



21<sup>st</sup> December 2023

### End of Term 1 – December 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As we approach the end of a very busy Term 1, it was wonderful to gather as a school for our annual Carol Service on Tuesday, in 3<sup>rd</sup> Rathfriland Presbyterian Church. The service not only reminded us of the meaning of Christmas, but of the many talents and abilities of our pupils and staff. I am grateful to the Reverend Burke and the congregation of 3<sup>rd</sup> Rathfriland church for hosting the event. Parents may wish to view some sections of the service via our Facebook page.

Term 1 has also brought much success for our sports teams, with the U14 Rugby team maintaining their excellent unbeaten run to claim top spot in the Ulster Rugby South East league. All pupils enjoyed our first House Sport day last Friday, with closely contested matches in rugby and netball taking place in all year groups.

As always, our pupils and the wider school community have demonstrated their commitment to supporting others less fortunate than ourselves. It was a privilege to see over 130 shoeboxes handed over to the Blythswood Shoebox appeal and these gifts will transform Christmas for so many in need.

I mention just a few of the activities and events that have added so much to the life of the school this term, I encourage you to keep up to date with all school activities via our website and Facebook pages.

Please find below a reminder of key dates for Term 2. A full version of the academic calendar (sent out previously) is available via our website.

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December, 12pm - Term 1 ends**

<b>Term 2</b>	
<b>Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024</b>	<b>Staff Development Day 1 (pupils should not attend)</b>
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	All pupils start Term 2
Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> January	Tracking 2 – Winter examinations
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February - Half Term break</b>	
<b>Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> March: St. Patrick's Day, school closed</b>	
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> March: Term 2 ends (2.45pm finish)	
<b>Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<b>Staff Development Day 2 (pupils should not attend)</b>
<b>Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Easter Holiday</b>
<b>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Staff Development Day 3 (pupils should not attend)</b>

*Please note that due to further planned industrial action, revised timetables for Tracking 2 (Winter examinations) week will be sent out to parents via the Parent App and email on 21<sup>st</sup> December.*

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very Happy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to welcoming our pupils back in 2024.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Matthews', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Matthews

Principal