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**Message to the Parents of Coláiste Muire on the Covid 19 Crisis**

**18.03.2020**

Dear Parents of Coláiste Muire,

I am writing to reassure you that school business is continuing, although, not as we know it.

Our school has invested heavily in e-learning infrastructure, software and, most importantly, staff training. This investment in time and resources has been ongoing for the past 18 months. The e-learning platform we use is from Microsoft. It is called Office 365. It enables direct educational contact between your child and their teacher. It uses a unique email address- @colaistemuire.com - and a password. Every student of Coláiste Muire has experience in using this platform on their phone or tablet or home computer. The feature on Office 365 that teachers use most often is called ‘Teams’. This feature was used to augment homework and home learning. It is now your child’s main link to the teaching staff of Colaiste Muire

Your child’s Office 365 address and password are located in the school journal. I ask you all to login on your own device. Two people can be logged in at the same time. This is a way of ensuring your child is ‘attending school’ in a virtual capacity. I encourage you all to do this. Teachers and parents have always supported each other in Colaiste Muire. This new form of learning will require the same support.

**Open a browser – go to office.com , login using your child’s @colaistemuire email and password (see school journal). Ask your child to show you examples of work from Teams.**

We had a series of planning meetings in school last week. The general points that emerged were:

* 3rd and 6th year study plans have gone out on Teams. Collated summaries by year group to go up on the app on Wed 18th
* 1st 2nd and 5th study plans to go out on Teams by Wed 18th afternoon. Collated plans will be on the app on Thursday.
* Teachers will work to school hours, and work to the best of their technical ability
* 6th and 3rd years are a priority for detailed interaction with teachers on teams
* We keep in mind that some students may be minding smaller children
* Parents will be informed that they can login to their child’s 365 a/c and see what is going on. Letter on App, Website and SMS.
* The ICT committee demonstrated several familiar and several new ICT tools as a refresher for teachers

**In summary: overall study Plans can be viewed by year group on the App – more detailed student-teacher interactions will be on Teams**

From An Taoiseach’s speech last night I took two things which are relevant to us in the Colaiste Muire community:

·         This crisis will take months, not weeks,

·         There were no immediate plans to alter the SEC exams (he encouraged students to keep up with their studies, calling out LC students, in particular). This will challenge us all. We assume they will take place, unless we are told otherwise.

In addition, I request that you do not send any students to the school – the building is disinfected and locked.

It was announced on TV on Friday that the orals have been postponed – but I have yet to receive confirmation directly from the SEC. I will pass any information I receive to you ASAP. Long documents will be on the app.

As Pope Francis says, let us live this difficult moment “with the power of faith, the certainty of hope and the fervour of charity" towards one another.

Yours Sincerely,

Fergus O’Brien,

Principal