



Colaiste Bríde

Templeshannon, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.

12th February 2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you and your families are safe and well.

We have now completed five weeks of remote learning and have reached the midterm break. A number of weeks ago we held an online liturgy with our students to celebrate the feast day of our school's patron saint, St. Brigid. As you know the 1st of February also marks the beginning of spring and although we are still feeling the icy grip of winter there are small but significant signs that the season of growth has begun. As the evenings begin to get longer, we can look forward with hope for brighter times in the weeks and months ahead. My biggest hope for spring and the renewal of life that the season brings is the renewal of life in our school. Our students are the beating heart of our school and I am really looking forward to their return to our school. It is all of the many simple interactions that I am looking forward to; students chatting with their friends, the bustle on the corridor, the enthusiasm, the noise, the laughter, the fun, the positivity, interactions that I often take for granted but that I can appreciate now more than ever.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate your daughters on their engagement in remote learning over the past few weeks. Remote learning cannot replace the person to person teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom, however it has allowed meaningful learning to continue over the past five weeks. Nonetheless, it has been a very challenging time for all students, but it must be acknowledged that they have for the most part coped extremely well to the difficulties of learning at home. In my daily interactions with your daughter's teachers, they have been fulsome in their praise of the engagement of students up to this point. The midterm break is an opportunity for students to sign out of Teams, switch off their devices and take a very well-deserved break.

At this time, I wish to bring the following to your attention:



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We have been waiting for the past few weeks for Department of Education announcements regarding the re-opening of schools and arrangements for the 2021 State examinations. Speculation in the media indicates that the Government will make an announcement on these matters next week, and I sincerely hope that this will be the case. Should an official decision materialise, we shall contact you with the details.

As this time, it is expected that remote learning will continue after the midterm for the first week at the very least. Students will continue to follow their school timetable. This period of remote learning will come an end but until it does it is extremely important that all students reengage with their teachers after the midterm.

There will be no online classes scheduled on Thursday the 25th of February as the Department of Education has designated that day for a Junior Cycle online teacher workshop for our school along with other local schools.

It is still our hope to facilitate the scheduling of mock exams for both Leaving Certs and Junior Certs however, whenever students return to school the initial focus for exam year students will be on a return to classroom teaching. Any decisions by the school regarding scheduling mock examinations will not be made until the Government has communicated its plan regarding both the reopening of schools and the State exams.

The consultation phase of our school strategic plan is ongoing with workshops taking place this week with our student council, junior & senior students, parents, ancillary staff, and middle management teams. I wish to sincerely thank those parents who gave of their time and attended our online parents' consultation workshop yesterday evening. The purpose of the school strategic plan is to help to improve the overall quality of education within Coláiste Bríde and in particular to improve the learning outcomes and experiences for students over the coming years. For those parents who did not get to attend tis workshop there will be a further opportunity to provide feedback by completing an online anonymous survey which we will circulate in the coming days. The importance



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of the parents' consultation cannot be overstated, and I would encourage you to complete this survey so that we can capture your opinions on how to improve our school.

Finally, I know that you will join me in extending gratitude to your daughters' teachers. They have fully embraced remote learning opportunities and been magnificent in supporting their students in all aspects of their learning. And I would like to thank you, as parents, for your continued support and encouragement for the school and our staff. It is at difficult times like these that we witness the power of our united school community.

Take care of yourselves.

Yours sincerely,

Kiera O'Sullivan

Principal