

18th February 2021

Dear Parent, Guardian & Students,

As you are aware an announcement was made by the Department of Education yesterday the 17th of February. We are still receiving information regarding the Leaving Certificate and will continue to do so over the coming weeks. The school will keep teachers, students and parents/guardians updated as more information becomes available to us.

The Minister set out the broad parameters of arrangements for this year's Leaving Certificate examination which have been summarised below. I would encourage all students to take the remainder of the mid-term break off to re-energise for the next term. All plans will be put in place for the return to school as per government guidelines, and again will be shared with you as soon as it becomes available to us.

The statement by the Minister for Education can be found by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Press-Events/Press-Releases/2021-press-releases/PR21-02-17.html>

The main elements are as follows:

- Written Leaving Certificate examinations will be put in place, which will operate in accordance with the normal timetables
- Be conducted subject to public health advice and providing, as far as possible, access to the examinations for very high-risk students
- Be supported by clear information and guidance to students and schools
- The Leaving Certificate timetables can be accessed by visiting www.examinations.ie

Additional assessment components, such as orals, practical performance tests and coursework will be put in place, subject to public health advice, with components in certain subjects not operating for public health reasons. Schools will locally source teachers to administer some of the tests, but not assessing their own students. Assessment will be arranged by the State Examinations Commission (SEC).

An Accredited Grades system, to be operated by the SEC, will be available whereby Leaving Certificate candidates can opt to have grades in some or all of their subjects (to be known as "SEC Accredited Grades") issued to them at the same time as the examination results.

The elements of the SEC Accredited Grades system will include the following:

- The professional judgement of each of the candidate's teachers which will not be subject to appeal
- A form of in-school alignment to ensure fairness amongst candidates at school level
- Approval by the school principal of the estimated subject scores
- A process of standardisation at national level to ensure as much fairness as possible amongst this year's candidates
- The SEC Accredited Grade and examinations outcomes will have regard to the pattern of results in 2020 and previously, with more details of the process to be determined by the Minister having regard to advice from the SEC
- A right for students to appeal in respect of their Accredited Grade which will comprise a process review focused on examining possible errors in the transmission and processing of student data
- Provision as far as practicable for out-of-school learners or students studying one or more subjects outside school to apply to receive Accredited Grades through the devising of an appropriate and practicable process
- Necessary legislation will be brought forward, the purpose of which will be to confer on the State Examinations Commission power to operate a system of Accredited Grades.

The following indicative dates have been provided by the Department of Education:

- May 14th – Closing date for collection of evidence of learning from 6th year student for the purpose of establishing an estimated mark.
- May 28th – Schools will close for all students to allow the final week for completion of alignment process and data entry related to SEC Accredited Grades by schools.
- June 4th – Closing date for schools to enter/return all data from the school to the SEC relating to SEC Accredited Grades.
- June 9th – Written Leaving Certificate examinations to commence in schools.
- The SEC will issue revised dates for submission of Leaving Certificate course work and the scheduling/arrangements
- It is intended to prepare and publish, in consultation with stakeholders, accessible and detailed guidance for parents, students, teachers and schools, to be issued as soon as possible.

We will continue to keep our students and parents informed of all updates on this process as necessary.

Your sincerely,

D. McCormack