

May 2015

**To: Parents of Pupils attending Controlled, Maintained and Voluntary Post Primary, Primary and Special Schools and Colleges of Further & Higher Education Colleges – South Down area**

Dear Parent

**The 2015 Irish Open Golf Tournament (28 – 31 May) – Home to School Transport Arrangements**

I write regarding home to school transport arrangements for your child during the above golf tournament.

The Irish Open Golf tournament is being held at Royal County Down, Newcastle between Thursday 28 and Sunday 31 May 2015 inclusive. Organisers expect a large attendance of up to 90,000 spectators during the week as follows:

- A practice round will be held on Tuesday 26 May and a Pro-Am will be held on Wednesday 27 May. Crowds are expected to number 5,000 and 10,000 respectively, commencing at 8.00 am on the Tuesday 26 and 7.30 am on the Wednesday 27, with peak traffic predicted between 8.00 am and 11.00 am.
- No routes will be closed in the Newcastle area and Park and Ride / Walk venues will be established on the three main routes into Newcastle – Donard Park, Northfield Caravan Park, Castlewellan Road, and Bryansford GAC.
- The main event begins on Thursday 28 May through to Sunday 31 May. Gates to the course are expected to open at 6.45 am and the total number of spectators are estimated at 25,000 each day.
- Key times will coincide with Rory McIlroy who is scheduled to tee off at approximately 8.00 am on Thursday 28 May and 12 noon on Friday 29 May. Newry Mourne and Down District Council have advised the peak traffic times on these days will be:

Thursday 28 May	6.30 am – 8.30 am	6.00 pm – 8.00 pm
Friday 29 May	7.30 am – 9.30 am	6.00 pm – 8.00 pm

**School Transport**

Translink and the Education Authority buses, both dedicated school services and scheduled service buses will operate as normal throughout the week; however, there is a very strong likelihood that buses will be delayed due to the volume of traffic in and around the south Down area. Accordingly, it is likely that attendance at school may be delayed and similarly the return journey to home. You should make alternative arrangements, as appropriate.

Schools have been advised to make appropriate arrangements to allow pupils to arrive at school early. Your school should advise you of any such details.

**Pupils Sitting Exams**

Due to the potential for disruption to transport for pupils sitting exams on any of the above mentioned dates, parents should **not** rely on normal school transport services to arrive at their scheduled times. Whilst the Authority has a statutory duty to provide transport assistance for eligible pupils, the Authority would advise that the prime responsibility to get a pupil to and from school lies with the parents.

If your child is due to sit an exam during the period 27-30 May (inclusive), you should make appropriate contingency transport arrangements to ensure that your child arrives at school in good time to sit their exams. The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has circulated details of its contingency arrangements to your school in the event that your child cannot attend school in time for their examination. Your school should pass this information to you directly.

Your co-operation in relation to this matter is appreciated. **If you have any queries regarding any of the issues highlighted above, please contact your school in the first instance.**

Yours sincerely



**N D McBride**  
Chief Administrative Officer