Monday 10th May 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Last Friday 08.05.2020, Minister McHugh announced the postponement of the 2020 Leaving Certificate.

He stated that all students are to be offered the option of receiving Calculated Grades for the subjects they are studying and the alternative of sitting the 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations at a date in the future when it is considered safe to hold the examinations.

The following is a breakdown of the process to be applied for students to be given the option of Calculated Grades or to sit the examinations.

1. The 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations, previously scheduled to take place in late July and August, have been postponed.
2. There will be no Leaving Certificate fee this year. All exam fees which have been paid will be refunded.
3. Teachers will be asked to provide a professional judgment of each student’s attainment which will be subjected to a rigorous in-school alignment process to ensure fairness.
4. The school principal will approve the estimated scores being provided and the rankings of each student in each subject in the school.
5. A special unit is being established within the Department of Education and Skills to process the data provided by each school and operate national standardisation, again to ensure fairness amongst all students.
6. The Department will finalise the grades for each student which will be issued to each student as close as possible to the traditional date. Formal State certification will also be provided.
7. Students will retain the right to appeal. This will involve checks on school-entered data; correct transfer of that data to the Department; a review that it was correctly received and processed by the Department; and a verification of the Department’s processes by independent appeal scrutineers.
8. Students will also retain the right to the sit the 2020 Leaving Certificate examinations at a date in the future when it is deemed safe for state examinations to be held.

In an effort to ensure fairness and equity the Department of Education & Skills has stressed the following:

At the core of both the school-based and national standardisation phases of the system of calculated grades is a commitment to objectivity and fairness. To ensure this, the school-based process must not be compromised. Therefore, the principal, deputy principal(s), teachers or other members of the school staff must not under any circumstances discuss with any student or with the parents or guardians of any student the estimated marks that the school is submitting.

There are two reasons for this:

* The mark assigned by the school is not necessarily the final mark that the student will receive, and it would therefore be misleading for the student to receive that mark before the calculated grade processes are complete.
* Allowing access to and discussion of estimated grades before the calculated grades process is complete would interfere with the process being carried out properly and fairly.

For these reasons and to commence and carry out the school-based section of the process:

* Students will finish their term today. You will not be required to submit any further work.
* Parents/Guardians and Students are required not to contact any members of staff going forward except for the guidance staff should support be required.
* Arrangements will be put in place to facilitate the return of schoolbooks and IT equipment. However, it is essential that all government guidelines on social distancing be adhered to during any appointments in the school.

Useful links for further information -

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1afce4-a-guide-to-calculated-grades-for-leaving-certificate-students-2020/>

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2f07eb-leaving-cert-2020-information/#information-for-leaving-cert-students>

Yours sincerely,

Michael Carew (Principal)