

Ballakermeen High School



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Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that you have had a fantastic summer break and that your children are excited about their return to school on Wednesday.

Personally, it is a great privilege to be taking up the responsibility of leading this amazing school. It is the people that make a community, and I have already experienced the passion and sense of belonging from the Ballakermeen staff, students and parents that I have been lucky enough to meet and speak to. There are a lot of people who quite rightly care dearly about the success of our school and our young people; it is why we do what we do as parents, carers or members of staff!

It is only right at this point that I pay tribute to Adrienne Burnett who led Ballakermeen with expertise, commitment and a great deal of love for 21 years. Unsurprisingly, after so long in charge, much of Adrienne's legacy is evident throughout the school. As her successor, I appreciate that I have big shoes to fill, but I am very much looking forward to building on the strong foundation that Adrienne has left in place. We wish her a long and happy retirement. She will always be a valued part of the Ballakermeen family.

Now, however, is a time to look forward to the next stage of our journey together. At a time when there are many challenges to face, both as an Island and globally, it is important that we take our next steps together. We need to be clear and united as a community with one aim; to ensure that our young people are safe, happy and successful and that they leave Ballakermeen well prepared for life beyond the school gates. We therefore remain committed to two key aspects of our school:

- **Kindness, Honesty, Respect** – these are our core values. We will continuously reinforce these throughout the year and they will be at the heart of everything that we do. These values apply to all members of our school community be that students, staff or parents and carers
- **The Ballakermeen Learner** – it is our continuing mission to support the development of our young people so that they embody the BHS Learner. We must all work together to ensure that our young people are ready, reflective, knowledgeable and ambitious in order that they are prepared for learning and prepared for life.

As a staff team, we have spoken about our expectations for the coming year. We have unashamedly set our expectations high, both for ourselves and for our students. To ensure that we continue to progress as teachers, we have established an ambitious programme of professional development based on the latest research around cognitive science. As role models to our youngsters, we are committed to continuous learning and we will continue to seek out and learn about the most effective teaching strategies from around the world.

OUR VALUES:
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In relation to our expectations of our students, we will be speaking to all of them within the first week about a 'Reset on Respect' and these conversations will continue throughout the year. We will provide you with more information in due course but, needless to say, this agenda ties in firmly with our core values and reinforces the need to respect both our own learning and the learning of others. Some key highlights are summarised below:

- Disruptive behaviour in class that interrupts learning will be addressed quickly. An initial opportunity to modify the behavior, without sanction, will be provided
- Any continuation of the disruption will not be tolerated out of respect for others in the class
- Respect for learning also extends to arriving at class on time and ready to learn. Poor punctuality without good reason will be addressed by staff to ensure the best use of learning time
- Uniform expectations are clear and should be respected. Failure to meet these expectations will be challenged. In particular, this applies to the need for all black footwear and skirts that are of an appropriate length (about an inch above the knee)
- Mobile phones are a distraction to learning and improper use can have a negative impact on fellow students. For this reason, mobile phones should not be seen in the school building or during the school day other than in lessons, under the supervision of a teacher. Failure to respect this expectation will result in confiscation

Our 'Reset on Respect' also of course, applies to behaviour outside of the classroom, namely in the way in which we speak to each other as students, staff, parents and carers. We can be honest about things that we may be unhappy about, however this can, and indeed must, be expressed with kindness and respect. We will be actively encouraging developmental dialogue with you and look forward to introducing a series of feedback opportunities throughout the year.

I very much look forward to working closely with you over the coming months and years. I feel that with hope, optimism and positivity we will be able to overcome any obstacles and barriers that we may face along the way. Please be safe in the knowledge that all of the staff at Ballakermeen are united in wanting the very best for your child.

Thank you in anticipation of your support and I look forward to meeting many of you personally in the near future.

Yours sincerely



Graeme Corrin
Head Teacher