



St. Kevin's College Guidance Newsletter

Wednesday 25th March 2020

Dear Students,

I hope that you and your families are all keeping safe and well. In the week that has passed since the last newsletter, the Minister for Education, Joe McHugh TD, has announced that the Orals and some of the practical examinations in the State Examinations have been cancelled. I prepared a Factsheet on this announcement for the school's social media channels on Twitter @stkevinsdublin and on Instagram @st.kevins_college. It is included at the end of this newsletter. Importantly, the Minister stated clearly that **there are no plans to cancel the June exams at present.**

Schools are now officially closed until Sunday 19th April.

The theme of this week's newsletter is
'Reducing Coronavirus Stress and Anxiety'.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or any suggestions for the Guidance Newsletter.
Email: lauraoflanagan@stkevinscollege.com

Warmest regards,

Ms. O'Flanagan
Guidance Counsellor

How to handle coronavirus anxiety

You can't avoid news about the coronavirus, and all of the constant updates about sick people in Ireland and abroad have left many people feeling anxious.

You may be worrying about yourself or family members who might be at risk. You are not alone in feeling this way, but there are things you can do.

Here are some steps you can take to reduce stress and anxiety:

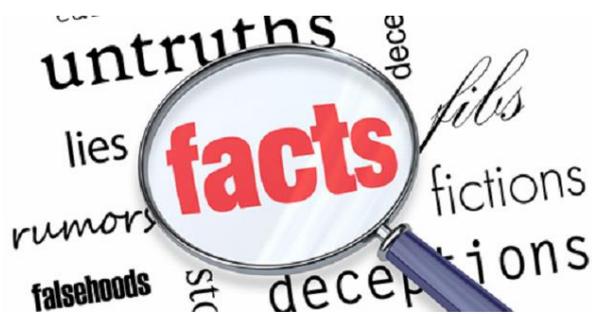
Step 1:

Learn the facts about COVID-19

Understanding what the coronavirus is, how it is spread, and what you can do to prevent it can help to ease your fears. Stick to trusted sources such as the [HSE website](#)

There's a lot of misinformation making its way around social media and private message groups, which can cause confusion around what's actually going on. If you receive messages or images claiming to uncover the 'truth' about the coronavirus, or offering advice that is different to what public health officials like the HSE have been saying, do not send it to other people. Instead, take a look at the messages that official HSE accounts are putting out and share those instead.

Read about fake news and how to recognise it [here](#)



Step 2:

Take precautions

There are things you can do to **help prevent the spread of the virus.**

It is important that you follow the advice from the government and the HSE about social distancing. The Taoiseach announced yesterday (24th March) that groups of people outside should be with **no more than 4 people.**

This is unless you are with people from your own household.

It's really important that we see as few people as possible, and when we do, that we follow the guidelines below. It's not easy for anyone, but it is the most important thing we can do to keep ourselves and our families and loved ones safe.



The infographic features a yellow background with a black virus icon in the top right corner. The text is in black and white. It includes five circular icons with lines through them, indicating actions to avoid. The text is clear and concise, providing practical advice for staying safe outdoors.

Coronavirus COVID-19

Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Advice

Social Distancing Outside

Spending time outdoors is good for our health. **But social responsibility is essential for ALL our health.**

- Avoid** close contact with others
- Distance** yourself at least 2 metres (6 feet) away from other people
- Small group** sizes should be kept to a minimum
- Don't arrange** to meet up with other groups
- Avoid** an area if it looks very busy and go somewhere else for your walk

Step 3:

Wash your hands!



- **Wash your hands properly with soap and regularly.** It is advised that we wash for 20 seconds, which is enough time to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice. [Here's a video to show you a good handwashing technique](#)
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
- Put used tissues into a bin immediately after use and wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Try to avoid touching your eyes nose and mouth

Following this advice can help to significantly lower your risk of catching and spreading the virus. It helps to remind yourself you are doing everything you can if you begin to worry about the virus.

There is no need to wear a mask because there is no evidence that there is a benefit if you are not sick. Only wear a mask if you are sick.

Step 4:

Find ways to relax

It's important to take time to look after yourself if you are experiencing a lot of stress and anxiety around the coronavirus. Take time to do some [self care](#) by doing things you enjoy or find relaxing, or download a meditation app or do some **breathing exercises**. A calming breathing exercise is to count to seven while you are breathing in and to eleven while you are breathing out, and repeat a few times.

Here's a little fish animation that can be a good start for you to learn how to relax your breathing. Link here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLbK0o9Bk7Q>



Step:5

Find stability



It can be difficult to feel like you have no control over a situation. Hearing news that the virus is spreading or being told that you can't go to school can make you feel like you've lost control. Making the choice to do something - even if it's just tidying up, doing some exercises at home, or watching something on TV - can help us to take back some of our sense of control.

While you're at home, try your best to adapt your routine to your new situation. Make sure to eat well, get some exercise, and check in with how you're feeling.

Keep on top of all that school work which is filling your inbox and Edmodo. Don't be afraid to e-mail your teachers if you need some help or extra time to complete work. Staying in touch with us will help you stay in touch with your normal life.

Stay in contact with your friends through social media. Be kind to each other!

Step 6:

Avoid checking for updates

With updates on the coronavirus all over the social media and the news, it can be hard to avoid hearing about it. However, try your best to avoid checking in regularly for updates - taking a look at the beginning or end of the day is fine so that you can keep yourself informed, but try not to allow news about the virus to be on your mind for the entire day.

Step 7:

Talk to someone

Sharing how you feel can be a great relief, so open up to someone about what's going on. Talk to your family and trusted friends. Have a cup of tea with your family members. If there are lots of conversations happening about the coronavirus, let people know that it makes you anxious, and ask if you can talk about something else instead.

If you find that you are struggling with your feelings, tell a trusted adult.

Remember to be kind to others during this time, and ask how your friends and family are feeling too. Many people will be feeling anxious, so this is an opportunity to support each other.



Lastly...

Above all else, stay safe, stay connected to your family, your friends through social media. Keep your body moving, get fresh air and remember that this strange, surreal time in all of our lives will pass and at some point, things will start to go back to normal.

Here's a little Pep Talk from Kid President. It's an old video, but it suits these strange times we're living in.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o>

Here is the factsheet about the State Exams.



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News on State Exams 19th March 2020

The Minister for Education, Joe McHugh TD, announced today that the following Oral and Practical State Exams are cancelled, due to Covid-19:

- **Oral tests in Leaving Certificate Irish** and the Modern Languages of **French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese.**
- Practical performance tests in Leaving Certificate Music.
- Practical performance tests in Junior Certificate Music and Home Economics.

All students who were due to take these tests will be awarded full marks for this portion of the exam.

What does this mean?

If you were due to take any of these tests, instead of taking it, you will automatically get all of the marks which were going for this section of the overall exam.

Example:

Leaving Certificate Irish Exam Structure

- **Oral Test** **40%**

- **Aural (Listening) Test** **10%**
- **Written Papers** **50%**

With the cancellation of the oral test, students will receive the full 40% for this section.

What about French and German?

The oral tests in French and German are worth 25% at Higher Level and 20% at Ordinary Level

What about project work?

The deadlines for project and course work have been extended until 15th May. This includes:

Leaving Certificate

Technology, Art, Agricultural Science, History, Geography, Religious Education, Politics and Society, Music, Construction Studies, Home Economics, PE and Computer Science.

Junior Cycle

Metalwork, Materials Technology Wood, Technology, Religious Education,

Junior Cycle Assessment Tasks

English, Irish, French, German, Science, Business Studies.

What about the rest of the practical exams?

All practical exams scheduled between 27th April and 8th May are still scheduled to go ahead.

Also:

- **The written LCVP exam scheduled on 6th May is still scheduled to go ahead**
- **The Oral and Practical LCA tests are still scheduled to go ahead**

What about the June Exams?

Minister McHugh was very clear that the plan is to go ahead with the rest of the State exams. The Leaving Cert and Junior Cycle exams in June will still go ahead, unless things change further. He promised that any further changes will be communicated quickly to students, but **there are no plans to cancel the June exams at present.**

Please contact Ms. O'Flanagan, Guidance Counsellor,

if you have any questions or concerns

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