



Junior Cycle Update

22/04/2020

Dear Parents /Guardians/Students

Some Junior Cert students may be under the impression that they are on holidays. They need to understand that is not the case. Assessment will proceed as school based tests and students will have an end of year assessment.

In its Press Release of 10th April 2020, the State Examinations Commission set out the Minister's position *at that time* on the proposed assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle as:

1. At Junior Cycle, the written examinations are postponed and will be rearranged as school-based tests when schools reopen.
2. The decision to postpone the Junior Cycle examinations recognises the need to prioritise the running of the Leaving Certificate examinations in order to allow 6th year students to progress to higher and further education or to the world of work.
3. At Junior Cycle the SEC will provide schools with the examination papers and related materials they need to deliver these tests when schools reopen.
4. All of the remaining elements of the Junior Cycle, project work, coursework and assessment tasks, will also be rescheduled to that time.

As with all aspects of this year's state examinations, the Minister, DES officials and the SEC have been engaged in an extended and extensive consultation process with management bodies, teacher unions, parent and student representative organisations. The aim has been to develop clarity on all operational aspects of this year's examinations while adhering to government health guidelines and the key principles of integrity and equity.

In terms of assessment and reporting of this year's Junior Cycle, the following clarifications have now been issued by the Department:

1. Students in recognised schools are required to study subject and short courses in accordance with the Junior Cycle Programme as set out in DES Circular 0055/2019
2. Students are not required to undertake Junior Cycle final examinations in 2020
3. Schools are free to use the assessments provided through the NCCA and SEC, but they are also free to design and organise the assessment of students' progress in accordance with their own schools policies
4. Examination fees in respect of this year's Junior Cycle will not apply

In relation to the Junior Cycle examinations, Classroom-Based Assessments, Assessment Tasks and project work, the Minister believes that it would be preferable that discussions with the education partners are concluded before schools consider their assessment arrangements for Junior Cycle students in 2020.

A statement by the Minister is expected to issue soon.

We will keep you informed of developments as they emerge.

Kind regards and Stay safe

Michael Sullivan