



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

Friday, 12 February 2021

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I hope this letter finds you safe and well.

I wish to mention the following points to you in this week's letter:

1. Great credit is due to our students and staff for their commitment to remote teaching and learning (RTL) since we returned to school on 11 January. RTL places great demands on everyone. It can never replace the real essence of teaching and learning which only comes about through person to person contact in the classroom. That said, it has been our only option over the past five weeks and I once again salute everyone for rising so well to the many challenges it presented.
2. We have conducted surveys of students and staff this week relating to their experiences of RTL. Results of the surveys have been emailed to all students by year group. I thank Ms. Foley for her great work in this regard. We are now examining measures that could be introduced in a further effort to enhance the RTL experience for both staff and students. Details will be provided next week.
3. We have been waiting for the past fortnight for Government announcements in relation to the phased re-opening of schools and arrangements for the 2021 State examinations. It now appears that substantive announcements will be made next week. Should these materialise, I shall keep you informed by means of a further letter to families, emails to students and Teams assemblies with particular year groups, most notably 3rd and 6th years. Accordingly, all students are asked to keep a close eye on their Loreto emails over the mid-term.
4. The following is the current situation concerning mock examinations:

- a. In my letter to families dated 22 January 2021, dates were set for the commencement of Junior and Leaving Certificate (JC and LC) mock examinations. These dates were based on students being back in school on and from Monday, 22 February 2021. It is now clear that this target date will not be met.
 - b. Accordingly, I wish to confirm that mock examinations will not be held as previously advised i.e. LC beginning on Thursday, 25 February and JC starting on Monday, 8 March. When students return to school on a phased basis after mid-term the focus for all year groups will be on classroom teaching.
 - c. Arrangements for mock examinations will now be decided and communicated to students and families when Government decisions regarding school re-opening and State examinations are announced next week.
 - d. LC students are reminded that the sitting of mock examinations is entirely optional as the school does not want to add to the stress that many are already feeling. To maximise class contact time after mid-term, we are giving preliminary consideration to running LC mock examinations during the Easter holidays.
 - e. Mock examinations will only be held for 3rd year students if JC examinations proceed as originally scheduled in June.
5. Classes will finish this afternoon for the mid-term break and will resume on Monday, 22 February at 08.50. Hopefully, we will only be on RTL for a short while and a full return to school on a phased basis will soon be possible. Our superb new building feels eerily quiet without the daily interactions between staff and students. In the meantime, I wish everyone an enjoyable and safe mid-term break and I encourage students to take a complete break from their studies as the demands made of them in recent weeks have been considerable.
6. The school office will be open each weekday during mid-term from 08.30 to 13.00.

Please feel free to email me with any query/comment on any of the above points –
principal@loretowexford.com

A further letter to families will be issued next Friday or earlier if Government decisions are announced.

Kind regards,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.