**Spring 2020 Newsletter**



**Covid 19 – Corona Virus**

The Corona Virus has reached our shores which is not really surprising. We will take all precautions possible to help protect our school surroundings. We have antibacterial hand washes at all entrances and would encourage all students and staff to use them regularly. It is important that all wash hands carefully when using the toilets and before eating. If you need to cough or sneeze, please do this into the elbow of your jumper to avoid the spread of germs to others which may cause infections. Posters are placed at a number of locations around the school to remind us all of what to do. Further information is available on [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie) on [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) or [www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie) All of these websites will provide updated information as soon as it becomes available. If in doubt, seek advice from your family doctor. Our school is in contact with the Department of Education and will follow all advice provided by them.

**New School Buildings**

The Building project is now nearing completion. Over the mid-term break a lot of the planting was completed by the contractor and this step really sets off the building and shows what we have to look forward to when all works are completed. The Board of Management are advising that it will take a while to complete all aspects of the works as the inclement weather has caused significant delays with the contractor having to wait for the ground to dry out before taking the next steps.

**School Chapel**

Internal works were completed recently in our School Chapel. The Stations of the Cross have been carefully restored to their original state and set off the Chapel beautifully. The Board of Management with the support of the Past Pupils Union have installed fabulous new modern seating, an Alter and Ambo to ensure that all appropriate events associated with or Ethos can be celebrated going forward as we have always done. Ash Wednesday was marked with distribution of Blessed Ashes in the Chapel to all our students. There will be a number of other events during Lent.

**Parking**

Parking in our school is causing a little bit of concern with the inclement weather adding to the difficulties. We have asked the Department of Education to provide two further bus parking bays which will alleviate some of the difficulties that we face at present. We are also asking parents to help us protect the grass between the playing fields and the driveway. Please reverse in to park, rather than the practice of some in recent months who drive in and turn around to face back the driveway. This is very unforgiving on the grass which has recently turned to mud. We do have a set down area in to the left of the carpark and would encourage as many as possible to use this facility and a little patience will see us all home quickly and safely without damaging the fields.

**Transition Year**

Our Transition Year cohort have been on a several trips recently and availed of some workshops including drumming and a History trip to Athy. The First Aid, Car maintenance, driving experience and other activities will be taking place shortly. All have made their subject option choices for the beginning of the Leaving Certificate Cycle in September. We have received out Teaching Allocation from the Department of Education and will advise on the subject availability shortly.

**Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones have a lot of very positive uses in school and elsewhere. However, when used inappropriately, they can cause considerable distress for many young people. There has been a lot of talk about the positive and unfortunately also the negative effect of social media in recent times. With that in mind, the Board of Management and the Parents Association want to ensure that students behave responsibly at all times. The rule on use of phones is very clear and states that mobile phones are not to be used from 8-55 in the morning until the end of the school day, unless under the supervision of the teacher for use in class. All teachers are asked to confiscate any mobile phones seen in use during the day and give to the Principal for safe keeping.

**State Examinations**

Subject Level forms will be presented to our 3rd Year students shortly for them to finalise the level to be taken in June. Please discuss this important decision with your son as it will be difficult to adjust entries at a later date. Forms for the payment of examination fees will be distributed in the coming weeks. It is the responsibility of each parent to arrange payment to the State Examination Commission of this fee with exemption only being available to those who hold a valid Medical Card.

**School attendance**

Full school attendance is very important if your son is to make the most of his time in school and be afforded the best possible opportunity of reaching his potential. We therefore ask all parents to make every effort to ensure that your son is on time for school and attends for the full day. A signed note to explain all absences must be presented upon returning to school. If it is necessary for a student to leave early, it is essential that the correct procedures are followed as these are an integral part of the ``Child Protection Guidelines``. This means that a note signed by a parent/guardian must be presented to the Principal/Deputy Principal before departure. If a pressing matter arises during the school day, please contact the school office to make arrangements.

**Study**

Study for all students now takes place in our new study hall and it was great to see such large numbers attending last week immediately following the mid-term break. A clearly defined study plan for the remainder of the academic school year will result in better outcomes in the summer. All students must bring all necessary books to the study hall with you as you will not be allowed to return to your locker during study. Final fees are now due, and seats will be assigned only to those who have paid these fees. There are only a few spaces remaining. Our Senior prefects are helping to supervise before study around the ref and entrance to the front building. It is important that all students take appropriate direction from them.

**Exams**

All students recently completed a full set of exams. The exception being our Second Year Students who used the time to prepare for their Class Based Assessments (CBA’s). Results for most exams are available with the exception of our Junior and Leaving Cert cohorts, with these being expected shortly. Results are available through E-Portal which can be accessed through the school website. Please contact the school office if you require logon details to access information related to your son.

**School Environment**

We are lucky to have beautiful grounds and a fantastic new school. The only damage being done is by students dropping litter which is a pity. Can each parent please ask your son to use the bins to dispose of their rubbish. There are many bins inside and outside the school, so there are no excuses. We all have a shared responsibility to ensure that our school and grounds remain in the magnificent condition that they are being returned to us. A clean, bright surrounding is a much nicer area in which to spend time.

**Leadership Roles**

There are two key leadership roles available to our students which provide a great support to all in our school community. Our Meitheal leaders provide very important support to new students throughout first year. They are chosen from our current Transition Year students by the Diocese and provided with high quality training during the month of June in preparation for the next school year. Prefects are chosen from our Leaving 1 cohort. They are nominated by subject teachers who meet them in class every day and are then chosen the Year Heads in consultation with the Principal and Deputy Principal. They will provide guidance to groups throughout the year on the importance of our Ethos and what it means to be a Knockbeg student.