



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

Friday, 1 May 2020

Dear parents/guardians and students,

This letter is being issued to you on a very important date – 1 May – when many countries around the world celebrate Labour Day or International Workers’ Day. Given our current Covid-19 situation, I think it is appropriate to pause for a moment to reflect on some issues concerning workers in today’s world.

- We stand in admiration of all workers who continue to put themselves in harm’s way as their work brings them to the frontline of this health emergency. So many have fallen ill. Tragically, some have died. Their particular courage and commitment will enter our country’s history books as they emerge as our new heroes.
- We share a major concern as a country for all those workers who presently find themselves out of work as a consequence of the current emergency. 600,000 people have been put out of work in the past seven weeks alone in Ireland. Whilst the State can offer some short term assistance to help these workers, many will be anxious as to when, or if, they will return to work. On this special day for workers, I can only express my heartfelt hope that we will continue to see light at the end of this long tunnel and that their worst fears will be allayed as the country returns to a “new normal” thereby opening up more places of work, albeit on a very gradual basis.
- Great credit is also due to the thousands of workers, many of whom are now based at home and embracing new technologies, as they work to keep the country functioning in so many important ways – civil and public servants, office workers, manufacturing workers, service providers, essential retailers, stay at home parents and farmers, to name but some. The generosity with which so many of them have agreed to new work practices and longer hours in the national interest is truly inspiring.

- And what can we say about all those citizens who, with worries of their own, have gone out of their way to work in a voluntary capacity to support those in most need in our society? Uplifting!
- In time to come, we will reflect on the totality of this emergency with great sadness. However, we will also see evidence of a very healthy re-prioritising in our country. We recognise more than ever the importance of all workers and our dependence on each other. Having spent the last twelve years rectifying an economy, we have at last come to see that we live, first and foremost, in a society where the care and wellbeing of people, not the relentless pursuit of profit, should matter most.

And so, on International Workers' Day, let us celebrate the value and worth of all workers and express the hope that every possible measure will be used to facilitate the return to work of so many of our citizens who wish to play their full part in Irish society.



I wish now to provide you with important information across a range of issues, as follows:

<b>1. Assessments and Reporting of Students' Work – Summer 2020</b>
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The approach outlined below has been approved by the Board of Management following a process of consultation with teachers and students and in accordance with Department of Education and Skills (DES) decisions.

**1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years students**

Teachers will provide a comment and grade in each subject. It is hoped that comments will be formative in nature, highlighting areas of strength and offering positive suggestions for improvement, where applicable. No grade will be provided, however, in respect of Wellbeing-

linked subjects (including PE) or non-exam Religion. These comments and grades will be based on continuous assessment of the student's work throughout the year.

To ensure equity, greater weighting will be given to work that was completed by students in advance of the closure of schools on 12 March 2020. Cognisance may be given to work completed after that date, but teachers will have regard to the impact that school closure will have had on students' ability to engage with further learning after 12 March 2020 and their ability to complete any additional assessment tasks. For example, some students may have been unable to undertake any additional assessment tasks because of issues arising from the Covid-19 crisis. In such circumstances, the assessment of the students' learning, and the report of their achievement issued by the school, may be based solely on work completed prior to 12 March 2020.

School reports will be posted to families in early June and placed on Eportal.

### **TY students**

In line with normal practice, no summer report will be issued to TY students. Instead, the TY Co-ordinators will, in consultation with teachers, prepare Certificates of Achievement for presentation to students at a graduation ceremony to be held in the school in September, subject to public health regulations in place at that time.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> year students**

There will be three elements to reporting on the achievements of 3<sup>rd</sup> year students, as follows:

#### **One**

A school report will be prepared in respect of the 10 examination subjects taken by each student. Teachers will provide an overall comment and grade that will be reflective of the student's work, commitment and achievement over the course of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years.

As set out in relation to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years above, greater weighting will be given to work completed prior to 12 March.

School reports will be posted to families in early June and placed on Eportal.

#### **Two**

DES will issue a Certificate of Completion to verify that students have completed three years of Junior Cycle education in their respective subjects. These certificates will be forwarded to families upon receipt of same by the school.

#### **Three**

In September, the school will prepare and present students with a Loreto, Wexford Junior Cycle Certificate setting out the grades awarded in May, the descriptors in respect of completed CBAs and a statement of other areas of learning completed by students in the course of their three year Junior Cycle.

As a result of these three measures, a line will be drawn under Junior Cycle on 29 May for both students and teachers.

## **Special Education Needs (SEN) Students**

Reports in respect of SEN students will be posted home as normal in early June.

### **2. Junior and Leaving Cycle / Certificate Examination Fees**

Junior Cycle fees: Students will not be required to pay an examination fee to the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in relation to the 2020 Junior Cycle. The SEC will be issuing a refund to all students who have already paid. There is no need to contact the SEC as refunds will be made automatically.

Leaving Certificate fees: The closing date for payment of the Leaving Cert. examination fee has been extended until after the issuing of results in the autumn.

The SEC will provide further details to the school in the coming days.

### **3. Student Engagement in Teaching and Learning**

All students are strongly recommended to engage as fully as possible in remote teaching and learning with their teachers until 29 May. Whilst the school recognises and accepts the many possible obstacles to this in the current situation, I am urging as high a level of engagement as possible so that students will be in a good position to resume their studies when schools eventually re-open.

I seek the co-operation and encouragement of parents/guardians in this matter also. Please check in with your daughter on a regular basis and urge her to do her best across all subjects.

I appeal to TY students to use all their creativity in the coming weeks to embrace the wonderful “Quarantine Challenge” that has been issued to them by Ms. Zimmermann and to work with Mr. Kavanagh in performing a remote song at the virtual graduation that is planned for Tuesday, 26 May.

Should any assistance be required in facilitating this engagement please feel free to email either Ms. O’ Reilly or Mr. McGinnity (Deputy Principals) at [deputyoreilly@loretowexford.com](mailto:deputyoreilly@loretowexford.com) or [deputymcginnity@loretowexford.com](mailto:deputymcginnity@loretowexford.com)

### **4. Class Assemblies**

I am using MS Teams to hold remote assemblies with every class group in the school.

By the close of business today, I will have spoken directly to all students who accepted the invitation to attend their assembly in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> years. Over the coming three weeks I shall speak to students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years.

I am most grateful to co-ordinating teachers who scheduled and joined the 4<sup>th</sup> year assemblies and to Mr. McGinnity who has also been in attendance throughout.

These assemblies have been most beneficial in terms of briefing students on relevant issues in their class groups as well as in facilitating questions and feedback from them.

### **5. Difficulties with access to IT devices**

In accordance with the recently announced government scheme, the school wishes to assist those students who are unable to properly engage in teaching and learning due to an absence or shortage of IT devices in their homes. The scope of the scheme is limited and priority will be given to students in 6<sup>th</sup> year who are preparing for Leaving Certificate examinations over the summer.

To apply to avail of this scheme, students are asked to email Mr. McGinnity (Deputy Principal) before 09.00 on Thursday, 7 May setting out the reasons for their application. He should also be contacted if any unforeseen IT difficulties arise after this date.

Any devices given to students under this scheme will be on a loan basis and must be returned in perfect working order to Mr. McGinnity by a date agreed with him.

### **6. OneNote – information for 6<sup>th</sup> year students**

I wish to advise all 6<sup>th</sup> year students that material in OneNote will continue to be available until the conclusion of the Leaving Certificate examinations.

### **7. School Administration**

Throughout the period of enforced closure, all administrative staff continue to work from home and may be contacted by email. Details of email addresses are to be found on [www.loretowexford.com](http://www.loretowexford.com)

Booklists for 2020/2021 will be placed on the website on Friday, 8 May along with details of the Free Books Scheme. It will not be possible to hold the annual second-hand book sale in June.

As ever, please feel free to contact me at [principal@loretowexford.com](mailto:principal@loretowexford.com) if I can be of any assistance.

As is clear to us all, we are living through unprecedented and extremely difficult times. However, despair is not a solution. We have to follow the expert advice that seems to have got us through this crisis without the chaotic scenes that were feared in our hospitals. As the day lengthens in small incremental steps from the darkness of 22 December to the brightness of 21 June and as leaves now populate the once-bare trees, so we hold on to the hope that things will eventually come right for us too – hope for anti-viral drugs, a vaccine, the togetherness and resilience of our people, the wisdom of our experts and leaders and the life and love that lie within us all. The picture below sums it up well.



Wishing you all a very pleasant bank holiday weekend,

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,  
Principal.