



**Loreto Secondary School,  
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**Office hours: 7.45 a.m. to 4.15 p.m., Monday to Friday**

Tuesday, 24 March 2020

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I start by saying how much I am thinking of our school community in these most difficult days. Classrooms and corridors that should be filled by the noise and bustle of 810 students and 70 staff going about their normal business now lie empty and eerily quiet. The same can be said of our cities, towns and villages. What appeared to be the certainties in life now appear to be uncertain and this is causing great anxiety to young and old alike.

It is so easy to fall into deep despair at this time but yet, we cannot do that. We have to keep going and to begin the fightback, fortified by the positives that have emerged like daffodils in Spring. Let us look with pride, admiration and gratitude at the following:

- The immense planning and resources being undertaken and sourced by government and statutory bodies to combat this Covid-19 threat
- The bravery and selflessness of frontline healthcare workers in caring for the sick and, by so doing, placing themselves in harm's way
- All factories and suppliers that continue to keep essential shops open and well-stocked
- Manufacturers who are re-configuring their production lines to make essential items required by our healthcare staff
- The sacrifices being made by so many in relation to phrases that, until a few weeks ago, were unheard of – self-isolation, social distancing
- The coming together of communities to look after the most vulnerable in society
- The success that some countries have recently had in slowing the progress of the virus

All of these are the lighthouses that point to eventual safe passage. They are Wexford's Hook Head. Let us all continue to rally around each other so that before long our corridors will be packed and one school principal will never again be heard saying "quiet, girls, please!"

There are a number of matters that I wish to bring to your attention, as follows:

## **Message from our President, Michael D. Higgins**

Following his consideration and signing of the Health (Preservation and Protection and other Emergency Measures in the Public Interest) Bill 2020, President Michael D. Higgins has released the following statement:

“As President, I am urging all citizens, given the emergency of our situation in relation to the grave challenge to our public health, to respond in a generous way to the Health Service Executive’s advice on measures to alleviate the spread of Covid19.

These new health and social measures may be difficult for many but they affect us all and we are at a point now when a person’s actions have consequences not only for themselves but for all in society. Irresponsible individual action puts all at risk. We must draw on our strengths now.

Intergenerational solidarity has been one of the greatest resources of contemporary Irish society. Future generations, it is my belief, will look back at this critical time and I hope that they will be proud of how we as a society rose to the challenges together, with different generations taking account of one another.

As President, I have such appreciation for, and deeply value the connection I have experienced with, young people around the country. I appeal to these young people to spread the word among their friends of the importance of that which we have been asked to do.

In every generation there will be exceptions to what is being sought in the public interest. Let us hope that we have seen the end of such behaviour which puts all of us at risk.

Many of the older people, of whose generation Sabina and I are a part, and to whom I have spoken, have been very appreciative of the large numbers of young people who are helping them, and that such assistance is offered in such a caring way that addresses issues of our older citizens that go far beyond the delivery of necessary groceries or food.

Those older people who have been helped have felt a connection within society, a sense of a bond that is being strengthened rather than weakened. Older people as well as being grateful for how they have been helped have spoken of how they have welcomed the sight of young people who have given them such hope for the Ireland that is to come.”

## **School Closure**

You will know from today’s announcement by the Minister for Education and Skills that schools will remain closed in the short term after 29 March. A further announcement in this regard is imminent.

I am aware that teachers continue to be in contact with students by email and other platforms in an attempt to keep teaching and learning going at this difficult time. It is essential that all students engage with their teachers through this period and do all that they can to stay up with the work laid out.

I am keen to emphasise, however, that this comes second to the immediate need to stay safe, look after and care for each other especially if family members are ill.

Any student having difficulty in accessing her Microsoft 365 email account should contact Mr. Mc Ginnity at [deputymcginnity@loretowexford.com](mailto:deputymcginnity@loretowexford.com) for assistance.

### **Mock Examination Reports**

Leaving Certificate mock examination reports have already been posted to families.

Reports in respect of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students will be posted home early next week.

Comments made by teachers on these reports point the way towards the individual actions needed by students as they prepare for State examinations.

### **Transition Year – School Tour to Spain**

The school tour to Spain has been officially cancelled by the airline carrier. This means that a refund of €469 will be due to each family that had paid. The loss will be the initial deposit of €151 per student. Once the funds have been lodged into the school account, we will begin the process of posting a cheque to each family. We hope to complete this exercise in the coming fortnight.

Please contact me at [principal@loretowexford.com](mailto:principal@loretowexford.com) if I can be of any assistance.

I wish every blessing on the full Loreto community in the coming weeks.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,  
Principal.