

27<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Dear Parents/ Guardians

I hope that you and your family are keeping well and coping with the challenges that are being presented. I would like to draw your attention to several matters which are significant for your son, you and the life of the College.

#### **Mr Michael Doyle VP**

I wish to inform you that Mr Michael Doyle is retiring from his position of Vice Principal from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. I am sure you, like me receive this news with sadness for the College, but happiness for Michael as he starts this new chapter.

Michael has been a pillar of this College over the past 45 years with over 35 years of tireless service as a member of staff. With his retirement, the College will be losing an invaluable colleague and teacher. In all the many roles he has fulfilled throughout his career, Michael has ensured that our students got the best possible experience from their time at Violet Hill. Most recently Michael has worked tirelessly in his role as Vice Principal Pastoral Care and Designated Teacher ensuring every student has been cared for and protected. We are particularly glad that in his last year at St. Colman's, the MacRory panel were able to bring the title home to Violet Hill for the twentieth time. Many past and present pupils and staff are grateful for all that Michael has given to Gaelic games in the school.

While there will be occasion in the future to formally mark his retirement with his colleagues, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the whole school community, to thank Michael for all that he has done for St. Colman's College, for his professionalism, care, consideration and friendship and to wish him health and happiness with his family and friends in the future.

#### **Designated Teacher Roles**

As a result of Michael's retirement, in the near future there will be further changes to the Senior Leadership of the College. In the interim I would like to remind you that Mr Doyle's role as Designated Teacher will be carried out by the members of the Senior Leadership Team, all of whom have a Deputy Designated Teacher role.

You are reminded that the Senior Teachers with responsibility for each key stage are:

Y8 – 10	Key Stage 3	Mr Mark Doran
Y11 – 12	Key Stage 4	Dr Patrick Collins
Y13 – 14	Key Stage 5	Mr Ciaran O' Hare

Mr Kevin Franklin and Mrs Helen Doherty are also Senior Teachers who hold a Deputy Designated Teacher role and I, as Principal have overall responsibility for the implementation of all procedures and policies with respect to Child Protection.

#### **Christmas/ Mock Examinations 2020**

In light of current circumstances, we are implementing contingency measures regarding the planned schedule of Christmas examinations and the calendar for the remainder of term. This will entail:

- Commencing the examination timetable three days earlier than planned, on **Friday 4th December**, and finishing on **Friday 11th December**
- Resuming normal classes from **Monday 14th December** with the last day of term for most students, being **Friday 18th December** unless individual students are notified to the contrary

- **Tuesday 22nd December** remaining a **staff day**.

As you know we are in a constant state of change. There is the potential for unforeseen circumstances to arise with consequent disruption to our planned calendar. This is why we have implemented this contingency plan. There is also the potential for further disruption to occur in January at individual, class, year group or whole school level. From an educational perspective it is more beneficial to complete summative pupil assessments at the end of this teaching term, rather than in the New Year.

Your son will be given all relevant information from his teachers to ensure that he is able to prepare for his assessments. Individual Departments will make any required adjustments to content or marking in response to this change to the start of the examination period.

A revised examination timetable will be emailed to all pupils, published on the College's website and sent to all parents/ guardians via **Sims Parent App**.

In balancing the potential risks, this approach is deemed to ensure that assessment will take place without interruption and protects teaching time after Christmas. You are reminded that from the College's perspective, all classes will resume on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December** and full attendance is required as normal.

We must constantly remind ourselves that these are exceptional circumstances and that we are in the middle of a global pandemic. While we are trying to keep the school calendar, processes and procedures as normal as possible, we must have the patience and flexibility to change planning in order to meet the needs of the pupils. Your co-operation and understanding with respect to this matter is greatly appreciated.

#### **Amendments to Return to School Guidance**

It is anticipated that in the near future DENI will publish additional guidance with respect to measures schools are expected to have in place in response to Covid. You will be directed to the full guidance when it is published. In the meantime, I would like to advise you that this guidance will include instruction as follows:

- Tele-conference, phone or video-conference **must be used** for all parent teacher meetings
- Open Nights/Days **are not** permitted
- **Schools prohibit** attendance of spectators and school-based sports and cultural events

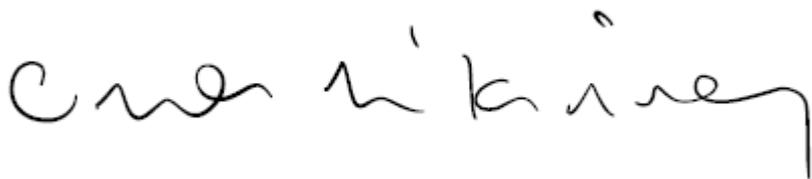
As a result, the College will endeavour to conduct meetings with parents/ guardians either by phone or by Microsoft Teams except in exceptional circumstances.

Arrangements in terms of reporting will be clarified in due course, but particular attention will be paid to communication with Y10/Y12 students with respect to subject choices moving into GCSE and AS/A2.

#### **Christmas Dinner**

At this time of year, we usually look forward to the Student Christmas Dinner and thanks to the hard work of the catering staff, the dinner will take place on **Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**. We know that this has been a very challenging time for staff and students alike, so we have decided to spread a bit of Christmas cheer and have invited everyone to have a Christmas dinner courtesy of St. Colman's College! We will also have a Christmas jumper fundraiser at the same time with the hope that the whole school will enjoy a Happy Christmas atmosphere on the day.

Yours faithfully



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Mr Cormac McKinney  
Principal