

Update from Castleknock Community College

Friday 3rd April 2020



Dear Parent(s) & Guardian(s),

I do hope that you remain safe and well at this time and I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with an update from the College.

In the midst of all this chaos so many of you have had to manage other challenges. I know that we have several families whose loved ones have been hospitalised as a result of Covid 19. In talking with these families we have learned that the upset is not just in the fact that they have contracted the Virus but that they are in isolation and cannot be visited and that each member of their immediate family is now in self-isolation. It is so important that we keep all these families whose loved ones are unwell at this time in our thoughts and prayers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our deepest sympathies to our colleague Ms Sheila Cotter, whose mother (Mary Cotter) passed away last weekend. May she rest in peace

If you have a particular concern please contact the College at admin@castleknockcc.ie.

State Examinations Update

I have posted and will continue to post updates from the Department & Education & Skills and from the State Examinations Commission in relation to State Examinations.

I have received many calls/emails regarding the practical exams for Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied and Junior Certificate students which are scheduled for late April & May. At this point time students should continue to plan with the expectation that these exams will take place.

Similarly we must continue to prepare our students for the Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied & Junior Certificate Examinations in June.

At the time of writing this message I am aware that the Government has said that the Leaving and Junior Certificate are set to go ahead 'by hook or by crook' despite the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

Online Learning & Teaching

I would like to commend all students who have engaged with their teachers over the last three weeks. Many of them have put in countless hours on schoolwork and it is important that they take some time out as the Easter Break begins.

It is important that students learn to pace themselves in these new and challenging times.

Having surveyed staff on a weekly basis in relation to student engagement I know that students and staff are making huge efforts to stay connected. I am also aware that some parents would welcome more online teaching. They have suggested that we use Zoom or similar devices. We have been advised by DDL ETB that should not use the Zoom platform due to Child Safeguarding protocols. We are now training staff in the use of Microsoft Teams and DDL ETB are now actively looking at ways at rolling this out to our learners so that we can enhance the level of communication without students and in particular our exam students.

I hope that the Easter break will be an opportunity to advance this project and that with the appropriate safety supports in place that we will be engage at another level with our students.

Senior Cycle Options – Students entering Fifth Year 2020-21

As you are aware, we were unable to host our senior cycle subject workshops for third & fourth year students entering fifth year 2020-21. Over the last few weeks we have provided information and links to these students and advised them to carefully research their subject choices. In order to plan for next year's timetable we will be inviting students to make their choices through the VS Ware System.

From Monday 6th April to Friday 10th April we will be making the online Options Programme available to students to select their senior cycle options. This will require parents to logon to their VS Ware Account and select the Options Tab and they will be guided to the section which will enable them to select their options for senior cycle.

Enrolment Policy First Year 2021-22.

We are now reviewing our Enrolment Policy 2021-22 and in accordance with the Admissions Act 2018 (Admissions to Schools). Parents are invited to comment and provide feedback on two sections of the policy: Selection Criteria and Method of Selection. I have attached a draft copy of the relevant section and if you would like to provide feedback you may do so by emailing johncronin@castleknockcc.ie by Friday 10th April. The Board of Management will consider all feedback in advance of its next meeting.

Donation to Connolly Hospital

All schools have been asked to donate any safety equipment to support our front line staff in our local hospitals. Earlier today our caretaker, Mr James Troy, gathered all gloves, goggles and sanitising gel that we had in the College and forwarded them to Connolly Hospital.

We are so grateful to the front line staff in our community who are doing extraordinary work to keep us safe. All we have to do Stay In, Stay Safe and continue to social distance.



An Easter Prayer from Canon Paul Houston

Canon Paul Houston, our Church of Ireland representative on the Board of Management at the College, kindly sent me on a prayer for you and your families at Easter Time.

Almighty and ever-loving God, we pray to you for those who suffer from the Coronavirus, in Ireland and across the world.

We pray too for all those who mourn the loss of a friend or family member who has died as a result of contacting the disease and those who support them in their grief.

Give wisdom to policymakers, skill to healthcare professionals and researchers, comfort to everyone in distress and a sense of calm to us all in these days of uncertainty and distress, this we ask in Jesus name.

Keep safe and God bless, Canon Paul Houston.

Continue to take good care of yourselves

John Cronin