

COLÁISTE MUIRE

COBH

CO. CORK

P24 EW42



(021) 4813800

info@colaistemuire.com

colaistemuire.com

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Dear 6<sup>th</sup> Year Parents,

I very much look forward to your daughter or son returning to school on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>.

I wish to outline what the decision taken by the Cabinet on Tuesday means for you as a parent of a student in 6<sup>th</sup> Year.

*All of this year's LC class will receive a grade from their teacher, using evidence acquired over two years of schooling. This grade will be sent to the Dept. at the start of June. The grades will then be adjusted to fit a bell curve. A specialist company will be responsible for this stage. It has yet to be appointed by the Government. This grade is being referred to as 'an accredited grade'. Please remember that for teachers to give grades, they need evidence. Evidence comes from class exams, individual engagement with the teacher, and homework. The Dept. has stated that there will be robust procedures in place to counter canvassing of teachers.*

In parallel, your daughter or son will be asked to opt in, on a subject-by-subject basis, to sitting the LC Examination. This will be done online, via a Dept. or SEC website called a portal.

When results are issued in August, the higher of either the LC grade or the augmented grade will be awarded. If your son or daughter feels they can do better, or "up the ante", they now have a chance to do so from March 1<sup>st</sup>. Last year's class were stymied- they never got back in a classroom after March 12<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity.

*It is the school's position that your son or daughter should sit the LC in as many subjects as possible.*

From Monday, we will be following the same timetable, in the same rooms as before. The shorter lunchtime will still apply, so classes finish at 3.35pm. **Students have been sent a form to declare they are fit to return to school on Monday. They cannot attend without completing and returning this form. If over 18, they can sign this form themselves.**

Students may leave the campus at lunchtime, as a temporary measure. When all years return after Easter, students return to the previous arrangement i.e. remaining on campus for the school day.

Pre LC exams have been cancelled. We took into account the loss of tuition time coming up to coursework deadlines, orals etc., grade inflation (due to sharing of papers on social media) and a directive from the Dept. that Pre/Mocks are prohibited from being used as evidence in accredited grading (see below). You and well as your sons and daughters were informed of this just before the Mid-Term Break. I hope it gave them some respite. There will be short, class based, written examinations in March. These will not be of the same scale as the Pre Examinations. They will have 2 purposes – firstly to motivate your daughter or son to revise – secondly to augment the bank of evidence that will be used by the teacher to provide an accredited grade. You will get a report on VShare once corrected.

I will be calling to all LC classes on Monday myself in order to convey three points:

- **We are all obliged to mind our own health and the health of others. Schools are safe places. We have a collective responsibility to keep safe outside the school building - at break time, in the evenings, and at weekends. An uncontrolled gathering, contrary to HSE guidelines, e.g. a birthday celebration, could have health consequences and compromise someone's Leaving Certificate. There will be no later set of exams this year.**
- *I will be encouraging students to sit as many of their subjects in the Leaving Certificate Examinations as possible. Accredited grading is the new calculated grading –however we do not know how the Dept. of Education will process the teacher's grade after submission. Your daughter or son should grab every chance to attain the grade they deserve.*
- **Coursework deadlines across all subjects have been extended, there is no need to panic. Orals will conducted over Easter. They will be recorded by teachers, but will be marked by the SEC.**

Its early days, but I believe that this is a well thought out solution for a very particular national situation. It will only work if we all do our part and prevent another wave of infection.

Yours Sincerely,



## **Addendum: the Minister has issued the following information on Leaving Certificate 2021**

1. Written Leaving Certificate examinations will be put in place, which will –

- Operate in accordance with the normal timetables, commencing June 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Be conducted subject to public health advice and providing, as far as possible, access to the examinations for very high-risk students, and,
- Be supported by clear information and guidance to students and schools

2. Additional assessment components, such as orals, practical performance tests and coursework will be put in place, subject to public health advice, with components in certain subjects not operating for public health reasons. Schools will locally source teachers to administer some of the tests, but not assessing their own students. Assessment will be arranged by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

3. An Accredited Grades system, to be operated by the SEC, will be available whereby Leaving Certificate candidates can opt to have grades in some or all of their subjects (to be known as “SEC Accredited Grades”) issued to them at the same time as the examination results.

4. The elements of the SEC Accredited Grades system will include the following:

- The professional judgement of each of the candidate’s teachers which will not be subject to appeal
- A form of in-school alignment to ensure fairness amongst candidates at school level
- Approval by the school principal of the estimated subject scores
- A process of standardisation at national level to ensure as much fairness as possible amongst this year’s candidates
- The SEC Accredited Grade and examinations outcomes will have regard to the pattern of results in 2020 and previously, with more details of the process to be determined by the Minister having regard to advice from the SEC
- A right for students to appeal in respect of their Accredited Grade which will comprise a process review focused on examining possible errors in the transmission and processing of student data, and,
- Provision as far as practicable for out-of-school learners or students studying one or more subjects outside school to apply to receive Accredited Grades through the devising of an appropriate and practicable process

7. The following indicative dates have been provided by the Department of Education:

- May 14<sup>th</sup> – Closing date for collection of evidence of learning from 6<sup>th</sup> year student for the purpose of establishing an estimated mark. Classes finish for LC on this date.
- May 28<sup>th</sup> – Schools will close for all students to allow the final week for completion of alignment process and data entry related to SEC Accredited Grades by schools.

- June 4<sup>th</sup> – Closing date for schools to enter/return all data from the school to the SEC relating to SEC Accredited Grades.
- June 9<sup>th</sup> – Written Leaving Certificate examinations to commence in schools.

8. The SEC will issue revised dates for submission of Leaving Certificate course work and the scheduling/arrangements.