

Update from Castleknock Community College

Monday 4th May 2020



Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Once again, I hope this message finds you safe and well. At the outset I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the enormous commitment you are making to your daughter/son's education in these most challenging of times.

We have received many emails from parents and students expressing their worries and concerns about their situation and asking many questions as to what will happen next. It is this uncertainty that is fuelling so many of these worries and concerns. I have written to you on previous occasions stating that we can only deal with the facts and information that we have been given by the relevant authorities and now know that the Department of Education & Skills (DES) and the State Examination Commission (SEC) have made a decision on the Junior Certificate Examination and we await further announcements from the DES & SEC with regard to the Leaving Certificate Examination.

Over the last two weeks it is evident that many students are becoming increasingly challenged by the current restrictions. The common themes that runs through the emails I have received relate to the sense of isolation that students are experiencing and the lack of certainty as to what will happen next. It is very important to remind you that our Guidance Counsellors and Chaplain are available to link in with any student who is struggling at this time.

Eileen Crowley	eileencrowley@castleknockcc.ie	Guidance Counsellor
Mary Moran	marymoran@castleknockcc.ie	Guidance Counsellor
Chantelle Barrett	chantellebarrett@castleknockcc.ie	Chaplain

Leaving Certificate Students

Our Leaving Certificate students are facing the greatest challenge with the Leaving Certificate now set to commence on Wednesday 29th July. This date has been confirmed by the DES & SEC. I am aware that the partners in education are meeting on a regular basis to consider how best to manage this challenge. The emails you have sent me in recent weeks have raised a number of questions:

- What will happen to the practical examinations such as Construction Studies, Engineering, Art & Physical Education?
- When will the LCVP written exam take place?
- What is meant by two weeks of teaching in advance of the exam and do these two weeks also include the time required to complete projects and practicals?

- What plans are in place for the LCA tasks/assignments/interviews?
- When will students be given time to complete their History, Geography & Politics & Society Projects?
- What social distancing protocols will the College have in place when students sit their exams?
- How will the College cater for the 200 students sitting state examinations while ensuring that all students are positioned two metres apart?
- How will the College provide for students who are entitled to a scribe/reader in terms of social distancing?
- What if a student tests positive with Covid 19 during the Leaving Certificate Examinations?
- What is the DES/SEC's Plan B if the examinations do not go ahead?
- Will the DES/SEC consider awarding predicted grades and if so, how will this work?
- What allowances will the DES/SEC make for students who are suffering from stress & anxiety? (Some students have lost family members/relatives due to the Covid 19 pandemic).
- What allowances will be made for students who have had limited access to technology due to a lack of devices in the home?

All of these questions are valid and reasonable ones to be putting to me and I have fed these questions & concerns on to my Principals' Network. It is not surprising to note that they are the same concerns that are being raised by other Principals. Regrettably, I do not have definitive answers to any of the above questions and nor can I predict what the answers might be. However, we continue to plan for July and we are carrying out our own assessment of the College as to how we can provide for each student while respecting social distancing.

As stated, I understand that further meetings are scheduled between the DES and the partners in education and it is hoped that greater clarity and certainty will follow from these meetings. Rest assured as information is communicated to me, I will post all details on the College website.

Accessing Lockers: A number of students have emailed me requesting permission to access their lockers. If any Leaving Certificate students require access to their lockers, I can make arrangements for students to access their lockers, this week. However, it is important that you email me in advance to agree a time to access their locker. Students will not be given access to their lockers without an appointment time.
Email: johncronin@castleknochcc.ie

Junior Certificate Students

The Department of Education & Skills and the State Examinations Commission announced last week that Junior Certificate students will no longer be required to sit an assessment in September. The key points from his announcement are detailed below.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Joe McHugh TD announced on 10 April 2020 that a decision had been made to cancel the Junior Certificate examinations which were due to take place in June 2020. He then made a further announcement on the 29th of April 2020 outlining that for each student, certification will involve two elements:

- **A State Certificate of completion of Junior Cycle from the Department of Education and Skills.** Students should receive a State Certification that they have completed three years of Junior Cycle education in a number of subjects/priority learning units. This certification will be provided by the Department of Education and Skills.
- **A School Report setting out the learning achievements of students in Junior Cycle.** Students should receive a written report on the broad range of learning that they have achieved in each subject, short course and/or priority learning unit at the end of Junior Cycle. This assessment of their learning will be provided by their teachers. Schools will have autonomy in how this assessment is to be arrived at and the format in which the report is provided.

How will Junior Certificate students be assessed at Castleknock Community College?

- Third Year students are required to continue with their coursework until the end of May 2020. Assessments & Assignments will be recognised in the final grade awarded in each subject.
- In June, we will publish a *Junior Cycle School Report* with a grade/descriptor and a comment that will reflect each student's engagement with each subject they studied over the three years of the Junior Cycle Programme. It will also acknowledge the work completed by all third year students over the last three months.
- Each Subject Department has agreed what the grade will reflect and will be a combination as best fits the coursework components of each subject. This will take into account the differences between practical subjects, the study of languages etc.
- The Grade will reflect a range of different elements: Grades achieved in examinations, assignments, class tests & practical assessments where applicable over the course of the last three years. Therefore, it is imperative that all third year students remain focussed on their studies for the next four weeks.
- Teachers will also make allowances for students who moved level in the course of their studies and will make Reasonable Accommodation where applicable for those students who accessed Learning Support/Resources.

Accessing Lockers: A number of students have emailed me requesting permission to access their lockers. If any Leaving Certificate students requires access to their lockers, we can make arrangements for students to access their lockers, this week. However, it is important that you email Ms Christina Clarke (Deputy Principal) in advance to agree a time to access their locker. Students will not be given access to their lockers without an appointment time.

Email: christinaclarke@castleknockcc.ie

Transition Year Students

Transition Year students have been advised by their teachers of the assignments/tasks that they need to complete in advance of their final report in late May. They have also been set a Vlog/interactive Power Point that will require them to reflect on the experiences they gained through Transition Year. This work will be assessed independently by a panel of teachers.

First, Second & Fifth Years & LCAI

Each teacher has communicated with their students through Edmodo, Microsoft Teams etc. the course work and assignments that will be completed by the end of May. In particular they have outlined the work that will be covered and how the student's engagement with this work will be reflected in their overall grade at the end of May. The grade awarded at the end of May will be an average grade of the work/task/assignments that they have completed over the last year, including work that has been completed since March.

Planning for 2020-2022

Fifth Year Options & LCVP 2020-2021

All students entering Fifth Year should have received a letter confirming their options for fifth year 2020-21. If you have not received this letter please email johncronin@castleknockcc.ie immediately.

Students entering fifth year 2020-21 have been asked to indicate if they wish to be considered for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). They were required to email the Guidance Department with their expression of interest.

- Students transferring from Third Year to LCI who wished to be considered for LCVP are required to email Ms Mary Moran, Guidance Counsellor: marymoran@castleknockcc.ie
- Students transferring from Transition Year to LCI who wished to be considered for LCVP are required to email Ms Eileen Crowley, Guidance Counsellor: eileencrowley@castleknockcc.ie

Transition Year 2020-21

We will be communicating with students who will be commencing the TY programme in September 2020-21. Ms Clarke (Deputy Principal) will be inviting parents to log on to their VS Ware accounts and to select the TY modules they wish to be considered for in September. In advance of this process we will be posting details of the modules on the website.

Booklists & Uniform Details

All information relating to booklists & uniform details will be posted on the website in June.

Returning for the new Academic Year

The official date that the College is due to reopen is Thursday 27th August. A number of parents have emailed me with regard to the arrangements we will put in place in advance of the College reopening. We will await guidance from DES regarding the protocols that we will be required to put in place with regard to social distancing.

Secretarial Position at Castleknock Community College

Dublin and Dun Laoghaire ETB are currently accepting applications for the following post:

**Permanent Part Time – Clerical Officer (School Secretary)
in Castleknock Community College
(Open Competition)**

For further information and to apply online please go to <https://etbvacancies.thehirelab.com/LiveJobs/JobApply/74006?source=1>
You will receive an email confirming application submission.

Applications should be submitted no later than 12.00 noon on Friday 15th May 2020. Late applications will not be considered. Shortlisting may apply.

We hope that all in the College Community stay safe while we work #TogetherApart and we look forward to welcoming our students back online tomorrow"

**John Cronin
Principal**