



Dear Parents/Guardians/Students,

I hope that you are all keeping well and that the nice weather over the Easter break helped to pick up your spirits.

In many ways, much has changed since our last communication on April 3rd – the biggest changes, of course, being those related to the State Examinations.

We start our new term today, by continuing as we left off and indeed developing our Remote Teaching and Learning as we go. The next few weeks are important ones for the whole school community. I remind students that work covered in these weeks will not be redone in the new school year – there simply will not be the time to do so. Therefore, it is vitally important that you all stay with us until the end of May, when the Summer Term and indeed the school year, draws to a close.

State Examinations.

As you know, there was an announcement on April 10th around the State Examinations for 2020. The June examinations for the **Junior Cert** have been cancelled and will be replaced by school-based exams and assessments held early in the new school year. At the moment, the plan is that these exams will be set by the State Examinations Commission and administered by the schools. When the DES release more information, we will, of course, pass that on to you.

We also know that there is probably a huge temptation to take your foot off the pedal, but that is absolutely not the right thing to do!!

It is vital that all third years continue to engage with their schoolwork for the coming term. Please be aware that a thorough knowledge of the Junior cycle curriculum forms the basis of senior cycle and there is still work to be done. Also, the remaining CBA's need to be completed by the end of May and that there will be exams in September. Remember as a condition of entry to TY we expect that students can work on their own initiative, take responsibility for their own learning and can be trusted to get on with their assigned work. Everyone needs to stay focused and stay on track. We would ask all students to check in with their teachers when required to do so on MS 365 so they can prepare properly for the last term of the year.

Please note that there has not been any announcement, so far, around Junior Cert fees that have been paid.

The **Leaving Cert** is now postponed until late July early August. The logistics of how this will be done, will be made known in due course. I do realise that this is a blow to you, our Leaving Cert students, and right at this moment, the end of July seems a very long way away. Do remember however, that all Leaving Certs are being affected in the same way. To date, any work that you have done will not be wasted. Your plans for the future can still be fulfilled, albeit under different circumstances. We will all be there to help you through and you will come through this. So many things seem impossible until they are done! Try to work away as normal for the rest of the Term and things will unfold gradually.



Remaining weeks of the academic year 2019-20

While we live in a rapidly changing world and it is hard to predict where things will be, even in a week's time, I want to give you some idea of what the remainder of the academic year should look like. As you know, schools are to remain closed until further notice:

- All 1st to 5th Years will work as normal until 29th May. Currently, it appears that most, if not all, of that time will take the form of Remote Teaching and Learning. When and if the schools reopen, is not a decision for us to make.
- 1st to 5th Years will begin their Summer holiday on Friday 29th May.
- It appears that the first couple of weeks of June will be a holiday space for all 6th Year/ Leaving Cert Applied students and the Teachers.
- From mid-June to mid-July, Teachers are not being asked to conduct classes remotely as they are doing now, but will be available to any 6th Year/Leaving Cert Applied student who wishes to engage with them for clarification of items on the syllabus and support in general.
- The current plan proposes that schools will open for a two week period in mid-July so that there can be some contact between 6th Year/Leaving Cert Applied students. Further detail around how this will be done, will undoubtedly be published by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the State Examinations Commission (SEC) in due course.
- In late July/early August, the plan is that the 6th Years and Leaving Cert Applied students will sit their exams.
- The DES has announced that some form of assessment will take place for 3rd Year students after this time. No details have been announced around this yet.

As we know, things change quickly to ensure that there is full compliance with Public Health decisions and/or restrictions. As promised before, we will let you have the official information, once it has been supplied to us. Please be careful around social media myth and speculation.

Engagement of Students with work:

While we all acknowledge that remote Teaching and Learning is not easy, it is however, all that is available to us at this time. Teachers will continue to engage, many moving to live classes in the new Term. **It is vitally important that ever student engages with the work being covered.** This work will not receive the same attention again.

I would ask Parents/ Guardians to check in on your sons/daughters to ensure that work is being done. If there are technical issues, please let us know on info@balcs.ie or contact the relevant Year Head. Students not engaging will be followed up on by their Year Heads and the Deputy Principals, Ms Forde and Mr O'Sullivan.

**Code of Behaviour:**

One of the main pillars of our Code of Behaviour is respect ie respect for peers and teachers. I would remind all students that, even in this current remote Teaching and Learning environment, your interactions with your Teachers must be respectful at all times.

School Building:

As per instruction by the Government, as and from Monday 30th March, the actual school building is closed to the school community. The only access is for maintenance Staff until further notice.

We will continue to keep in touch by email and by text. If at any time you want to contact us, please feel free to do so on info@balcs.ie

While the phrase “much done, more to do”, describes our school situation at the moment, at the end of it all, the most important thing that you all stay healthy and well.

Every good wish,

Kathleen Lowney