemistry preferred at A level but not a requirement.

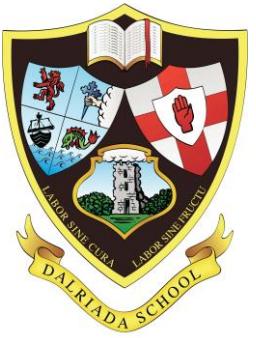
Pharmacy – Chemistry plus at least one other from Biology, Physics or Maths.

Social work – no specific subjects but relevant experience required.



Non Subject-specific Degrees

- Archaeology
- Business
- Criminology
- Drama
- Economics
- Environmental Planning
- Film Studies
- Finance
- History
- International Studies
- Philosophy
- Politics
- Sociology
- Theology



Subject-specific Degrees

Biochemistry – Biology & Chemistry at A level

Biological/Biomedical Science – Biology & Chemistry at A level

Computer Science – Maths or Computing at A level (sometimes Physics)

Engineering – Maths and normally either Physics or Technology A level

Food Quality, Safety & Nutrition – Biology or Chemistry A level (preferably both)

Genetics – Biology and Chemistry A level

Marine Biology – Biology and preferably Chemistry A level

Medicinal Chemistry – Chemistry A level

Physics – Physics and Maths A level

Product Design – Normally Maths and one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics or Technology A level

Zoology – Biology and preferably Chemistry A level



Higher Level Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships

- Young people who have completed A Levels or equivalent may be interested in a Higher Level Apprenticeship, which offers the opportunity to gain quality training and a recognised higher qualification while in paid employment.
- Higher Level Apprenticeships (HLAs) currently offer you qualifications from Level 4 to Level 7 (Masters degree). The majority are at Level 5 (Foundation degree or equivalent).
- The length of a Higher Level Apprenticeship will vary depending on the programme you chose, but will be a minimum of two years.

Benefits to apprentices

- you can gain the skills that employers need and that are relevant to the local economy, therefore improving your prospects of good earnings and sustained employment.
- Other benefits include:
 - earning while you learn
 - achieving professional-level qualifications without paying higher education tuition fees

Higher Level Apprenticeships



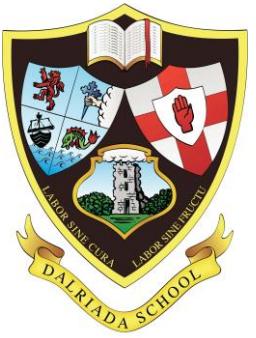
Career Areas:

- Accountancy
- Engineering & Manufacturing
- Construction & the Built Environment
- Business & Administration
- Food Innovation & Technology (CAFRE)
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Information Technology
- Transport & Logistics
- Law

Higher Level Apprenticeships



- For further information, contact the relevant Further Education College or University
- Remember that you need to have an employer beforehand
- Employers advertise individually on their websites and/or email to schools
- The website www.workplus.com is a good central source
- Keep an eye on the Dalriada Careers Bulletin where I will advertise all opportunities shared with us



Careers Guidance in the Sixth Form

- Individual Careers Interviews
- Support throughout the university application process (UCAS/CAO/Oxbridge) including help preparing for interviews
- Careers lessons through Tutorial programme
- Work Experience in Year 13
- Talks / presentations on a range of careers
- Careers Officers from Careers Service Ballymoney (Dept. for the Economy) available



What is Sixth Form Like?

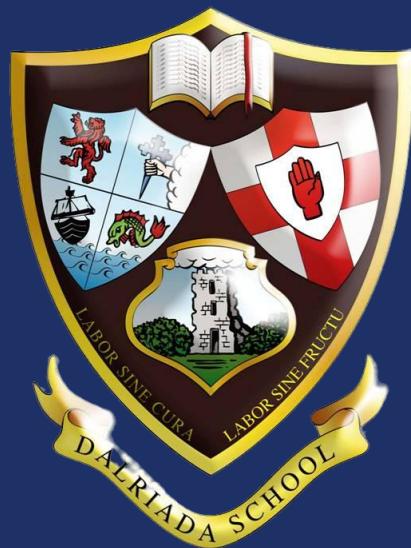


What is Sixth Form like?

Independent study in school – supervised study rooms, Sixth Form subject specific areas, library, Careers library

Independent study at home – must be committed

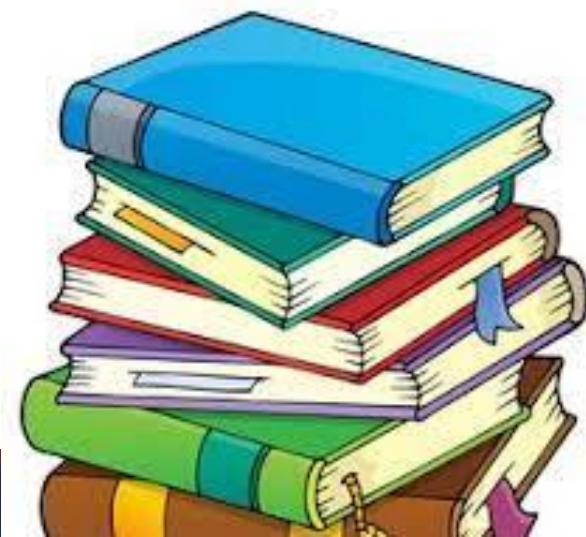
Duties and helping with school activities.



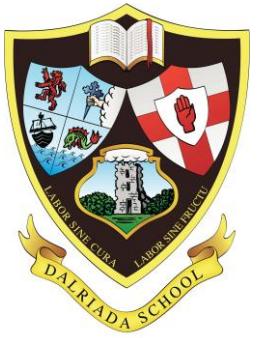


What is Sixth Form like?

- 3 subjects = 27 periods of AS subjects
- Study periods
- Enrichment
- Tutorial – 1 period per week (outside speakers, mental health, study skills, student life, university information)
- Games – 2 periods per week (range of options)
- Duties & helping with school activities



Privileges



- Sixth Form do have a number of privileges – but with this comes greater responsibility
 - Uniform
 - Attendance
 - Punctuality
 - Behaviour
 - An example for the younger pupils
- Dedicated lunch time social areas



Regular Review

- Class teachers will use a tracking system to ensure there is regular review in all subjects. This is reviewed by Head of Year.
- October – first review of all subjects. Contact with home if need be.
- Parents' Meeting - to meet all class teachers.
- January – internal exams – results reviewed and contact with home.
- Reports – to review all subjects
- February half term – review for pupils who underachieved in January examinations.
- Easter – final review across all subjects. Contact with home.





- Enrichment – approx. 2 periods per week (range of options which can add to CV/UCAS)
- ICDL – International Computer Driving Licence
- Heartstart – First Aid
- British Sign Language
- Millennium Volunteers
- Wellbeing Ambassador scheme
- Mandarin
- SOAR leadership course
- TEFL



Extra Curricular Activities

- Extracurricular activities include...
- Debating
- Drama
- Public Speaking
- Choirs/Orchestra
- Business management
- Robotics
- Science club
- Athletics
- Rugby
- Hockey
- Soccer
- Volleyball
- Tennis
- CU
- Strategists



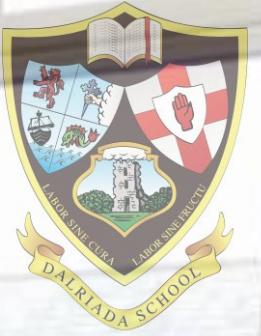


Resources

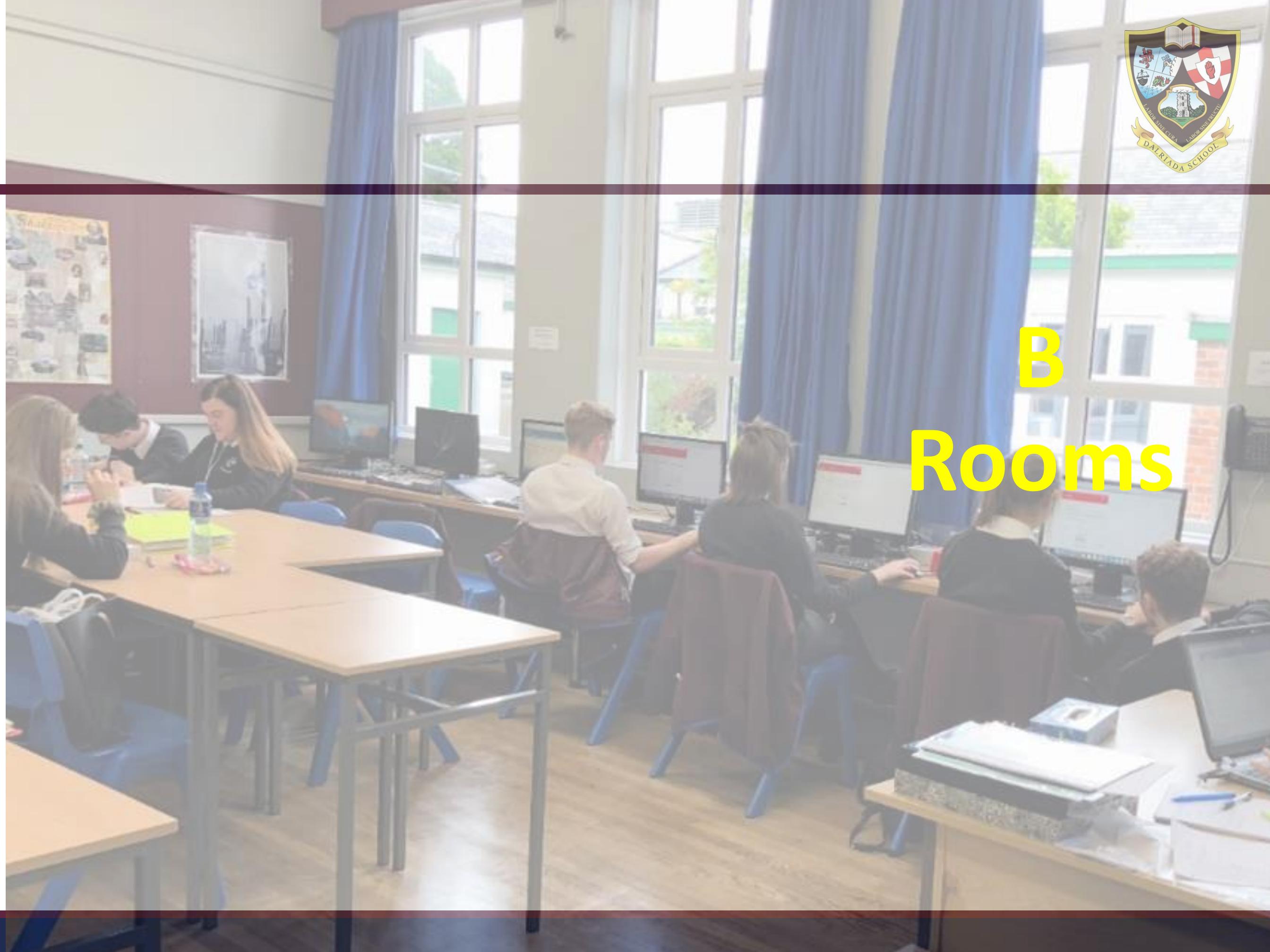


Gillan Centre





B Rooms





Resources

- Subject specific areas for Sixth Form independent study
- Private Study area with staff supervision
- ICT resources
- Social Area
- Careers area
- Library



Who is there to help me?

- Form teacher - every pupil is assigned a new Form Class with a dedicated Form Teacher who you meet each morning
- Mrs Williamson - Head of Year
- Mr McMaster (B rooms)
- Mrs McKee (Gillan Centre)
- Ms Crawford (Pastoral VP)
- School Counsellor
- Wellbeing ambassadors





Educational Maintenance Allowance (E.M.A.)

- EMA – means tested against household income
- Could receive up to £30 per week & £100 bonus twice a year
- Forms given out in May of Year 12 – your responsibility to complete ASAP – can be done online
- Will receive letter confirming EMA & amount – must be brought into school and an agreement signed.



What needs to be done between now and the GCSEs?



Review of Mock exams, compare with targets set earlier in the year and evidence from tracking using Assessment Manager



Have they discussed their target for each subject with you?



Controlled Assessments – how have they done so far, what is left to do?

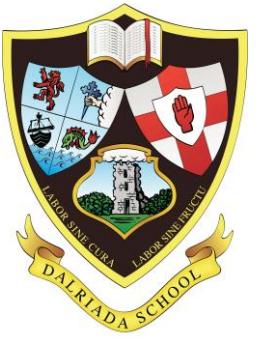


A plan for the road ahead, 10 weeks to study leave, (Friday 1st May) 9 weeks of class time.



What needs to be done between now and the GCSEs

- Parents can feel at a loss in this period up to exams. Be aware your active involvement can make an enormous difference.
- One of the biggest challenges is communicating the importance of these exams.
- At times it may be necessary to put a hold on short term fun in the interest of long-term benefit.
- Need to curtail certain activities like part time work and love life!



What pupils need to consider

Pupils should never say 'I have no work to do'.

They should be completing an average of 2.5 hours per night.

The key to exam success: 1. Learn content. 2. Revision. 3. Exam technique

Pupils should know the exam, how long, number of papers, value of each.

Deadlines.



What pupils need to consider

At home, make sure pupils have a place to work, agree 'check ins' with your children to discuss where they are with their work.



Know their learning style.



Which revision strategy works best for them?

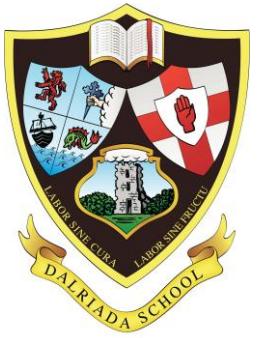


Learn from past experience.



Take advice.

GCSE EXAMS WELL UNDERWAY 1 : NEXT MONTH (JGD to update)



23/02/2026 GCSE Biology Practical Exam : 12C1 RMC P3-6 in A5

23/02/2026 GCSE English: INTERNAL Speaking and Listening Moderation

27/02/2026 GCSE Drama: Unit 2 Scripted performance Internal Marking. (25%)

03/03/2026 GCSE: Yr 12 Business Studies Controlled Assessment – EXAM.

04/03/2026 GCSE Eng. Language EXTERNAL Speaking and Listening Moderation GCSE

05/03/2026 GCSE Art Exam 1 of 3:

06/03/2026 Volleyball: All Ireland Finals@ Craigavon

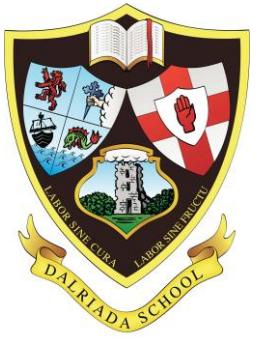
10/03/2026 GCSE Art Exam 2 of 3:

GCSE EXAMS WELL UNDERWAY 2 : MAR TO END OF APRIL



11+12/03/26	EVENING OF MUSIC - Note a week earlier than in the school calendar
11/03/2026	GCSE Physics CCEA Exam Paper 3A: All Y12 physics students (71) involved in either:
11/03/2026	GCSE English Literature Moderation in J6a
12/03/2026	Volleyball:U16 School's Cup @ UUI
18/03/2026	BLC + Ballymoney Rotary Club: 'Just One Life' - Road safety initiative with the NIFRS + PSNI
20/03/2026	GCSE Drama Unit 3 Visit of External Moderator in B5
23/03/2026	GCSE CHEMISTRY Unit 3 Practical Exam - 4 sessions x 2 hours. Max 22 pupils per session GCSE English Final Moderation
25/03/2026	Football : U16 Coleraine + District Final v Coleraine GS @ Ballymoney Stadium
14 Apr 25 - 15	GCSE Chemistry Unit 3 Practical Exam – 4 sessions X2

In Conclusion



Strike a balance

Aim High

Be aware of the support
available

No substitute for hard work

Good luck!



Next Steps? External



Focus on doing your best in your GCSE examinations



Select potential subjects, looking at entrance requirements for specific A Levels carefully



Call the school on the morning of Results' Day on Thursday 20th August to arrange an appointment



Attend an Interview in person on the day –
Remember your results slip (you may need previous ones with module results)

