



Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí

Seskin

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Co. Cork.

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29th April 2020

I hope you and your family are keeping safe and well.

You will be aware by now that the Minister for Education announced on the 10th April that the Leaving Certificate Examinations for 2020 are provisionally scheduled to commence on Wed 29th July and that the timetable for the exams is due to be published at the start of June. Project work and coursework in a range of subjects and practical/day exams in further subjects are also due to be rescheduled for the July/August period. While the announcement brings a certain clarity to the current thinking and planning of the Department and the State Examinations Commission (*SEC*), I fully appreciate that it is far from an ideal proposal and possibly raises more questions than it provides answers. Understandably, prolonging the commencement of the running of the exams in many ways only adds to the prevailing sense of worry, anxiety and frustration amongst the LC student cohort and their parents. While the Minister's announcement provides a degree of clarity it does not provide what students yearn for, certainty and guarantees. Unfortunately and regrettably, this is something which cannot be provided by anyone in the current Covid-19 public health emergency. I would remind you that the press release from the Minister/*SEC* states that, "at all stages, the health and safety of candidates, examination superintendents, school staff and others involved in the delivery of the examinations system will be at the forefront of the *SEC's* approach.....The *SEC* will continue to act in accordance with advice from Government and public health authorities in relation to this evolving public health emergency".

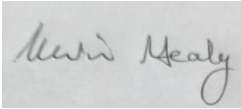
In the above context, it is evident that whatever happens in relation to schools re-opening and the running of the State exams will depend on how the country is managing the public health emergency at any given time. I therefore don't think it is helpful or of any benefit to speculate too much on when/if schools might re-open nor to dwell too long on the plans for the running of the exams in July/August. There is simply too much outside of our control. This uncertainty over the future can be daunting, stressful and, indeed, overwhelming for some. We can only control what is under our control. So, as we commence the last term and work towards the end of the academic year, I want to urge and encourage you, the LC students, not to give up, to lift your spirits, to 'go again' and to assure you that we are here to support you as best we can along the way. You are not alone, your teachers, parents and friends will help and support you to get through this. In the first instance, I am urging you to reengage with teachers through the various online platforms that are being utilised to promote distance learning. I appeal to stay focused on your studies and motivated to do your best. You need to concentrate on what you can control - having a routine or structure to your day, to work on your study/revision, your exam questions and to give time and care to other fundamentals of staying well such as having adequate sleep, nutrition/hydration, exercise/relaxation and staying connected to teachers, friends and parents.

For you the parents, you are only too familiar with the stress and anxiety of sitting for LC exams in 'normal'

circumstances so I am sure you empathise like we do with the plight of our LCs in these unprecedented circumstances. I am sure you are already doing your utmost to support and encourage them and to keep them positive. It is important to monitor their communication and engagement with teachers and to help keep them motivated and focused on their studies as we all work together to advise and guide them on this journey through uncharted territory.

For now, I want to extend best wishes to you all and hope that you are staying safe and well in every sense of the phrase. I will keep you informed of any updates that arise due to changing circumstances

Take care and stay safe,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin Healy".

Kevin Healy, Principal