**Spring 2022 Newsletter**



**Covid-19 Pandemic**

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to present many challenges within our community. A lot of our families have had to remain at home for a period as per the regulations, with some isolating at present. While it is great to see that a lot of the restrictions in public have been lifted, there are still some challenges to be faced before we return to normal school life. We are delighted to have Hepa filters in all classrooms which help to keep air clean. It must be understood that they do not remove the virus with ventilation being equally, if not more significant as we continue to do all that we can to reduce the risk of the virus spreading within our school community. Mask wearing and hand sanitising continue to play a very important role in our daily lives in school. Please ensure that your son understands the importance of continuing with these arrangements until further notice. It has been great to be able to facilitate the boys’ participation in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities this year. This alone has lifted spirits and help improve the school experience for us all.

**School Uniform**

Our students have embraced the challenges posed by Covid-19, and we are very proud of the way they have embraced the changes to their daily routine. Having windows and doors open always was fun at first, though not as much when the weather changed and became colder. Across the winter months, we have therefore accommodated the boys in wearing hoodies and a variety of other clothing underneath the school uniform. Students have been advised that we will be returning to normal rules after the mid-term break. This means that hoodies cannot be worn to school after this week. If a student is cold, they may wear a t-shirt or under armour under their school shirt and school jackets can also be worn. We remind all parents that school regulations require all the boys to wear black shoes as part of the uniform.

**Leaving School**

We would like to remind all parents of the importance of following correct procedures if your son needs to leave school early. If known in advance, please complete the relevant section in the journal and ensure that he brings it to Mr. Ronan in the morning. If an emergency arises during the school day, please contact the school office on 0599721960 to ensue that we have appropriate records.   
Text to student’s phone is not appropriate for this purpose.

**State Examinations**

The State Examinations Commission, following instruction from the Department of Education, has advised that all students will be sitting the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate examinations in June. This decision is made, and it is important that all now focus all their energies in preparing for the challenges they will face in the next few months. All students are sitting mocks at present, with projects and orals to be completed in a range of subjects in the weeks that follow. For those sitting the Leaving Certificate, Orals in Irish, French and German along with the practical in Music, these are scheduled to take place between April 9th to 15th. **School will close at 12-30 this Friday February 18th for all students.**

**House Examinations**

All other students are taking exams in their subjects this week. We will be giving feedback to parents via VSware as soon as it is available. It is important for parents to advise all students to return to their studies as soon as possible after the mid-term break. Most Second Year students will be completing Class Based Assessments (CBA’s) in the coming weeks which will form an integral part of their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Transition Year students have completed their subject choices for next year. They still have many important aspects of the programme to complete in the weeks ahead. **School will close at 12-30 this Friday February 18th for all students.**

**School Trips**

There are several trips scheduled to take place across the remainder of the school year. Our First Year students will take off on a History trip to some important areas of County Wexford this week. Many of our Transition Year and first year students will go on separate trips to a premier league soccer match in the weeks ahead. Other more local Transition Year trips are being planned also.

**Parent Teacher Meetings**

Several Parent Teacher meetings have taken place across the last two half terms. All of these took place online as we continue to do our best to keep the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on our school community to a minimum. Scheduling has been a challenge which we have done our best to overcome. It has resulted in some parents not meeting all their son’s teachers. It is not possible for logistical reasons to schedule an online Parent Teacher meeting for our current First Year students. It is also not appropriate at present to bring so many parents together in school as the HSE/Department of Education advice does not support this. We will ensure that all parents receive informative, good quality feedback from the exams that all students are completing at present.

**School Closure**

We are scheduled in our Calendar to be closed on March 17th & 18th to celebrate St. Patricks day. The Government recently announced an extra Bank Holiday for everyone to acknowledge the great efforts of everyone to overcome the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. We have decided to take this Bank Holiday on **Monday March 21st**.

**Liturgical Events**

In line with our School Ethos, of which we are very proud, we have appropriately marked Catholic Schools Week with a “thought for the day” read each morning by our prefects. Fr. Dunphy, our school Chaplain, led prayer service with each of our First-Year classes in our lovely school chapel. Our Transition year students attended mass in St. Clare’s Church, which was broadcast to the entire school. We will also mark the Lenten season which begins shortly with Penitential Services for all year group to help them prepare for Holy Week.

**School Policies**

This Year we are once again updating several of our school Policies in line with best practice. Our Anti Bullying Policy was ratified recently while our GDPR and Child Protection policies will be updated in the coming months.

**Covid Mural**

Our beautiful Covid Mural which was created in the last academic school year in acknowledgement of the many challenges that all in our community faced has moved to a permanent home in the lobby of our sports hall. It will serve as a permanent reminder of the wonderful supporting family spirit that we have here in Knockbeg College.

**Charity Fundraiser**

Our annual Tractor run took place recently, with a large number of new and old tractors brought to school by several of our students. The tractors were beautifully presented having been washed and polished for the occasion. All funds raised will be going to support ‘Embrace – Farm Accident Support’ It was a lovely opportunity for our students from all backgrounds to marvel at the size of modern tractors. A huge Thanks to all our parents who donated so generously to this wonderful venture. The boys raised the fantastic sum of €1465 on the day, with additional funds being raised through sponsorship. Well done to all the committee and participants.

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**Gaeltacht**

Our excellent Irish Department supported by our Parents’ Association are offering the fantastic opportunity for some of our students to experience life in a Gaeltacht area this summer. We hope to be able to support a minimum of four students across several year groups with significant grants towards the costs involved. Can all interested students please advise your Irish teacher to be in with a chance to avail of a wonderful holiday in a safe learning environment.

**Sponsorship**

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| We are delighted to announce that another very generous parent has come forward to support us by sponsoring four sets of tops for our Athletes. These were worn with pride by our students in the recent South Leinster Cross Country event. A huge thank you to Ger and Olive Brennan and their printing company A-ZAP PRINT for their generosity. | A blue and white shirt  Description automatically generated with low confidence A blue and white shirt  Description automatically generated with low confidence |

**Extra-Curricular Events**

Football, Hurling, Basketball and Athletics training takes place for many of our students each day. It is lovely to see so many of our students involved in a range of activities. Our Junior and Senior Basketball teams won the Regional Finals before Christmas. Both had success in phase 1 of the All Ireland qualifiers and proceeded to the quarter finals which took place in the National Basketball Arena. Both teams came up a little short on the day, though they will have learnt much from playing in the arena. They will be back to compete at the highest level again next year.

A group of people in sports uniforms

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A group of people posing for a photo

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| We are delighted to announce that Jack Kehoe has been selected for the upcoming Home Nations Tournament to be held in Cardiff during April. Best of luck to Jack in the competition. | A person wearing a white shirt  Description automatically generated with low confidence |

Our First and Second Year teams are in competition at present with both progressing to the regional semi-finals.

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A group of boys in blue uniforms

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In hurling, our Junior team reached the South Leinster semi-final where the came up against a very strong team from Creagh College in Gorey. The younger teams will be in competition shortly.

A big group of athletes took part in the recent Laois Cross Country event with several individual and team medals being won. Following participation in the South Leinster Cross Country Championships, two individual runners and one team have qualified for the Leinster finals which take place this week.

A group of people posing for a photo

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Football as always has lots of students participating with several teams training every day. Like basketball, the younger teams are competing in the group stages and are on target to reach the knockout stages of the South Leinster Championships.

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A group of people in sports uniforms posing for a photo

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The Junior team has reached the South Leinster Final which will take place after the mid-term break. A big Thank You to all teachers who are giving so generously of their free time to support out students in a wide range of activities which helps to maintain the wonderful community spirit that we have here in Knockbeg College.

A group of people posing for a photo

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**Green Schools**

We have several students involved in a range of activities to improve our environment. In an effort of reduce litter several extra bins have been installed around the school. We are asking all in our school community to use the bins to help keep our school clean. We want to retain our green flag and apply for others as we move towards a greener, more environmentally friendly school. We are segregating waste into three different bins as part of the process, general waste, compostable food waste and mixed recycling. We are asking parents to encourage all our students to always use the bins and to use them appropriately. The Green Schools Committee will be holding a quiz in the coming weeks to raise awareness of environmental issues among junior classes.