



**OUR
LADY'S
SCHOOL**
TERENURE



24th April 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome back after the Easter break. We are entering the last term of what has proven to be a very different year. As we continue with our work in this term, I would again like to thank our teachers and other staff for their continued commitment in providing education and support in the most challenging circumstances. Remote teaching and learning have been a new endeavour for students, teachers and parents and it is a testament to all how quickly it has been embraced.

As teaching and learning continues to take place we all realise how much we miss the day to day aspects of our lives in schools. Our school thrives every day with laughter, communication, friendships and constant learning in the corridors and the extra- curricular space about teamwork, humanity and empathy. These aspects of school life are subtle but are a vital aspect of education in Our Lady's. For our students to reach their potential we know that they have to develop all aspects of themselves, academically, physically, spiritually and mentally. Our school offers so much more than academic excellence and it is clear during these unprecedented times how important all these aspects are. Our 4 pillars, Academic Excellence, Wellbeing, Ethos and House reflect the fact that our students develop in so many different ways in Our Lady's that are not measurable but profoundly important. We all miss the richness and variety of school life very much.

We are very conscious that in some of your family circles there have been bereavements and many families are worried about family members. Our thoughts and prayers are with the sick and bereaved.

As teachers re-engage with their classes they will be advising students about what to expect this term with the end goal of summer assessments only a few weeks away. We are again reminding students where possible to follow the school timetable each day. Teachers will use many platforms to achieve effective teaching and learning and will communicate directly with their classes. We will be reporting as usual at the end of this assessment period.

To help focus the students this term we have nominated week 5, May 17th to 22nd as Assessment Week and Week 6, May 25th- 29th the final school week as Feedback and Awards week.

Our 6th Year students are paramount in our minds throughout these changing times. We will help in any way possible to support them through this process. The Minister has now confirmed that the Leaving Cert exams will start on Wed July 29th and we hope more clarity will emerge over the coming weeks. It is important that the girls do not get drawn into all the speculation that is currently happening but focus on their studies as they work steadily towards the end of July.

We await further clarity from the Minister in relation to 3rd Year and the Junior Cycle examinations. The DES has asked all schools not to make any decisions about Junior Cycle assessments and the scheduling of the school based Junior Cycle early in the new year. We await clarification. 3rd Year parents will be sent a survey today to gauge their opinion on this important issue.

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We have had assemblies with year and class groups encouraging them to stay positive, pace themselves, take breaks, exercise, and stay connected to the community and friends. So far, they have done brilliantly and we need to keep the momentum going.

We understand how stressful this time of year can be for many students, but it will pass, our 6th Years will move on to further education and we will all be back in the school buildings a little fonder of it than before.

In the coming days and weeks, as the Government give clarity on plans for the Leaving Certificate and other educational decisions, I will communicate with you as soon as I receive information through official channels.

We are working hard to support our students through this difficult time. We have been delivering laptops to those who critically need them and giving extra support in many other ways.

We will continue to follow our school calendar where possible. There have been many remote firsts for Our Lady's over the past few weeks from staff meetings, assemblies, Assistant Principal and Care team meetings online. We will also maintain our weekly student and staff surveys so that we can react to the changing needs of our students.

Our Year Head and Care Team meetings continue, and the Form Tutors and Year Heads are checking in on their students regularly. The Guidance team also continues to work with students, offering check-ins and support where needed. The vast majority of the students have been working very hard during the past few weeks and we are really impressed with how they have taken to online learning as a student body.

We are regularly updating and adding new information to our website under the banner Covid-19 Contingency (<https://olschool.ie/documents-2/remotelarning/>). Please check this out regularly for the latest updates.

I wish all our students every success this term. The OLS community is a strong and supportive one and we will try to encourage our students as much as possible through this challenging time. We are here to help our students in whatever way we can. If there are difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will endeavour to do our best to support and assist you.

Yours sincerely

Principal

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