



Dear Students,

We are just checking in from John the Baptist Community School, in an effort to keep you and your families up to date, in these strange times. Well done to all engaging on the learning platforms. The future timing of many things is uncertain but if you continue to work at your studies, you will be prepared for the exams. Look on the full marks awarded for orals and practical examinations, due to take place next week, as a positive. Everyone is in the same boat. Plans that are fair to all will be developed taking account of the unprecedented situation. **One thing is certain – the State Examinations will take place.**

John the Baptist Community School has always been to the forefront in providing leadership and example to others. You as young people have a huge role to play now, not only in your own lives but in the lives of others.

Up to this point, in most of your lives, others have provided and cared for you and shouldered responsibilities of all sorts for you. Now, society is asking you to play your part in being responsible for your own welfare and that of others. The school has been closed to prevent the spread of Covid19 and this will only be effective if everyone cooperates and does what we are asked to do. Please remember parents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, past pupils and grandparents all part of the community that is John the Baptist C. S., who are working in the front line against this Coronavirus and are putting their lives and the lives of their families at risk to keep you safe. "Never has so much been asked of so few by so many" to paraphrase Churchill and more recently our own Taoiseach, so it is vital we do not negate their work by behaving in a reckless manner.

The school has been made aware that a small number of students are not behaving in a responsible way and do not seem to have grasped how important each person's behaviour is in order to deal with this pandemic. This is a heartfelt plea to you to please refrain to stay at home.

Our students are well used to being innovative and pioneering in the development of ideas and the achievement of excellence. There are scientists, musicians, poets, singers, dancers, mathematicians, engineers, sports people, athletes and award winners in our student population who could come up with ideas on how to spread the simple message of hand washing and social distancing to young people, in a way that young people would relate to, and embrace the practice of these two vital behaviours. Could you create a way of raising awareness of this? Could you encourage your friends, who may not realise the consequences of continuing to socialise, "to stay together but apart" and communicate the message that we are all in this together? Already, your classmates are working on ways to positively impact the new world in which we now find ourselves.

Well done to all who have engaged with distance learning in so many ways, with such interest and enthusiasm. We are so thankful to all our teachers who have embraced this new reality and the possibilities and of digital learning. Yes, it is very difficult to keep motivated. Yes, decisions will be made by the government that are not easy. Yes, it is not ideal. Remember however, that every challenge is an opportunity.

We are proud of our students in John the Baptist Community School and know you will rise to the challenge that faces everyone. Help your families, do your study, wash your hands and stay at home. Take exercise and communicate in other ways than face to face, stay in touch through social media (you were not expecting that advice from me!). Keep in touch with the school by email and learning platforms. Our Guidance Department are here too to provide direction and support (vhoward@johnthebaptistcs.ie). Stay connected with your teachers and Year heads.

Please email me at nrafferty@johnthebaptistcs.ie if you have concerns or issues. Please refrain from posting these issues on Facebook etc. We are available to help, just email.

God bless you all, stay safe and well and this too will pass.

Ní neart go cur le chéile.

Le gach deaghuí,

Noreen Rafferty, Ita Browne, Rachel Hayes