



12th February, 2021

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s),

It really is hard to believe that we have completed five weeks of online teaching and learning since schools closed in January. As always our school community has adapted positively to the change to remote teaching and learning. This has been a challenging time for every family in our community. You have all been juggling work commitments with managing students and their learning. For some that means home schooling for primary students, for others university students all sharing a table with the same Wi-Fi connection and others minding elderly relatives. These challenges also apply to our school staff.

I want to thank you for working with us so positively to ensure that our students continued to be supported in their learning. The extensive school supports are available online to assist those struggling to adapt to remote learning and we encourage your daughter to avail of them if needed. We have lent out over 90 chrome books and if your daughter can only access a phone for remote learning please contact us to arrange a loan agreement to be signed for a chrome book.

A few factors have contributed to the success of this phase of remote learning which included the early routine of students being present at their desks for a 8.30am roll call and also students rigorously following their school timetable. The study skills drop in clinic every Wednesday after school has assisted many students to find ways to study effectively and to create clear boundaries between online school work and home time.

We are all missing many aspects of school life, including camaraderie and social interaction and we are hopeful that normal school life will resume soon. The national conversation about back to school indicates that we will have more firm news shortly from the Department of Education.

### **Assessments for 1st, 2nd and 5th Years**

These year groups have been notified of the 2 week assessment window that will open on February 22nd to replace the traditional House exams. This assessment period will be low key and there is no need for these year groups to engage in extra study over the mid term break.

### **State Examination students 3rd & 6th Year**

We urge our Leaving Certificate students to continue to steadily prepare for their Leaving Certificate exams. During the mid term break they have all been advised to have a 'digital detox' for some of the week. We want to particularly commend these students for their hard

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work and dedication. We understand the frustrations associated with a lack of information regarding the examinations. We have given our 6th Years provisional dates for their in school mock exams. They will be given time in school with their teachers before the exams to allow them to reconnect with their classroom learning and their peers.

We have moved the 3rd Year mock exams to the week before the Easter holidays to allow our 3rd Years to have a good rest and break over the mid term break. It is important that all students try to ignore the speculation around the State Examinations and concentrate on and work towards the assessments that will take place in the summer term.

#### **4th Year**

4th Years completed their TY exams before Christmas and demonstrated the excellent progress that has been made in their learning. We recently held our Care week and Work Experience weeks remotely for our Transition Year group. The TYs are to be commended on their excellent engagement with the programme. I would like to thank the 4th Year team who worked relentlessly to organise this engaging and enriching 2 weeks' remote programme.

#### **Student Council Remote Friday Fundraiser**

Well done to our student council who organised a virtual break time fundraiser for Breast Cancer Ireland raising over €1,300. This is another fine example of the student voice in OLS and the strong sense of social responsibility in the student body.

Over the mid term break we encourage all students to have a digital detox and get out in the fresh air as much as possible. In spite of the weather, getting outside and exercising are crucial, as is healthy eating. Your daughter should maintain virtual contact with friends as much as possible whilst avoiding meeting in person. This is particularly important if we want Covid cases to continue to decline allowing us to reopen.

We wish to commend our student body for their continued positivity, resilience and for their high levels of active engagement in remote learning this term. It really makes everything much easier for the whole school community.

We wish to thank our staff for their unwavering work this term despite their many challenges and for their continued flexibility in adapting to student needs.

I wish you and your family a safe and healthy mid term break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marguerite Gorby', written over a horizontal line.

Marguerite Gorby  
Principal