



24th February, 2021

Dear 6th Year Students and Parents,

We are delighted to welcome our 6th Years back to in-school learning from Monday 1st March. We fully appreciate how challenging these times have been for our 6th Years and we thank them for their patience whilst we awaited some clarity from the Department of Education. We previously sent links to all of the latest information on the changes to Leaving Cert 2021. We still await further guidance on many details, however, we are now in a position to give clarity on the process to be undertaken and the implementation of the Mock examinations.

Leaving Cert 2021

The class of 2021 have been given the option of sitting the Leaving Cert examinations in June 2021 **and/or** opting for States Examination Commission's Accredited Grades. As a school we would strongly encourage our 6th Year students to work steadily towards sitting the Leaving Cert exam. By sitting the Leaving Cert exam you will be giving yourself the very best chance to achieve your highest grade possible as you will be awarded the highest grade of either the examination or the Accredited Grade in each subject.

In terms of teaching and learning, classes will proceed as per normal with all teachers focusing on preparing students for the exams in June. Regardless of the option that each student will take around estimated grades and doing the Leaving Cert exam, they will all follow the same path of classwork, homework and study until the end of the year. The focus remains to cover the course and to revise the material that they have done since 5th Year. In these essentials the year does not differ from any other.

Estimated Marks/ Accredited Grades

The process of teachers providing estimated marks for each student in their classes will be based on 5th & 6th Year work and will be subject to a school alignment process. We still await clarification on the details of this process.

Teachers' estimated marks will be issued to the States Examination Commission (SEC), following an alignment process within the school, where they will undergo a national standardisation process. Please note that this estimated mark is prohibited from being shared with students.

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As a school the estimated marks that we submit will be subject to the new algorithm that will be devised for Leaving Cert 2021. After this national standardisation process, students will receive the best of their Accredited Grades (the result after the State Exams Commission has standardised all schools' estimated marks) and Leaving Cert grades in August. We are fully aware that grades submitted by the school may be impacted by the standardisation process and this is another reason why we would strongly advise our students to sit the Leaving Cert exams to ensure that if negatively impacted in the standardisation process they have a choice of grades.

Mock Exams

Mock exams will take place for the 6th Years starting on Thursday 4th March. The timetable has previously been issued to our students. **Please note that schools will not be using Mock grades for the process of estimating marks for the Accredited Grades.** This will allow students to sit their exams (which will be marked externally) and give them a clear picture of the work needed to improve their grades for June without the additional pressure of their grade being used for estimated marks. These exams are an essential part of preparation for the June exams and offer students a valuable opportunity to assess their progress, time manage their questions and see what improvements that they need to make.

Oral exams, coursework and practical components

Accredited grades will not include marks from orals, practicals and coursework.

Leaving Certificate exams will include marks from orals, practicals and coursework.

Oral exams will provisionally be scheduled during the Easter holidays. We are awaiting further guidelines on the scheduling of these exams. The exams will then be forwarded to the SEC for grading.

Indicative Dates

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

- May 14th – Closing date for collection of evidence of learning from 6th Year students for the purpose of establishing an estimated mark.
- May 28th – Schools will close for all students to allow the final week for completion of the alignment process and data entry related to SEC Accredited Grades by schools.
- June 4th – Closing date for schools to enter/return all data from the school to the SEC relating to SEC Accredited Grades.
- June 9th – Written Leaving Certificate examinations to commence in schools.

6th Year Assembly

We will hold an assembly on **Thursday 25th February** for 6th Year students at **9am** to give an overview of the whole process and to answer any questions.

Parents and 6th Years are invited to email remotelearning@olschool.ie before 8.30am on Thursday morning with your questions so we can compile these beforehand.

We appreciate that all of the changes to the Leaving Cert 2021 can be confusing. We encourage our students to embrace these changes and take them as additional opportunities to achieve their highest grade.

Please reach out if you need additional help and support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. J. Kelly', written over a horizontal blue line.

Principal