



Coláiste Pobail Naomh Eoin Bosco, Cill an Dísirt St. John Bosco Community College, Kildysart

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RETURN TO REMOTE LEARNING PROTOCOL Jan 11th

Dear Parent/Guardian

I hope you had a nice Christmas break and may I take this opportunity to wish you and your family a very happy new year in 2021.

We were very hopeful before the Christmas break that school would reopen on 6 January 2021 and that school-life could continue like it did prior to Christmas. The students and staff of the school were simply remarkable in how careful and respectful each and everyone of them have been with minimising risk of infection and looking after one another in our community.

The Minister for Education Norma Foley TD and Minister of State for Special Education and Inclusion announced on Wednesday 30 December that the school Christmas break would be extended by three days, with schools reopening on Monday 11 January.

That decision was made so as to allow every member of the school community to follow public health advice closely and minimise their contacts before people return to school.

However, the Government has since changed its stance on this due to surging Covid-19 infections with several thousand positive cases a day now compared to less than 300 per day before the Christmas holidays.

While transmission of the virus in school-going children is still below average it has since Christmas day started to increase sharply every day since and at a very fast rate. There has been a significant recent deterioration in all of the key disease indicators (case numbers, hospital admissions, ICU occupancy etc.) and the potential impact of new, more transmissible, variants of the virus.

If schools were to open, this could lead to an even higher level of ongoing transmission.

The Taoiseach, Micheál Martin TD, announced on Thursday, 6 January that;

- Schools will be closed until 1 February 2021

How we will support your child/children

We appreciate how challenging the Covid-19 crisis has been for families, and particularly students. Please rest assured that we are working hard to support all students and parents/guardians in our school community as the pandemic evolves. We have learned a lot since March 2020 and this will stand to us all as we work through the next few weeks.

We gleaned considerable best-practice from your feedback, that of our staff and our interactions with students when schools were forced to close last March. Our patron, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has also supported us very well since the pandemic struck, and we have weekly meetings of the region's Principals and Deputy Principals to share best-practice and strategies that can support teaching and learning and student care. The last period of school closure presented many challenges, but the resolve of our students, staff and parents/guardians to engage in every effort to upskill and adapt to Remote Teaching and Learning was truly inspirational. Everyone in our school community is fully prepared for Remote Learning in an effort to fulfil a continuity of learning in the coming days.

Our staff meetings and staff Professional Development days have focused on upskilling everyone to be more proficient and comfortable with the school's excellent Learning Platform - G Suite for Education (Google).

Our students are very familiar with this Learning Platform and you can read more about how it works from our dedicated Remote Learning Portal on our school website.

We have also developed our "Digital Response Booklet" which is available to view under the COVID tab on our website.

Assessing Teaching and Learning in our School

Our School's Digital Learning Hub, (Google Classroom) which students are familiar with, is the main portal for accessing on-line classes and feedback from teachers.

- All students will receive a Year-group timetable in PDF format via their school email account.
- Students will also receive a link to a Google Meet with their Year Head. This takes place on Monday 11th at 10.00am.
- Year Heads will take students through their timetable and prepare them for contact with their teachers and remote learning.
- Following this meeting, students will be contacted by their individual teachers to discuss the detail of each individual class period on their timetable.
- We encourage students to take the time on Monday to organise themselves in terms of device access, area to work and reproduce their own personal timetable.
- Please note that the timetable on VSWARE is suspended for the foreseeable future as we focus on remote learning.
- It is crucial that all students engage in all online lessons/recordings and submit work on time.
- We will use the VSWARE App which you are now familiar with, to communicate any lack of engagement.

Our staff have been appraised of the relevant advice, guidance and peer support on managing learning, teaching and assessment in the current pandemic and we are hopeful that this will help to mitigate the loss in class contact time and 'Face to Face' time while the school is closed.

The next three weeks

We will focus our efforts for the three weeks of school closures on teaching, learning and the provision of effective feedback to students.

Your child will have a blend of on-line 'live' classes, 'flipped learning' lessons, assignments and homework. Teachers will communicate this information to students.

We advise that students get up early in the morning and connect with their learning as per their remote learning timetable.

Lessons can start at 9.00 for some students. The last lesson finishes at 2.45pm Mon to Thurs and 11.45am on a Friday.

This is to ensure students get exercise and take a break from schoolwork and study.

Students in Sixth Year and Third Year

We are especially mindful of any school closure and how it affects students in Sixth Year and Third Year regarding the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate examinations.

Our school is represented at national level at the Stakeholder Group meetings with the Department of Education by Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, and we will ensure that challenges that arise will be addressed by the group.

The State Examinations Commission has been requested to look at all of the timelines and elements of the practical examinations, submission of project work and the oral examinations. You will get more information about this in time via its website and we will communicate any updates to students and yourself as we are apprised of same: www.examinations.ie.

The Department of Education and the State Examinations Commission are making every effort to support all students through this challenging time.

Students facing examinations are asked to keep focused and to keep working in preparation for the exams. More details will be forthcoming in the near future regarding the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate examinations and we will bring this information to your attention without delay.

1st Year Students

We are equally as conscious that our 1st year students are new to remote learning from a second level perspective.

Our 1st year Year head is very conscious of this fact, along with their teachers.

Supporting Students with Additional Education Needs

Our students in our AS class will be contacted directly by the class coordinator in regards to how we plan to support our AS students and also arrange an adapted remote learning timetable for each individual.

SNAs assigned to individual will also support our students on an individual basis.

The National Council for Special Education has developed resources for parents of children with additional needs who may benefit from specific advice during the period of school closure. All resources are available on the NCSE website and publicised through education partners and Twitter. The NCSE visiting teacher service continues to provide direct telephone/skype support to families and students. The NCSE resources can be accessed at: www.ncse.ie/online-resources and include;

- resources for parents and teachers such as class\age level activities
- practical advice on how to take care of Assistive Technology in the Home and a suite of Occupational Therapy and
- Speech and Language Therapy resources (including a social story animation on attending a Covid-19 test Centre prepared by the HSE).

Supports for Students including Internet Connections and Data Bundles on Mobile Providers

The Department of Education and Management Bodies have been working closely with the tertiary education sector to address issues raised in relation to accessing online provision including broadband issues.

Thankfully, we saw progress on ways the mobile operators helped students with connectivity and data issues last Spring and Summer. Management Bodies have requested that the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications reintroduce the Covid-19 Consumer Commitment which was in operation between April and August in 2020 as a matter of urgency. This commitment provided for the following:

1. Any fixed broadband customers who do not have unlimited usage already as standard will be given the opportunity, if they require, to upgrade their package (which may be on a temporary basis), with their current service provider

2. Any customer who does not have fixed broadband and who relies solely on mobile access to the Internet will have the opportunity to avail of affordable unlimited mobile data access/package from their service provider
3. Fair usage policies will not be automatically applied to unlimited fixed and mobile data packages
4. Service providers may implement appropriate permitted traffic management measures to avoid network congestion
5. Access to healthcare and educational resource websites identified by the Government will be zero-rated for all customers where technically feasible

Customers experiencing issues should contact their service provider in the first instance, before contacting ComReg's Consumer Care Team at consumerline@comreg.ie or 01 8049668 (from 8.00am to 8.00pm Monday to Friday and 9.00am to 1.00pm on Saturday, excluding public holidays).

How to get the best out of our mobile phone & stay connected

With ComReg's outdoor mobile coverage map, you can find out if the area you're in has good mobile coverage. Learn about it [here](#).

Wellbeing including physical activity

NEPS, the Department's National Educational Psychological Service, has developed advice and resources for keeping Children and Young People well during Covid-19. These resources aim to support children and young people's learning and wellbeing at this time.

In the context of wellbeing, NEPS has included a reference in its advice for young people and for parents of young children for the need for physical activity as part of everyone's daily routine while schools are closed.

There is an excellent range of supports available on www.loveparenting.ie specifically for parents to help with this. These resources have been created specifically for parents to use with their children and cover these areas;

- Having the chats
- Routines
- Managing your child's anxiety
- Parent Self-Care
- Maintaining Routines

For information, the relevant text can be found at the following links:

Advice for Young People: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/advice-to-young-people-while-schools-are-closed.pdf>

Advice for Parents: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/guide-for-parents-supporting-children.pdf>

Contacting the School during Closure

Please do not hesitate to contact us at the school via this email address Kildysartcc@lcebtb.ie and we will do all we can to address your query as soon as possible.

In the meantime, please follow the advice of the HSE and the Government;

The school building is closed to all members of the public until further notice

Additional Information

A considerable number of announcements regarding schools will all be available on www.gov.ie as well as regular updates from us in the school.

Thank you for your continued support of our school and we look forward to being in contact with you soon again.

Yours Sincerely

Denis O Rourke
Principal