Dear 3rd Year Parent / Guardian,

I hope this letter finds you, and all who are dear to you, well.

Today, Minister for Education, Joe McHugh announced that the Junior Cycle final examinations will be replaced by a school-based end of programme assessment to be concluded by the end of May. This is a welcome reversal of the minister’s earlier proposal to hold such assessments in September, after the summer break. The major points from the minister’s statement include (see the full press release below):

- There will be no certified Junior Certificate/Cycle exams for students in 2020.
- All students will receive a State Certificate of Completion of Junior Cycle from the Department of Education and Skills. This will recognise that they have completed three years of Junior Cycle education in a number of subjects.
- Students will also receive a School Report setting out the learning achievements of students in Junior Cycle. Students will receive a written report on the broad range of learning that they have achieved in each subject at the end of Junior Cycle. This assessment of their learning will be provided by their teachers.
- Schools will have autonomy in how this assessment is to be arrived at and the format in which the report is provided.

In anticipation of such an announcement, our Board of Management, senior management team and teachers have been working over the last fortnight on contingency planning for our College’s end of programme assessment. A model of assessment will be finalised by Friday and will be shared with 3rd Year students and parents/guardians over the May bank holiday weekend for consultation. Currently, we are working on a model which will recognise and weight the following:

- Student attainment prior to the College’s closure on March 12th.
- Student post-Easter engagement in learning and teaching.
- Projects/ coursework completed to date (where relevant).
- Results of Classroom Based Assessments (CBA’s) completed prior to March 12th.
- Assessment task(s) in May: these tasks will be standardised and agreed at subject department level.
- Some assignments currently graded during closure* (if already flagged by teacher).
- Student Wellbeing / other areas of learning activities.

The breakdown of percentages for each area in arriving at overall exam grades and/or descriptors will be shared with parents in the consultation document. However, I would stress again that in light of the minister’s decision today, it is even more important that your child remains engaged with his/her subjects until the end of May.

30th April 2020.
We believe the minister’s decision to complete the end of programme assessments in May as the correct decision for the current circumstances which we face. We believe it will assist your child’s wellbeing and keep him or her motivated and engaged until the end of this academic year, while also allowing a fresh start and an immediate commencement in September in the Senior Cycle programme (Transition Year / 5th Year / Leaving Certificate Applied) they have chosen.

I will be back in touch in the coming days to consult with you and offer further clarification on our plans. As always, I remain available for contact through email or via the college phone number.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]
Principal.

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**Minister Mc Hugh Press Release 29.04.2020**

The Minister for Education and Skills Joe McHugh TD has today (Wednesday 29 April 2020) announced revised arrangements for this year’s Junior Cycle.

The decision was taken following recommendations from an advisory group of stakeholders as part of planning for the State Examinations in response to the Covid-19 public health measures and the decision that the Junior Cycle State Examinations will not run this year.

Minister McHugh attended the meeting of the advisory group and thanked the members for their work.

“In this difficult time for students I have listened to the very strongly-held and well-articulated views of students, parents and other stakeholders,” Minister McHugh said.

“This decision has been made with the health and wellbeing of students, parents and teachers at the forefront of our thinking.

“It gives students and their families more clarity and certainty. It also gives schools freedom to decide how best to assess the progress of students following three years of hard work and learning.”

Under the revised arrangements and in light of the exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the work and achievement of third year Junior Cycle students will be recognised with a state certificate from the Department of Education and Skills.

As soon as possible after the end of the current school year, students will receive a written school report on their learning achievements in each subject, short course and/or priority learning unit.

Schools are also being given autonomy to decide whether to run school-based assessments and what form they take. Options to consider include school-designed examinations, tasks, projects, assignments, essay style questions, presentations, or other tasks agreed at a local level. Guidance for schools on reporting to students and parents, developed with the advice of the advisory group of stakeholders, will be published by the Department.

The State Examinations Commission is also being asked to put in place specific arrangements for adult learners to give them an opportunity to take final Junior Cycle examinations for which they are entered in autumn 2020.

**Certificate of Completion**

This will issue from the Department early in the next school year. It will provide each student with a certificate confirming completion of the Junior Cycle programme of study, including the list of subjects, short courses and/or priority learning units studied and the level at which the subject was studied.