



THE
KING'S
HOSPITAL
SCHOOL

Headmaster's Christmas Newsletter 2020

Dear Parent and Guardian

As we come to the end of a term and year that has presented us with many personal and professional challenges, I would like to express my extreme gratitude to all of you, within this extraordinary community, for your support and encouragement. The rewards of being in a position to come to school each day this term, and provide a safe and welcoming space for your child to learn and grow, have far outweighed the endurances.

Whilst we remain hopeful for 2021, with the introduction of a vaccine initially for our most vulnerable and frontline workers, existing restrictions and precautionary measures will have to remain strictly in place as we begin the new term.

We will send out a return to school questionnaire as before, and please see a letter to schools from [CMO Dr Tony Holohan](#) urging us to remain vigilant over the holiday period.

Boarders return Wednesday January 6th from 8pm, and classes resume January 7th.

Our Digital Working Group have been meeting regularly to ensure that staff have all that is required digitally, should the school have to return to online learning at any point. All teaching staff have been equipped with a fully loaded Surface Pro laptop, and remain prepared to engage digitally with the students, if necessary.

We have also been able to move forward on other important aspects of school life such as our anti-bullying programmes and policy review; FUSE, Helping Hands, student research collaboration with DCU, and our Diversity and Inclusion working group.

I am very grateful and appreciative of how staff continue to engage and motivate our students, despite the constraints they have been put under; in the classroom, on the pitch and when organising activities. We have been very fortunate to remain unaffected by Covid-19 outbreaks, and I strongly believe this correlates to how respectful the community remains to the protocols and restrictions inside and beyond the school gates. I would also like to acknowledge with thanks the hard work and dedication of our support staff, who keep the school running efficiently and safely, each and every day.

The students are a testament to themselves and you all. Their resilience and determination to make the most of school being open, gives us a hope for the future; that rather than being stunted by the pandemic, they will be the stronger for it. However, we are conscious that the pandemic has taken a toll on some students' mental health and while we remain attentive to this, and supportive at school, we do ask that you bring any concerns to our attention through the [well-being pathway](#).

You will see some short messages below from the School Management Team and links to many of the events and activities that took place throughout the term. I would encourage you to follow our social media pages for instant updates; [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#). A pdf of this email newsletter is also attached for your convenience.

Siobhán Daly – [Deputy Head Academics](#)

Ensuring the students are caught up on any work missed during the lockdown has been a primary focus and I am pleased that the November exams reflected that. However, with the Form 3 & 6 Mock Exams less than six weeks away I would encourage the students to use some of the holidays to stick to their revision plan and space out the work needed to achieve their personal best.

[Mocks timetable](#)



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School reports will be available on the parent app from midnight, Tuesday, December 22nd.

There will be no classes on Monday March 8th, 2021 to facilitate a Department for Education required Junior Cycle teacher-training day.

Form 6 students have been engaging regularly with the careers department and attended their study skills seminar. Please use the break to discuss their CAO choices with them and begin preparing for the application process. There will be more virtual college open days in January that they can check out. Updates from the Careers Team can be found [here](#).

Cormac Ua Bruadair – [Deputy Head Pastoral/Head of Boarding](#)

As it is necessary to keep windows open in classrooms please remind students that they can wear their jumper, blazer and school jacket to class if necessary. Please respect the uniform by not encouraging sweatshirts and non-uniform jackets.

Restrictions will remain in place around social distancing for the next term so we must retain the staggered lunch times and will be unable to resume the break time snack. We will review this again at mid-term and the Food Council will meet in January to discuss menu options. Hot lunches will be €340 for the Spring Term. Please email sean.meagher@sodexo.com with any sign up queries.

Any student who travels outside Ireland over Christmas, day or boarding, must quarantine for 14 days or take a PCR after 5 days, on their return according to current regulations. We will send out a form before school starts, and ask that you send a copy of the negative PCR test to a designated email address, in order to resume boarding on the 6th or classes on the 7th. All of our International-based students that travelled home will return to KH one week before school starts, and take a PCR test after 5 days. Students staying in the KH camp must arrive with a negative PCR test taken within 48 hours before they travel to Ireland.

Leave out for boarders will depend on what level restrictions are in place on our return.

Despite the rolling restrictions, our Weekend Team did their utmost to keep the students entertained. Aaron Doyle, our Weekend Manager has put together the [highlights of the term](#), with some photos, here.

John Aiken – [Head of Wellbeing](#)

Covid-Sars2 has been a most challenging test for all of us since last March. However, a roll-out for a vaccine is on the horizon, and we must look forward with optimism to what 2021 will bring. The members of the Well-being Team have worked extremely hard since March, and particularly during this Michaelmas Term, to reassure and support students, parents and staff. We would like to thank you all for the part you have played, too. Please be assured that the same arrangements as have been in place will continue throughout 2021 and until we see an end to this pandemic. We are in this together, and together we will support and care for each other.

On behalf of the Well-being Team, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy, peaceful, relaxing and, above all else, the safest Christmas and New Year imaginable. Keep well and stay safe until we see you all again in the New Year.



Derek Maybury – [Director of Sports](#)

Congratulations and a massive 'thank you' to all Heads of Sport, coaches and especially all students who have supported the safe running of a comprehensive sports programme under very difficult circumstances. Your patience, understanding and willingness to adapt to changing Government and National Governing Body of Sport safety protocols is greatly appreciated. The importance of staying physically active, socially active, and outdoors over the past three months cannot be overstated and the consistently high attendances across our sports offerings is very pleasing.

The new after-school activities programme for the Hilary Term will commence on Thursday, January 7th. Please click on the [website](#) for the updated schedule and make yourselves familiar with the changes before the start of term. Students do need to log on to [SOCS](#) to reregister for next term's ECA's. Click here for my [Sports Round Up](#) for the term with some photos.

Kerrie O'Reilly – [Head of Arts & Culture](#)

A wide range of after-school activities have continued throughout the Michaelmas term. This meant that some activities saw reduced numbers or were held outdoors for a time but students and staff adapted superbly during the ever-changing situation. Activities that have continued include Dance, Book Club, Pottery, Cooking, Debating, Artistic Performance, Photography as well as Drama and Music. This year also saw the addition of new extra-curricular activities that have proved very enjoyable - Film Club and Virtual Gaming.

We held many traditional events in non-traditional ways, but which were still really enjoyed by staff and students, and got us all in the Christmas Spirit. Click on the [Events & ECA round up](#) for details of the activities; including video links and photos.

After 40 years nurturing and catapulting the KH music department and its students to dizzying heights, Helen Roycroft has retired from school life to the West of Cork. Please click through as we wish Helen well and watch a beautiful [spoken and musical tribute](#) to Helen from past and current pupils, and colleagues. Our new Head of Music, Colm O'Regan, produced this poignant arrangement. Please click [here](#) for Colm's bio. Our students colleagues are really looking forward to benefitting from Colm's global stage and choral experience, as we build on Helen's legacy.

Other highlights of the term can be found on the News section of our website and in the links below:

- [Christmas Carol Service](#)
- [The Harden Library newsletter](#)
- [Form 1 Newsletter Christmas Edition](#)
- [KH European Studies Class](#)
- [Bluecoat magazine 2019/20 eBook](#)
- [Past Pupil Willie Heron turns 100!](#)

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very safe and happy Christmas with your loved ones, and best wishes for a brighter 2021.

Yours,

Mark Ronan

Headmaster / Principal