



Dear Parents/Guardians

8 December 2020

The purpose of this letter is to make you aware of the alternative approach that we will be taking to Parent Teacher Meetings this year. As you are aware we cannot run our usual face-to-face parent teacher meetings due to the health restrictions currently in place.

Parent Teacher Meeting Alternatives

In place of Parent Teacher Meetings for the 2020/21 academic year we will be providing you with information about your son's/daughter's progress through the following means:

- We will provide an enhanced report for the first official school-based assessment carried out by teachers (5th year October assessment, 3rd and 6th year November assessment, 1st and 2nd year Christmas assessment. Transition Years have a TY graduation in lieu of a Parent Teacher Meeting);
- Comments on these reports shall be more detailed than usual and will give some specific advice regarding student progress and suggestions for improvement;
- Teachers will also continue to provide as much ongoing feedback to students as possible in class and through the Teams platform;
- As a follow-on to these reports year head, tutors or subject teachers will phone parents of students who they feel would benefit from some additional guidance. Due to time limitations this phone call will not be possible for every student. If you do not receive a phone call then your son/daughter is progressing well and the report should provide sufficient advice for future learning;
- However, if you have specific concerns about your son's/daughter's progress in a subject, please phone the school office and request a phone call from the subject teacher and this will be scheduled at a suitable time.

We will miss the presence of parents/guardians in our school building this year and the support you show for your students during their six years with us. Attendance of parents at our Parent Teacher Meetings is usually well above 85% and we really appreciate the ongoing involvement you have in your child's education.

We will continue to communicate with you as usual and our parent/guardian communication graphic on page 13 of the journal advises who to contact on a day-to-day basis should you have any concerns about your son/daughter. Please continue to link with us as needed and check our website www.lucancc.ie and Twitter accounts @lucancc1 and @LearningLucanCC for updates. We are continuing the process of gathering email addresses for all parents/guardians and we appreciate your prompt responses to the surveys we are sending for this purpose.

Parents Association

Our Parents Association are operating as usual, albeit in a remote setting. We encourage you to make contact with our new committee as they have monthly meetings planned for the year ahead and are a great way of communicating suggestions between the Parent/Guardian body and the school.

Email: lccparentsassoc@gmail.com Twitter: @LccAssoc or email/phone the school office and we can ask a member of the PA to contact you. They also have a Facebook presence.

Update on Protocols in place for keeping our school community healthy

We appreciate your ongoing communications with us about Covid-19 related issues and we know that while the protocols in place (e.g. wearing of masks, satellite rooms due to physical distancing in classrooms, lack of lockers, canteen or a full range of extra-curricular activities and other restrictions) due to the pandemic mean that school life is not *normal*, we are very proud of our student body for how well they have adapted to the restrictions in place. Our staff members continue to work extremely hard to keep classes running smoothly, to keep the school ventilated and sanitised and to cover the various educational courses as well as possible. Cooperation from the students ensures that as much time as possible can be spent on teaching and learning.

In many subjects this year's Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate **examination students** will have a wider choice of questions to answer with fewer mandatory questions and changes have been made to requirements for practical exams in order to reduce the pressure on students. The requirements for Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessments have also changed to help ease pressure on students. Teachers can offer specific advice and will do their best to prepare students for their exams but this will prove more challenging than usual in the current circumstances.

Transition Year students should now be trying to find suitable work experience placements for 1st to 12th February (including remote working opportunities) and we will have a back-up plan in place should it not be possible to run our work experience programme at this time.

Some small improvements from students are possible and we would appreciate your assistance by talking to your son/daughter about these points:

- The following people **cannot attend school**:
 - students experiencing any **symptoms** of Covid-19 (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/your-questions-answered/>);
 - students informed by the HSE that they are a **close contacts** of a positive case (<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/managing-coronavirus-at-home/if-you-live-with-someone-who-has-coronavirus.html>) The HSE will arrange testing for you and will tell you how many days you must restrict your movements;
 - students **awaiting results** of a Covid-19 test – you must follow the instructions of your doctor or HSE and you cannot be in school while you are waiting for a test result;
 - students who have a member of a family or **household** displaying symptoms and awaiting testing;
 - students who have **travelled abroad** and need to follow the national guidance to quarantine;
 - If in doubt, please keep your child at home and contact your GP and/or the school office to seek advice.
- **Punctuality and attendance** are always vital parts of school life. If a student is late for class in these times of restrictions it means that teachers have to pause the lesson in order to change their seating plan, the school roll and wait for the student to wipe down table and chair and join in the class activity. Please try to ensure that your student is on time for school and use the VSware system to monitor your student's attendance.
- We have a small supply of disposable masks that we keep in case a student's mask breaks or gets wet. However, we have a significant number of students who are arriving to school without a mask of their own. Please try to have a set of **3-layer fabric masks** available at home for use by your student. Students should carry a spare mask in their bag and masks should be washed daily.
- **Ventilation** means keeping classroom windows and doors open. In winter months is this a challenge and while we have the heating system running at full capacity, our outdoor school means that it is still a colder place to be than usual. Please ask your son/daughter to wear their **full uniform including school coat** and to wear thermals and layers under their uniform. Coats and scarfs can be worn in classrooms but hats may need to be removed to allow the teacher to identify the student (a mask and hat combination can make that hard!) There is a lighter and heavier option available for the school coat if needed.
- We are still encouraging as many students as possible to **go home for their lunch** as we do not have the capacity in school given the social distancing requirements, to provide space or supervision for all

students to stay in school for lunch. Parents & guardians, please work with us for the foreseeable future, in this regard.

- The easing of restrictions over the Christmas holidays is much needed as we use the festive season to gather in small numbers with family and friends. Please discuss the restrictions with your son/daughter and help them to see that their **actions over the coming weeks and months** are important to help us to get back to normal.
- Help your son/daughter to follow the **basic health guidelines** when outside school including: Keep masks on if closer than 2m to another person; use hand sanitiser regularly; keep physically distanced from others; meet outside or in well ventilated rooms.
- Once the **National vaccination programme** is in place we will communicate with you if schools are going to be used as part of the programme for distributing the vaccine to students. We have no information about this as yet.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we look forward to continuing to educate your son/daughter going forward and to moving towards a time when we can get back to normal, hopefully with a greater sense of appreciation of all we hold dear.

Yours sincerely

Diane Birnie
(Principal)