



End of Term Letter Hilary 2026

March 2026

Dear parent or guardian,

As we approach the end of another busy term, I want to take the opportunity to 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.

As usual 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 host the 1608 Debate between the five Royal Schools of Ulster and while our team performed well, the eventual winner of which was a team from Royal School Cavan, with the best speaker awarded going to a pupil from Enniskillen Royal Grammar School. Our debating team has had great success in the Northern Ireland Schools Debating Competition with a team qualifying for the final to be held in Stormont Parliament Buildings in late April. The English department visited the Heaney Homeplace for a tour and lectures on their set text, and the history department attended a series of lectures on Irish history.

The dance team has had a successful season; at NICMAC (Northern Ireland Creative Movement and Aerobic Championships) the team achieved five firsts, six second and three third places. At Ulster Fusion the team collected 11 golds, five silvers and two overall awards.

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

CCF has had a busy term and last week we were delighted to welcome the new SSI Mr Wayne Sampat. It was good to see Mr Braddon return to school earlier in the term and we are grateful for the work he is doing in the hand over to his successor. We wish Mr Sampat every success in his new role.

Sport in our school is always strong and this term has been no different. Swimmers and athletes have completed very successfully in a range of events across Ireland. It was a delight to host the Kate Russell All Ireland Schoolgirl's Tournament, and we loved watching the energy and enthusiasm of the participating teams from across Ireland. 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	Winners of the Belfast Telegraph Senior School Cup & runners up in the Kate Russell All Ireland Tournament
2XI	Won the McDowell Plate
4XI	Runners up in their Cup competition
U14	Won the Junior Plate final
1XV	Reached the semi-final of the Subsidiary Shield
Medallion	Reached the semi-final of the Medallion shield
U16	Won their shield competition
Year 8 team	Won their shield competition
Rugby 7s	Won their shield competition

Music

The school community was treated to a magnificent spring concert in St Patrick's Cathedral last night, we were immensely 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 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 ensembles.

Young Enterprise

The pupil company *Sew Loved* produced hand sewn iPad covers, make up bags and scrunchies and earned a Certificate of Recognition at the regional trade fair.

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.

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.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the parental consultation on school uniform. I have never seen such a large response to a school consultation, and it indicated overwhelming support for the retention of the current uniform arrangements. Your responses will be invaluable to us as we consider further any modifications required as a result of the passage of the School Uniforms Act 2026.

Phones

We continue to believe there is a place for technology to be used wisely to advance learning and teaching. The schools 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

Can I please take this opportunity to remind you that parking in the school grounds 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 continue to receive understandable complaints from local residents about inconsiderate parking in the streets around the school. Please ask your children 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 13 April** – school starts back for all pupils. Boarders may return on Sunday 12 April (unless by prior arrangement).
- **Thursday 16 – Sunday 18 April** – Duke of Edinburgh Silver Expedition training.
- **Thursday 30 April - Saturday 02 May** – Duke of Edinburgh Gold Expedition training.
- **Monday 04 May** – Bank holiday – school closed.
- **Tuesday 22 May – Friday 29 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

In many ways Easter represents the firing of the starting pistol for external examinations. Best use should be made of this holiday for well planned, sustained and thorough revision. To assist with that the News section of the school website contains a link to the 'Get Revising' Website and an 'in house' document 'Study Skills Retrieval Guide'. From early 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 4 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 to that point. Schools are not obliged to place pupils on study leave and there may be times where teachers feel that their pupils should return to class for further preparation. We recommend that pupils follow closely the advice of their teachers.

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....

Successful schools require the support of the whole community. On behalf of the Governors and our staff, I would like to pay tribute to your children, whose contribution to school life is greatly valued, and to wish you all a happy and blessed Easter.

Yours faithfully



Graham Montgomery
Headmaster

