



# JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

OLD CONNA, FERNDALE ROAD, RATHMICHAEL, CO. DUBLIN.

TEL: (01) 6680828,

E-MAIL: [SECONDARY@JOHNSCOTTUS.IE](mailto:SECONDARY@JOHNSCOTTUS.IE) WEB: [WWW.JOHNSCOTTUS.IE](http://WWW.JOHNSCOTTUS.IE)

---

25<sup>th</sup> October, 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I hope your sons and daughters have had an enjoyable first two months of school despite the restrictions in place. Here are some notices that may be of interest:

## **Philosophy Themes**

It has not been possible to run whole school assemblies this year, instead we run the assemblies online and broadcast to the various classrooms.

To provoke discussion and thought, some of the themes over the past few weeks have been:

Can I achieve more than I expect?

How can I develop good learning habits?

How can I calm myself down?

How can I delight in the present?

## **Founders Day Friday 23 October**

Our normal Founders Day in September was postponed as it is day with considerable mixing of year groups. However, our 6<sup>th</sup> year leadership team, with great initiative and enthusiasm, have organised an alternative Covid-19 compliant Founders day. The day consisted of a number activities for pods of 15 students all with physical distancing in mind. Great credit is due to the 6<sup>th</sup> years for organising such a great day.

## **Keeping Schools Open**

I am aware that some of you may have concerns about the schools staying open as the country moves into level 5 of the Living with Covid-19 Plan. To help explain the government's decision to keep schools open, I have attached a letter to schools from Normal Foley, the Minister of Education and Skills. The key points are:

- The Irish experience to date supports the current international position that schools are low risk environments for COVID-19 and are not key drivers of transmission in the community.
- There have been relatively few instances where transmission of COVID-19 within a school is strongly suspected by HSE Public Health.
- As of 19 October, 10,513 students and teachers have been involved in mass testing with a positive detection rate of 2% or 246 cases.

I hope this gives some context for the decision to keep schools open.

## **Digital Learning Strategy**

In these uncertain times, there are different possible scenarios the school may face in the coming weeks and months. Our Digital Strategy has been developed by our teachers with

input from parents. The following is a short summary of the plan. Hopefully it will help prepare the school community to face all situations as they arise.

Scenario number	Scenario Description	Response
1	No students absent	Teaching material posted on teams. Subject assignments posted on teams and all homework submitted through teams.
2	Few students absent	Classes may be scheduled in Teams. Classes or part of classes maybe recorded so they are available asynchronously.  Teaching material posted on teams. Subject assignments posted on teams and all homework submitted through teams.
3	Teacher absent	Two situations may arise: Teacher leaves work on Teams and a substitute teacher takes the class. <i>or</i> Teacher delivers class online via Teams and substitute teacher supervises the students in class.  Teaching material posted on teams. Subject assignments posted on teams and all homework submitted through teams.
4	Entire Class absent	Teacher delivers class online via Teams  Teaching material posted on teams. Subject assignments posted on teams and all homework submitted through teams.
5	School closed	Teacher delivers class online via Teams  Teaching material posted on teams. Subject assignments posted on teams and all homework submitted through teams.

### **DEAGOT Days**

To help develop ICT skills amongst both students and teachers, for the past two weeks the school has had DEAGOT (or Drop Everything And Go On Teams) days. On these days teacher started their classes online so both teachers and students could try out the online meeting functionality. Feedback was good and both students and teachers are getting more comfortable with the technology.

### **Health and Safety Control of Covid-19 Policy**

This policy is an addition to the current Health and Safety policy and is influenced by the need to minimise the risk of introduction of COVID-19 into the school community and to prevent its spread. In accordance with this policy, students are expected to comply with the standards of behaviour set out in this policy or as directed by the school to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19. The COVID-19 control measures are consistent with current advice from the HSE, the Health and Safety Authority, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Foreign Affairs and, as such, may be subject to change. Students and parents/guardians will be notified of any changes to the control measures.

## **Winter Ready**

With the need for ventilation, windows and doors have been kept open for the past two months. We are aware this will present problems when the temperature drops. We are looking at different options available to see how we can keep the temperature at a reasonable level. However, in the meantime, we encourage students to wear under layers. Please note that black or navy hats, coats, scarves and tights may be worn in addition to the regular uniform.

## **Leaving Certificate Results 2020**

Well done to our graduating class of 2019 on their excellent results. The destinations are varied with students moving on to study disciplines such as Forensic Science, Medicine, Business, Art, Drama, Music and Philosophy in UCD, TCD, NUIM, TUD and IADT.

## **Car Park**

We have seen an increase in the number of cars this year with more parents dropping children to school. This is just a gentle reminder that the pick up point is in the general carpark and to observe the speed limits.

## **Outdoor Classroom**

Our Transition Years are developing an outdoor classroom on the grounds of Old Conna. They are now putting in the finishing touches and are looking for garden benches, solar lights, wind chimes, old plants or pots, outdoor cushions, oil table cloths, water resistant fabrics, outdoor paints and old garden tools. If you can help, please contact Ms. Swan.

## **Assessment**

The October assessment results are now available for viewing on the student administration system VS Ware. The first major assessment of the year takes place from Monday November 23<sup>rd</sup> to Wednesday November 25<sup>th</sup>. Students will sit exams over the three days. Progress reports on learning will be available for viewing in December.

## **Clubs and Extra-Curricular Activities**

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, there has been a significant decrease in club activities this year. This, we know, is a big loss to students. The current restrictions are very extensive with only non-contact training allowed in pods of up to 15 and neither challenge or competitive matches are permitted. PE classes are continuing with physical distancing measures. After school sport also takes place on Wednesday afternoon in accordance with the restrictions. The plan for after school sport on Wednesday is to start with soccer. For the girls this will switch to hockey in November. For the boys, if there are no competitive games, other sports will start. More information on HPSC guidance on Return to Sport can be found [here](#).

## **Transition Year Update**

The Transition Year programme to date has managed to run as normal despite the Covid-19 restrictions. In the past few weeks a cookery course has started, a photography trip to Barnaslingan woods has taken place and the Dublin Mountain Way has been explored. Our Transition years are looking forward to more weeks of developing Resilience, Independence & Responsibility, the Transition Year motto.

## ***Class Reps***

Our first class representative meeting of the year took place on Thursday Oct 1<sup>th</sup>. If you have not received the minutes of the meeting, please contact your class representative. Please note the parent representatives for each year:

1<sup>st</sup> Year: Niamh Van de Bergh, Brian Flavin

2<sup>nd</sup> Year: Patricia Cronnelly, Carolyn Downer

3<sup>rd</sup> Year: Fiona Aryan, Neeraj Kumar, Neil Costello

Transition Year: Simon Tyner

5<sup>th</sup> Year: Siobhan Free, Siobhan Launder

6<sup>th</sup> Year: Michelle Murray, Julie Homan Greene

### **Parent Teacher Meetings**

We acknowledge the importance of parent-teacher meetings and are currently looking at alternatives to face to face parent teacher meetings. More information on this will come after the mid-term.

### **1<sup>st</sup> year assessments**

All 1<sup>st</sup> years will undertake standard CAT4 aptitude testing and NGRT reading tests after the mid-term. These tests will be conducted online and will take place during their normal English classes. They are used as a base line to monitor academic progress over the next few years. When the results are received, they will be sent to parents.

### **A philosophical thought for the day**

“He who has never learned to obey cannot be a good commander” – Aristotle

Yours warmly,



Dr. Declan Kelly

Principal

Phone: 01-6680828

Email: [dkelly@johnscottus.ie](mailto:dkelly@johnscottus.ie)