



29 May 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

On the 12 March we were here in the school, preparing for practical's, orals, seachtain na gaeilge, Easter, students were in the middle of CBA's, St Patricks day was just upon us, ceili music was being played in the school porch, volleyball semi-finals were overdue, a GAA match was overdue, dance workshop were taking place, Faith fest was happening, parents' quiz in Peacocks, mock music practical's and fundraising for Loreto Rumbek with St Finian's Parish.

These were school priorities when the Taoiseach announced the closure. Well these big tickets items faded into insignificance as the days turned into weeks and the weeks turned into months. It has been 11 weeks and 1 day since I sent that text home that we were closing the school for a short period!

It's a strange reality, indeed, that we had to resort to the virtual world of technology to continue our teaching and learning. Who could have thought that a virus like Covid 19 could turn the world upside down ... the Leaving Certificate and Junior Cert cancelled... the world in lockdown for two months – education, business, sports and social life in uncharted waters. We've had to get used to this new reality in such a short space of time. I want to thank the staff of the school for dealing with the biggest change in their professional careers and for making huge efforts to keep remote teaching and learning alive at this time. I want to thank our students, in all year groups for coping with stress, study and speculation over the past 3 months. I want to thank them for their engagement with their studies, for their completion of assignments, for their participation in wellbeing activities, for their responses to posts, for their continued enthusiasm up until the end. I want to thank you our parents and families who have had your lives turned upside down and have continued to do your best balancing parenting, working and just doing your best in recent weeks. I also want to thank you for your continued support for the school and to the many of you who have expressed your thanks in recent days.

I will ask that all direct contact with teaching staff in the school will cease for the summer period from 29th May and please send all correspondence to the school email.

Let us not forget that we had over 6 months in school this year where so much happened in sport and student committees, arts and drama, extra-curricular, subject activities, academic

achievements, trips and tours, charity and fundraising, justice and peace initiatives, student leadership, Garda Band with Mr Phillip Mc Caffrey and many other areas of school life that shouldn't be overshadowed. I wish to thank all who have contributed to making all of the above a success. I want to thank our Board of Management led by Mr Gerry Sinnott, 5 current or former parents, 2 teachers and Sr. Josephine Keegan who make up the Board for their continued guidance and support. This also gives me an opportunity to thank our Parents Association, led by Ms Karen Barody and dedicated committee, for their wonderful work in fundraising and supporting school initiatives. They presented a cheque for €5,500 to the school last week, which as always will be spent on enhancing the school facilities for your daughters. Special thanks to Ms Trasa Kearns former chairperson and Ms G Murray for their committed and never-ending support for the college over the past 6 years.

I would also like to wish our 6th year students every success as they spread their wings. The staff and Management of Loreto Swords believe that they are now fully fledged, fully moulded in the values of our Institution, values that will underpin every decision in life, consciously or subconsciously, values that will define them into the future. It would be my fervent wish that you will be "lovers of truth and doers of justice" inspired by the vision of Mary Ward the founder of Loreto.

To all our other students, the world will keep on turning, a new day will dawn and please God we will be able to return to a sense of normality as soon as is possible in the Autumn. On my behalf and on behalf of the staff I want to wish you and your family a safe, happy and healthy summer.

I wish to extend sympathies from the entire school community to members of staff and to students' families who have lost loved ones over the past few months. Be assured that you are in our thoughts and prayers at this sad time. May your loved one's rest in Peace.

As every school year comes to end, we have to say farewell to some valued members of staff. This year is no different in that regard. I wish to express our deepest thanks to Ms Aine Duffy, to Ms Katie Grenham, Ms Emma Keavney, Ms Ciara Shorthall and Mr Dermot MacLamh who will leave us this summer. On behalf of the entire school community, I wish them well and thank them most sincerely for all that they have done for your daughters in Loreto College. It also gives me great pleasure to welcome back Ms Sorcha Furlong, Ms Lucy Doherty and Ms Siobhan O Hara who will all re-join us in September.

For now, from all of us in Loreto to all of you in the greater Swords region, stay safe and stay well and mind yourselves and family.

We will be in touch with you in early August please God. God bless you all.

Kindest Regards

Mr Macnamara and Ms Gunn