



10/4/20

Dear Parent and Guardian

Once again I would like to sincerely thank all the courageous members of our school community, working on the frontlines in healthcare and other essential services. We really appreciate all that you are doing during this time.

An announcement was made this afternoon by our Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, extending the existing Covid-19 restrictions to May 5th 2020, and that as part of the wider public health measures; schools are closed until further notice.

Education Minister Joe McHugh provided clarity around the state exams stating 'plans were being put in place for the postponed Leaving Certificate examinations to begin in the last week of July or early August 2020, subject to public health advice'. The new Leaving Certificate exam timetable will be confirmed in early June. He believes that 'it is the fairest way of assessing students and giving them certification of achievement in school and a pathway to higher and further education'.

Speaking on the Junior Certificate examinations, Minister Mc Hugh said 'they will be replaced by school-based exams and assessments held early in the new school year'.

The Minister is in close conversation, with Ministers for Education in the UK, as the postponed Leaving Certificate examinations will have a knock-on effect for entry to third level at home and abroad; and they are working together to consider the best possible outcomes.

I know that the continuance of restrictions and clarity around State Exams is disappointing for our community and especially our students, who are finding these restrictive measures challenging and isolating. However, according to the Minister for Health, Simon Harris today, 'just a couple of weeks ago, a person who got the virus typically infected about 4 others.....it is now approaching 1! You are doing this; you are making it happen'.

I think we have to be very proud of what we achieved by adhering to these restrictions, so please do let your children know the encouraging results of their efforts, and thank them.

The School's Leadership Team will meet next Tuesday to continue to plan and implement our eLearning and Well-being strategy, as well as considering the implications of the postponed exams. With three-weeks experience of eKH and the feedback received from students, parents and staff; we remain committed to providing learning and pastoral support for our students, for as long as these restrictions are in place.

More specific correspondence will be sent to Leaving Cert students next week, in order to provide guidance and support, on the additional challenges they face over the rescheduling of exams that they planned to take in June; and will undoubtedly be extremely upset over. I will be engaging with the relevant representative bodies to ensure that the student voice is heard.

I hope this provides some much-needed clarity for your Leaving and Junior Cert children and that you enjoy the remainder of the Easter holidays, in so far as is possible.

Yours

Mark Ronan
Headmaster / Principal