



Scoil Thomáis

Laurel Lodge, Castleknock, Dublin 15, D15 VWO2
www.scoilthomais.ie

Return to Schooling: January 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians

As you are aware, the Department of Education confirmed that schools will not reopen as planned in January 2021 and as all schools are due to move to remote learning from Monday 11th January Scoil Thomáis will be activating our Remote Learning Plan with effect from this date. This plan was updated in November 2020 and is available on the school website www.scoilthomais.ie

Everyone in the school community, parents, pupils and school staff hoped that face to face schooling would be possible for the return to school this January but unfortunately the Covid 19 health crisis has necessitated the closure of schools until 1st February. Meanwhile we all must adhere to public health advice and stay at home as advised and comply with safety guidelines and hopefully the infection cases can reduce quickly to allow in-school life to resume for pupils and school staff very soon.

We know that pupils were looking forward to coming back to school after the Christmas break, were eager to see their teachers and SNAs and to meet their friends and to continue learning activities in their classrooms. Teachers and other school staff were ready to welcome the children back to school for the new school term. However the present reality is that whilst school buildings are closed for January, schooling for all classes must now be supported through remote learning led by individual class teachers and our Special Education team.

As a school staff we understand that the prospect of home schooling and learning from home may cause anxiety and stress for many parents/guardians especially those trying to juggle parenting and work duties. Please note that whilst we all agree that in-school teaching and learning is best, school staff will provide for and support learning activities appropriate to each class level in so far as is possible. Provision is also being made to provide specific support for SEN pupils as appropriate. We ask for everyone's patience and understanding at this time as there are challenges for parents, pupils and school staff in managing all the expectations and demands of remote learning. Please also understand that the school must also manage the availability of school staff at this time. Daily school time must be utilised by teachers for class level curriculum planning, assessment and feedback and communication during remote learning.

The school is aware that the context of each home is different and this will affect how and when learning can be supported at home for children. We know from the last experience of home learning in March - June 2020 that there will be many difficulties such as parents working from home, parents as front line workers required to work in challenging situations, those now unemployed, vulnerable family members at home, multiple demands on ICT devices and internet, members of family isolating/restricting movements due to Covid etc . All we ask is that everyone engages as much as they can reasonably do with home learning. Remember when school reopens. teachers will revise planned curriculum content for January to meet the needs of all pupils at that stage.

Please note the following points in relation to the organisation of remote learning in Scoil Thomáis:

- The school is currently planning for remote learning for three school weeks ie 11th -29th January and awaits DES information on return to school for 1st February. Our Class and SEN teachers will be finalising their remote learning plans from Monday 11th and will communicate with parents via Aladdin email from Monday 11th January in relation to their programme of learning for pupils. Please be sure to check your email from 12noon on Monday for teacher communication.
- The school will conduct a short survey (via google form to parent email) to look at areas such as access to ICT devices/Internet for home learning and how best to support parents and pupils with learning from home at this time. The results of this survey will help inform our ongoing planning for remote learning provision. The survey will be emailed to parents over the coming week so please be sure to respond.
- Pupils were given some of their core school books before Christmas break and most assigned work over the coming week will focus on using these school books - this should avoid the need for printing off pages of school work at home. Please email secretary@scoilthomais.ie if your child was absent on 21st/22nd December and did not collect his/her schoolbooks. The school will aim to facilitate collection of same.
- Teachers will not be undertaking 'live' teaching sessions during this remote learning time; however there will be some provision for online interaction with pupils. Teachers will inform parents of this format as necessary and will seek the necessary permission etc.
- All pupils now have access to Seesaw (Infants -3rd Classes) and Google Classroom (4th - 6th Classes) and these platforms will be used by teachers to post schoolwork. Pupils can also upload completed work for teacher feedback. Please check that you have your child's login for their account.
- If you need to make contact with your child's teacher during the upcoming school closure, please do so by email, within normal school hours that is 9a.m. to 3p.m. Monday to Friday. It would be helpful if parents would let teacher know if there are particular circumstances at home affecting your child's involvement in home learning activities ie sickness etc.
- The planned Relationships and Sexuality 'sensitive' Lesson due to be taught by teachers during the week of 11th January at all class levels will now be postponed until face to face classes resume.
- Don't forget that RTE School Hub and Joe Wicks Activities will resume on Monday 11th January as a further support for families at home. Also check www.scoilthomais.ie for regular school updates.

At this time of uncertainty in the midst of a public health pandemic our priority is that everyone remains safe and that there is a focus on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing for both adults and children. Please do not stress too much about schoolwork and keep positive and connected with your child's teacher over the coming weeks. That's the update for now in advance of remote schooling on Monday 11th January 2021.

New Year Wishes from **Principal Mary McGarry, Mary Ryan, Deputy Principal and Scoil Thomáis school staff.**
Dated 9th January 2021

Junior Infants Places for September 2021: Applications for Admission to Junior Infants for September 2021 are now being accepted. The application form is available to download on www.scoilthomais.ie
Please complete and add the required supporting documents and ORIGINAL bills.
Your completed application may be posted to the school or dropped into the letter box at the school office from 10- 2pm. To gain access to the school please come to the Castleknock Vale Gate and ring the school office at 8201022. Applications CANNOT be sent by email. Please note that applications for Sept 2021 Junior Infants are being accepted from 11th to 29th January 2021 as per Admission Notice. Please read Scoil Thomáis Admissions Policy and Admission Notice for further information.