



Creagh
College

Coláiste na Craobhai Guaire

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Learning for life

19/11/2021

Staff/Parent/Student Briefing Re: contingency measures

To all the members of our school community,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of contingency plans we have made and may need to implement in the coming weeks.

Our immediate difficulty relates to the availability of teaching staff. There has long been and continues to be a significant shortage of substitute teachers. In our school this year we have had trouble in recruiting teachers for relatively long part-time contracts (eg. Maternity leave cover). With the current trends regarding Covid-19 and the new precautions announced by government this week (at the time of writing we await official communication from the Department of Education regarding the implementation of these guidelines) we are concerned that we are likely to experience difficulty in adequately supervising all of our classes at some point in the coming weeks.

Our staff will continue to diligently follow the public health guidelines by not coming to work in circumstances where they are advised to isolate or restrict movements (very often as a purely precautionary measure). This is very likely to put us under further pressure regarding supervision and availability of teachers.

Therefore, we have devised a contingency plan for next week that will allow us to safely operate the school with appropriate supervision in place for all students attending. Regrettably, **if necessary**, this plan will involve alternately requiring year groups to stay at home to free up teachers to cover classes. Our current circumstances are volatile and unpredictable. As the next week progresses our difficulties may ease, or they may worsen. Please monitor your work email (for staff) and our text messaging/social media channels/website (for students and parents) for updates. We will notify you of any contingency measures we have to implement the next school day with a social media post and a text message to parents by 8pm the previous evening. If you do not hear from us, your child should come to school as usual (unless prohibited from doing so by Covid-19 precautions, eg. have symptoms or are a close contact).

Next week, from Tuesday on, 5th and 6th years have organised house exams. We consider these to be of vital importance for these year groups who have not had the benefit of sitting the Junior Cert exam due to Covid. Our contingency schedule for leaving year groups at home next week, **if necessary**, is as follows:

- Mon Nov 22nd: 5th years (not including LCA1 students)
- Tues Nov 23rd: 2nd years
- Wed Nov 24th: 1st years
- Thurs Nov 25th: 3rd years
- Fri Nov 26th: TY/LCA1 and LCA2

Parents and students should be aware that teachers attending for work will be engaged in covering other classes so it will not be possible for remote learning to be provided for the year groups who are

left at home on particular days. We are in the Christmas assessment period and all students should have plenty of study to do. Exams that year groups may miss (other than 5th or 6th years) will be rescheduled. I would like to again express my gratitude to our entire school community for their commitment to keeping the school open in as safe a manner as possible. I regret that we are in a position such as this; I hope you will understand that it is beyond our control, and we would not make these plans if we didn't feel they were needed in order to safely operate our school. We also feel it will be helpful for our school community to have advance notice of these potential measures. We are also cancelling any extra-curricular activities and inservice courses for the next two weeks to minimise the possibility of invoking these measures.

I urge all of you to continue to fully observe and comply with all the current protocols, regulations and restrictions. Each small thing each one of us does to minimise the risk of the virus spreading will collectively keep all of us safe and well. Most importantly, it is vital that students/staff who have symptoms, who are close contacts of household cases, or who themselves have positive test results (either antigen or PCR) must not attend school, even if they have assessments scheduled on those days.

Stay safe.

Sincerely,

Paul Glynn, Principal

CONTINGENCY MEASURES

Only to be implemented if necessary: to be confirmed by 8pm the previous evening

Year groups may be required to stay at home as per this schedule

- Mon Nov 22nd: 5th years (not including LCA1 students)
- Tues Nov 23rd: 2nd years
- Wed Nov 24th: 1st years
- Thurs Nov 25th: 3rd years
- Fri Nov 26th: TY/LCA1 and LCA2