



March 19th 2020

6th Years

Re: School Closure – Parent/Guardian & Student Briefing Document No. 2

Dear Parent/Guardian & Student,

An announcement was made last Tuesday by the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar about the possible extended closure of schools, pre-schools, further and higher education settings, for a period beyond 29 March 2020. This is in order to support efforts to contain the spread of Covid-19 and minimise social contact.

We sincerely hope that you and your loved ones are managing well through these challenging and unprecedented times. By working together and heeding the advice of the medical professionals, we will get through this. To quote one broadcaster, ‘If we can all winter this out, we can summer anywhere’. We continue to keep our school, our national and global community in all our thoughts and prayers.

We are acutely conscious that the period from now until June is an exceptionally busy period for state exam candidates in CBC preparing for their certificate examinations especially those getting ready for the Leaving Certificate. During this period of unexpected absence from school our students are bound to have concerns about the demands of examination activity when they return to school, particularly as they will wish to refocus their efforts on their preparations for the written examinations commencing on June 3rd. Student welfare is of utmost concern at this time and along with the State Examinations Commission (SEC), CBC wishes to provide reassurance to students and their parents/guardians and to provide clarity about what they need to focus on during their absence from school.

As you can imagine, things have moved at an incredible pace and all our staff here in CBC are adjusting accordingly to the new demands of the current situation. Keeping a regular routine appears to be the mantra that is coming through in all the literature at present. Getting up for school at the normal time and working at your study desk with regular breaks every 40 minutes is a definite way to keep on top of things. The article below from the late Professor Aidan Moran of UCD might be useful regarding some intrepid study tips: <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/going-to-college/prepare-your-brain-for-active-learning-in-college-37230659.html>

Mr Murphy and Ms Barnwell, our guidance teachers and school counsellors, are readily available to offer support to our students via telephone counselling. Students are welcome to make an appointment if required, via e-mail at either cbcm Monkstownguidance@outlook.com or mbgc@cbcm Monkstown.ie

Here is a blog that has some useful tips about dealing with anxiety and the impact of the corona virus on our daily lives.

<https://www.annamathur.com/dealing-with-coronavirus-anxiety/?fbclid=IwAR2Ay4aHehv5KrG4lv0C4ase-xZPocyfR9cfne8KYi3gEu9sqoGZBhb68FY>

Here in CBC our top priority is to support exam classes as they continue to prepare for State examinations. We kindly ask parents and guardians to continue to encourage your sons to attend to their on-line classes, tutorials and school-work. In addition, we ask that your sons continue apace with the work as set out by their teachers in combination with a degree of self-directed learning. Please note the following:

- Since the Government announcement last week about the closure of schools until the 29th March, the State Examinations Commission (SEC) has been working closely with the Department of Education and Skills on considering alternative arrangements for candidates approaching the state examinations. The planned closure period directly impacts on the scheduled dates for this year's **oral and practical performance tests**.
- Following a review of all possible options the Minister has announced today that it has been decided **to cancel these tests** and to award candidates the full marks for the components in question. For your attention and information, see here the SEC's press release on this decision. <https://www.examinations.ie/misc-doc/EN-PR-99651218.pdf>
- The Department has also announced an extension of the completion date for project work and coursework which was due for completion on various dates between the 20th March and the 24th April. Candidates will now have until the **15th May** to complete this work. The SEC will provide further details on the revised arrangements in the coming days to school authorities and will publish details on their website for the information of students, parents and guardians.
- Awarding full marks for the oral and practical performance tests was considered to be the most fair to candidates as it guarantees that no candidate can be awarded a mark lower than they would have achieved in the test. No other approach to generating a result for these components would have given this guarantee. These decisions have at all times been guided by consideration of the best interests of candidates. The advice to candidates is that they should continue to prepare for the remaining elements of their examinations as scheduled.
- In order to minimise the impact on teaching and learning, all CBC teaching staff have been requested to continue to plan lessons and provide online resources for students and/or online lessons as much as possible. It is vital that all our teachers engage with all of their classes and students in a fully interactive, two-way engagement process over the coming weeks. As professional educators, we have a dutiful sense of service to continue to do our very best for all our students over the coming weeks. Parents/Guardians are also doing their bit by ensuring that the students engage on-line on an ongoing, two-way basis. We are involved in a process, it is not simply about sending work out to the students one-way – the students need to respond on-line with homework for teachers to correct and such homework can be graded accordingly and sent back to the students. Parents/Guardians are asked to remind all students that while they are off school, they are not off school-work and they should endeavour to work at home for the hours that they are missing in school. Parents/Guardians can also access the Google Classroom and keep in touch with the interactions there between student and school.
- The State Examinations Commission has advised schools that project work relating to the State exams **should remain in the school** as normal and not be taken home by students.

- CBC had the following posters on display (link below) over the past few weeks and we would like to reiterate again the correct procedures regarding respiratory etiquette for all our students and their family members at home. <https://assets.gov.ie/70321/9bc0cff6befd4a33837a2189ec145ff5.pdf>
- In relation to social distancing protocol, the following poster (link) highlights the need for observance of proper distancing, especially among teenagers and young adolescents. <https://assets.gov.ie/71609/34390198bec74437ac5d759865dae786.pdf>
- Most of the educational book companies are giving free access to their on-line books during the current emergency. Edco, Folens, CJ Fallon, etc.

Most teachers in CBC are currently using Google G Suite for Education (**Google Classroom**) to engage with students remotely for online homework, revision etc. We would ask that all students accept the invitation to participate in this forum of on-line learning.

We are all deeply conscious of the impact that school and education setting closures have on students, on families and on the wider community. However school closures are a necessary and proportionate measure that the country is taking as a pro-active measure to help contain the threat of Covid-19.

We are currently open for telephone calls, Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm (Tel: 01-2805854). If any remote ICT problems emerge for you, please contact the school at office@cbcmonkstown.ie and we will be in touch.

If there is anything further that you think we as a school community can do to support you, please let us know via the above e-mail address and we will do all that we can to assist you in any way that we can.

Further briefings will be issued in due course.
Thank you all for your patience.

Le gach dea-dhuí
Gerry Duffy
School Principal
March 19th 2020