



End of Term Letter Hilary 2025

April 2025

Dear parent or guardian

This has been a long Hilary term, and as we approach the end of it I want to take the opportunity to reflect on the last few months and thank you and your children for all the cooperation and hard work since Christmas. Much more detail about pupil achievements appears on the school's social media pages but I've just included a sample below.

School life

This term has been packed with a varied range of extra and co curricular activities and I am, as always, grateful to the many staff who have freely given of their time to run these activities.

We were delighted to see the continuation of the 1608 Debate between the Royal Schools and our team travelled to Dungannon for that event, the winner of which was a team from RSD. The English department visited the Heaney Homeplace for a tour and lectures on their set text.

The dance team entered two competitions this term; Ulster Fusion held in the La Mon Hotel where the team achieved fifteen firsts, seven second and three third places. In the Northern Ireland Creative Movement and Aerobic Championships (NICMAC) the team achieved six first places, one second and two third places. Well done to Mrs Shufflebottom and all the team!

Over the last few weeks boarders have been in London and a very successful ski trip has taken place in Andolo, Italy.

CCF has had a busy term ending with successful swimming training and a visit from representatives of 38th Brigade.

It has been another remarkably successful sports season. We would like to commend all our pupils and their coaches for their commitment to training and high-quality play, and draw particular attention to the following achievements:

1XI	Runners up in the Belfast Telegraph Senior School Cup & runners up in the Daphne Hall All Ireland Tournament
2XI	Runners up in the McDowell Cup
3XI	Reached the ¼ final of the Gibson Cup
4XI	Reached the semi-final of their Cup competition
U14	Reached the quarter final of the Stephenson's Cup

	Won the Mid Ulster League Reached the ¼ final of the Ulster Union Cup
1XV	Runners up in the Danske Bank, Schools Cup
2XV	Won the Plate competition
Medallion	Won the Medallion Bowl

Music

It was great to hold our spring concert in St Patrick's Cathedral again and we were impressed by the variety of the programme and the talents and skills of the performers.

As always, the event was a showcase of the gifts, skill and hard work of our musicians and choristers. We are very grateful to all the pupils involved and all the staff associated with our music department. Although we have come to expect high levels of performance this was a remarkable concert, we do not take it for granted!

We are also very grateful to the Dean and Chapter for making the necessary arrangements for this event.

The choirs have participated in several significant events in the local community including the Cathedrals Partnership. Numerous musicians have played in representative orchestras and two Year 14 pupils reached the finals of the Rotary Young Musician of the Year Competition. Currently two pupils are performing in Birmingham with the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

Young Enterprise

The pupil company - *Circle of Seasons* made festive wreaths and won the Southern Area final earlier this month, earning a place in the Northern Ireland final against five other schools. They will find out how they have done at a gala awards dinner on 01 May.

Attendance

Thank you for your cooperation on matters of attendance. School attendance matters and all the research indicates that it corresponds directly to pupil attainment. Please encourage your children to attend as often as possible and as punctually as possible. Attendance and punctuality data is often requested by potential employers after pupils leave school and we know that it can be influential when it comes to job offers.

Home/ School Communication

We have been very pleased by the high levels of engagement at Parent Teacher Meetings, we understand however that there might be other times when you will want to communicate with school or meet with staff.

To ensure that the member of staff you need to speak to is available and in possession of the information they may need for your meeting please ring ahead to make an appointment.

If you ring to speak with a member of staff, please bear in mind that the bulk of a teacher's day is spent in the classroom with pupils, and it may not be possible for your call to be returned that day. When you ring, please be prepared to provide reception staff with some basic information such as:

- ***Your full name.***
- ***The nature of your inquiry.***
- ***The telephone number you would like to be reached at.***

Please do not ask for an urgent call back unless the matter is of a safeguarding nature.

If you wish to inform us about a safeguarding concern an appointment is **not** necessary. Please ring and say you need to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

It is generally not our practice to share email addresses with stakeholders without permission. However, if you do have a teacher's email address, please remember that most of a teacher's day is taken up with classroom teaching or dealing with other important scheduled activities and therefore colleagues may not have an opportunity to look at emails. There should be no expectation that emails will be seen or responded to immediately. In public administration in Northern Ireland there is no universal minimum response time for general email enquiries, however, as a 'rule of thumb' we aim to respond to emails within four working days of receiving them. Day one is the day *after* the email is received. A copy of our email etiquette procedure is available on request.

School uniform

The Royal School is known in the community for its high standards. It may have been these very standards which attracted you to our school in the first place. Please note that hoodies, and tops (other than the school pullover) are not permitted. Boys may not wear earrings at all, and girls may wear ONE stud in each ear lobe. Nail varnish should be neutral and gel nails are not permitted. We would ask for your particular cooperation to ensure that pupils are not displaying non regulation piercings (e.g. nose piercings and multiple earrings). The expectation is that boys will be clean shaven.

While the Board of Governors is extremely keen that uniform standards are enforced, we want to avoid unnecessary confrontation with pupils over uniform and would therefore ask for your cooperation. Further information about appearance, including information about hairstyles, is contained in the Parents' Handbook.

Phones

There is a place for technology to be used wisely to advance learning and teaching. The school's agreed position on phones is 'Switched off and out of sight', that means that between 08:45 and 15:15 phones are not permitted to be visible in class (without the express permission of the teacher), in corridors or in the playground. Phones which are being used in an unauthorised way are liable to be confiscated.

Traffic Management

Parking on the school site is limited to staff and visitors only. Pupils are not permitted to park in the school grounds. To ensure the safety of everyone using the school site only pupils in the Preparatory Department may be dropped off or collected in the grounds. The exception to this is in cases where a pupil has mobility issues which should be discussed with Mr Cardwell at the earliest opportunity.

We have received some understandable complaints from local residents about inconsiderate parking in the streets around the school. Please continue to ask your children (if they are privileged enough to have a car to take to school) to be considerate to those who live in the vicinity of the school and to park respectfully. This is especially important in the event that emergency access is required.

We have been advised by the Armagh Observatory and Planetarium that their car parks are reserved for patrons and visitors of the planetarium only. They reserve the right to take action with regard to unauthorised parking.

Important forthcoming dates

Below is some important information about the next few weeks:

- **Monday 28 April** – school starts back for all pupils. Boarders may return on Sunday 27 April (unless by prior arrangement).
- **Friday 2 – Sunday 4 May** – Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition training.
- **Monday 5 May** – Bank holiday – School closed.
- **Monday 26 May** – School Closure in lieu of St Patrick's Day opening.
- **Friday 24 May – Friday 30 May** – Examinations for Years 8-10.

After School hours

For insurance purposes I must ask that all day pupils, who are not participating in supervised activities after school, leave the grounds by 3:30pm. Any pupil who encounters difficulty getting home should report to either of the Vice Principals or to me.

External Examinations

Easter represents the firing of the starting pistol for external examinations, all the more so with a late Easter. Best use should be made of this holiday for well planned, sustained and thorough revision. To assist with that, a Study Skills Guide can be downloaded from the school website (go to the 'News' tab on our website and click on 'Study Skills/Retrieval Guide'). It contains what we believe will be useful information for everyone preparing for external examinations. There is also a link to the Get Revising Website. We would particularly draw to your attention that from Tuesday 06 May school facilities will be open to 8:30pm Monday to Thursday to enable pupils in Years 12 to 14 to study in school if they would find that beneficial. Pupils sitting external examinations are likely to commence study leave in the week beginning 5 May.

We would emphasise that it's really important that pupils attend school up until study leave commences as teachers will be actively engaged in important examination preparation up until that point.

Lost Property

Please remind your sons and daughters to check Lost Property for any missing items. Lost property will be kept until the first Friday of the next term after which, if unclaimed, it will be sent to charity. All Lost Property requests to Mr Cardwell please.

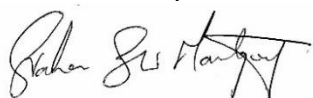
Lunchtime

If you wish your child to purchase food in school, please ensure that the relevant parent pay account has credit. We regret that we cannot routinely provide food to pupils where there are no funds available in the account. There is an automatic top up facility available in ParentPay which you might find convenient. Sixth Form pupils may leave the school grounds at lunch time in line with conditions which have been explained to them, they may not use their cars at lunchtime.

And finally....

It takes a community to make a school successful and on behalf of the Governors and all of our Staff I would like to pay tribute to your children whose contribution to school life is highly valued and also to wish you all a happy and blessed Easter.

Yours faithfully



Graham Montgomery

Headmaster

