April 2020

Dear Parents,

These are and indeed remain the strangest of times for all in our school community and particularly for those of us who are preparing for the Leaving Certificate examinations. I want to thank all our students and their parents who have worked so well to study from home and completing the many varied homework assignments provided by your teachers. It really is wonderful to see how all in our school community have worked together in such difficult circumstances to maintain the high standards of Education that Knockbeg College is renowned for. It has been a steep learning curve for us all in so many different ways with a few errors made along the way as we all combined to embrace the new social norms, working conditions and varied forms of exercise. It was lovely to listen to the message of support from Bishop Nulty earlier in the week also.

**Wellbeing**

Wellbeing has become an important part of the curriculum for us all and covers many areas of socialisation, physical and mental health, in school and our home life. I would urge all of us to ensure that we maintain contact with our friends via social media while we follow the recommendations and ‘Stay at Home’, and to get at least 30 minutes of physical exercise each day. There are lots of means of accessing exercise these days with a variety of experts providing online support to meet the needs of all from beginners to serious sports people. If you are not getting much exercise, please do so as it is as important for our mental wellbeing as the physical. Joe Wicks, the ‘Body Coach’ has lots of workouts online that will help all categories.

The Year Heads and I have been in contact with a lot of parents in recent days and weeks to check in and see how families are doing at present. If you have any concerns and would like to talk please send a message to bhoyne@knockbegcollege.ie our Guidance Counsellor or principal@knockbegcollege.ie and we will call to see how we can help.

**Exam Fees**

The State Examination Commission has advised that the date for payment of Leaving Certificate fees is being extended until after the exams process has been completed.

There will be no fee required for the Junior Certificate as the exams have been cancelled. We have been advised that any fees already paid will be refunded automatically.

**Junior Cert Assessments**

As you are no doubt aware, the Minister for Education announced that the proposed Junior Cycle assessment for September have been cancelled. All schools are now asked to undertake their own form of assessment in each exam subject over the coming weeks. Please see the link below to the announcement and all associated information. We will discuss this carefully over the coming days and provide detailed information on how we will proceed. It is our intention to do all that we can to provide grades that are fair to all students and decided upon in a transparent manner. We expect to include some or all of the following in our decisions - projects already undertaken, CBA’s, Mocks, November assessments and a number of assignments to be scheduled by your subject teachers in the coming weeks. When full details are agreed upon, we will let you know. You cannot adjust the work already done, but you can help to improve your final grade by working with your teachers to complete all assignments set in the coming weeks.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Learners/Information/State-Examinations/junior-cert-2020.html>

**Leaving Certificate**

I hope that all students are maintaining focus as much as possible and working with your teachers to prepare for your exams in the coming months. I know that it is very difficult for you and your families at present to be away from school, friends and teachers at such an important time and then to have to keep going for an extra two months. It is important to pace yourselves, get plenty of exercise and to remain in contact with your teachers to get the best advice and support in relation to each subject. We will hopefully have a timetable of events early in June from the Department of Education and Skills to allow us prepare together for the weeks ahead.

**End of Year Arrangements**

Reports will be issued for all non-exam classes as normal at the end of this term. Teachers will generate results from a number of assignments that they will be setting in each subject in the coming weeks. The results achieved will form the basis for your grade and your engagement this term will also form the basis for individual comments that you will receive.

**Awards Ceremony**

It is hard to see how ‘Parents Day’, Transition Year Graduation and our annual Graduation Mass which are such important features of our school life can take place at present. All the data is being collected at present to ensure that the excellent performance of so many students is recorded and acknowledged. We are looking at a number of options and we will let you know what our proposals are in due course.

Above all, ‘Please Stay Well & Stay Safe’ and hopefully it will all pass soon

Michael Carew(Principal)