24th April 2020

Good morning Parents/Guardians,
I hope that this message finds you safe and well. Before I begin I want to remember those families in our school community have lost loved ones in very difficult circumstances over the past few weeks and who are in a lonely place today. Our prayers and our thoughts are with you.
As the school holidays are over and the summer term begins I am sure you are concerned about where things are going. I have no doubt in listening to media reports that you are aware that for the 1st, 2nd and 5th years, apart from the extension in the lockdown, little has changed for your daughter since before the holidays. The teachers are all ready to start remote teaching again and we would ask that your daughter makes herself ready to start working with them.
Of course, the 6th and 3rd years have received very significant news in relation to the exams and we will keep a very close eye on how things progress here and as soon as we know anything new we will let you know.  Despite the cancellation of the Junior Cycle exams in June we will keep working towards assessment in September so the teachers will be working with them over the next few weeks. With regard to the Leaving Cert, we will take it at present that there will be an exam at some stage over the next few months and, despite the uncertainty, we would ask that she continue to engage with her teachers as tuition will proceed. As soon as we have clarification on the practicals we will be in touch.
We are all very aware that this is a very challenging time for all, particularly exam classes and that it is demanding to work at home, without the personal interaction of the classroom setting. We know that many of you may have trouble with laptops and the internet and all sorts of demands with work and family life.  We are very aware of the challenges here. For the moment it’s a matter of working our way through it all as best we can. Encourage your daughter to keep in touch with her teachers and let them know if she has challenges. It is really important that she engages with her work.  Education is such an incremental process it is really important that she engages.   Communication is key.
The school will keep in touch throughout the term with updates on any changes or developments.  In the meantime, we wish you and your families all the very best as you face all the daily challenges posed by these times.
Kind regards,
Ann Marie Mc Donough

23rd April 2020

Dear Parent/Guardians and Students,
We hope that this correspondence finds you and your families well and coping in these difficult times. There is no doubt that it is challenging for all.  As we move along through week two of distance learning and teaching we would hope that some sort of regular routine is evolving in the students’ way of doing things and that new methods are becoming established in the learning pattern as we all adapt to doing things differently.
We are aware that while some students may be adapting easily to the new and changed way of learning that it may be a struggle for others. With this in mind the Student Support team have set up a Google classroom for all students to support and help in the area of mental health and wellbeing. The teachers are open too, to supporting and helping, as they are in the regular classroom. We are all aware that it can be a challenge for all involved. All the textbook publishing companies have made their books available for free online. This may be of some help.
The Minister of Education has confirmed that schools will not be reopening in the short term. He is committed to working out a plan for the state exams and said that if at all possible they will take place this year, within the normal time frame. We will be kept updated as the weeks progress but for the moment we will assume that they will go ahead. The link below will bring you to a list of frequently asked questions in relation to the cancellation of the orals and the practicals.  This may help to answer some queries and allay concerns about the grading and the fairness of the move to cancel both.
The second link below is a statement from President Higgins encouraging and motivating all to practice physical distancing and appropriate social behaviour in the face of the difficulties presenting at the moment and asks us to rise to the challenge of responsible citizenship.
Parents and Guardians we would ask that you encourage your daughter to do as is asked of her for the benefit of others and students we ask that you take responsibility for your own actions. Having said this, we have little doubt, studetns, that judging from your behaviour when at school, you are acutely aware of the situation and are doing your very best to comply.
We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best in these difficult times and to thank you for your continued support and cooperation.
We will continue to keep in touch as the weeks progress.
Kind regards,
Ann Marie Mc Donough
Geraldine Barnett            Rachel Gallen               Chris Garvey

<https://president.ie/en/media-library/news-releases/statement-from-president-of-ireland->following-his-signature-of-the-health-preservation-and-protection-and-other-emergency-measures-in-the-public-interest-bill-2020

[https://www.examinations.ie/misc-doc/BI-S](https://www.examinations.ie/misc-doc/BI-SE-67826275.pdf)

1st April 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Please find attached a link below from the Department of Education which is

*A Guide for Parents/Guardians on supporting children and young people with daily routines while schools are closed.*

<https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents-supporting-children.pdf>

It may be of some help to you in these very challenging times for all.

Having read this document you will note that balance, support, and engagement are three central themes throughout.

In consultation with the staff, we note that some students are not engaging with the online activities and teaching provided by their teachers.  We would encourage you to check in with your daughter regularly to see how she is progressing and support her in her engagement.  Having said this we are acutely aware that there is a myriad of challenges you face in this process. These may include access to laptops and digital technology and indeed the internet. Limited space or crowded houses with so many at home at the same time can be a difficulty for many families.  For this reason, we are hesitant to put pressure on you or your daughter.  We will supply the teaching and advise that you, knowing your own circumstances, use your judgment to check that she is responding to the best of her ability and as far as your circumstances allow.

If your daughter is ill or, due to some family circumstances, she is unable to engage you can contact the school office email *office@loretobalbriggan.ie* to inform us of the same and we can let her teachers and her Year Head know.

We will be in communication with your daughter, and indeed with you, before finishing up for the holidays on Friday afternoon.

In the meantime, stay well and take care.
Kind regards,
Ann Maire Mc Donough
Geraldine Barnett                      Rachel Gallen Chris Garvey

3RD April 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We want to take this opportunity to make contact with you before the school closes for the Easter holidays today at 4 pm.  While the teachers and students may have been in their homes I have no doubt that most of you are aware of the unstinting and steady work that has continued over the past three weeks. We would like to thank the teachers for their interest in your daughter's welfare and continued learning.  It is of great concern to them and they are constantly in touch with us and with each other in their efforts to provide your daughter with the optimum online learning experience. We appreciate your ongoing support at home as you facilitate their learning. We are aware that this is a challenge when so many of you have other demands on your time and energies.

I am sure you have heard that the Government hopes to ensure that the Leaving and Junior state exams will go ahead.  This provides great clarity for 6th and 3rd-year students and helps them to focus in these uncertain times.  It is vital that exam classes take a break and a rest over the holidays but, as would be normal, they also need to take the opportunity to revise and study. The mock reports were posted today and should be available through the Compass portal.  There are some technical difficulties presenting with the third year reports which Compass hopes to rectify within the next few hours.

Even in this time of social and physical distancing, it is so important that your daughter takes care of her physical and mental wellbeing.  As you so well know, fresh air and exercise, good sleep and healthy food all contribute to helping her feel good about herself and staying positive in these times which are challenging in their young lives.

We want to wish you and your loved ones all the best for a peaceful and happy Easter and some sort of a break from the pressure of ensuring that online learning continues. We will keep you informed through the Compass portal and via email of any further relevant developments. In the meantime we hope that the two weeks will bring some respite during this ongoing difficult situation.

Kind regards,

Ann Marie Mc Donough

19th March 2020

Please click on the link below for full information regarding the cancellation of this year's oral and practical exams for Junior and Leaving Certificate students.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/PR20-03-19.html>

19th March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian

All Leaving Cert students studying languages will receive marks of 100% in lieu of oral assessments that were due to be held in Irish and modern European languages.

The measure has been announced by Minister for Education Joe McHugh.

Oral exams were due to begin on 23 March but have now been cancelled.

The oral assessment is worth 40% of overall marks in irish, and 25% in modern European languages.

The deadline for submission of practical and coursework for the leaving cert has been extended to 15 May.

No decision has yet been made in relation to when schools might reopen, or on June's leaving certificate examinations.

22nd March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,
After what has been a most unusual weekend, today is really the first in our temporarily changed way of doing things.
All staff are working on communicating remotely with your daughters. Please bear with them, as they are facing their own challenges and they are all doing their utmost to ensure that learning and teaching continue.
We have written to your daughter and asked that she is disciplined and keeps to a good routine of work and study – that she gets out of bed early and finds a suitable place to study. We are very aware that some households have young children at home and have limited space and it, therefore, may prove challenging for you and for your daughter. All you can do is support her to the best of your ability in her learning in order to ensure that she does not fall behind.
In our communication with your daughter, we have encouraged her to practice social distancing and understand her civic duty at this time and that this will require self-discipline on your daughter’s part. We will keep you updated on any changes as the situation develops and hope that you and your families are keeping well and coping at what is undoubtedly a challenging time for all.
Kind regards,
Ann Marie Mc Donough
Geraldine Barnett                   Rachel Gallen Chris Garvey

18th March 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We would like to direct your attention to updated guidance issued today on talking to children and young people about Covid-19.

You can access and download this guidance in both Irish and English from the Department of Education and Skills website below under the heading ‘Talking to children and young people about Covid-19’.

[www.education.ie/covid19](http://www.education.ie/covid19)

We would also like to direct your attention to a child-friendly interview that Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr Ronan Glynn did with RTÉ’s new2day programme last week. It may also be a useful resource when talking about Covid-19 with children and students.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/coronavirus/2020/0306/1120692-news2day-coronavirus/>

Many thanks,
Ann Marie Mc Donough