**Information Bulletin 18-03-2020**

Dear Guardian/Parent/Student/Teacher,

I hope this email finds you well during these unprecedented times. Further to the Government’s decision to close schools to support efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. I am writing to advise you of school continuity measures taken to date by Ramsgrange Community School and some advice for the days ahead.

* **Thursday 12-03-2020** 
  + All Students were briefed on the imminent school closure. We spent time talking to our exam students in particular.
  + In the afternoon, all students were given time to go to their lockers and collect what they needed to bring home with them.
  + We ensured that all students had access to their Microsoft Office 365 school email.
    - [www.office.ie](http://www.office.ie)
    - Username is [firstnamelastname@ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie](mailto:firstnamelastname@ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie)
      * E.g. [johnmurphy@ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie](mailto:johnmurphy@ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie)
    - If your child requests a password reset, I will do so remotely and text the new password to the parent/guardian’s number on the system.
    - Teachers have been instructed to only correspond via official school email (excluding social media platforms). If your child contacts a teacher from their personal email, this will not be responded to.
  + Teachers issued revision guidelines to support students’ continued engagement with the curriculum during the closure. Teachers had been preparing or students and work for this closure.
  + The school closed following a directive issued by the Department of Education and Skills (DoES).
* **Monday 29-03-2020**
  + Provisional return date to school.
    - If the DoES confirms we can open I am inviting students to bring a small hand towel, soap and hand sanitizer in a plastic zip-lock bag. The school was struggling to source new dispensers and hand sanitizer prior to our closure as the HSE had understandable priority.
    - In the interim, the school will continue with actions to prepare for our return to the school in Ramsgrange.

The following guidance is to support students as they prepare for their summer/state examinations.

* **The State Examinations Commission** (SEC) will circulate guidance on contingency arrangements if they are required.
  + The school will communicate any such arrangements through normal channels such as SMS, student emails, VSware, and social media.
  + If the practicals and orals are postponed for our students, it is essential to note they will be delayed for all students across the country. Please check for accurate updates on the [SEC website](http://www.examinations.ie).
  + We have been informed by NAPD that the orals have been rescheduled until after the Easter holidays. Please continue to prepare for these.
* **Examination Years**
  + Our teachers will endeavour to support you as a matter of priority through blended learning (online support & work assigned to you before closure).
  + Your current school timetable provides you with an excellent structure to organise your day. If parents could encourage their daughter(s)/son(s) to submit assigned work, we would be most grateful. Please urge them to do so within agreed timeframes.

[www.studyclix.ie](http://www.studyclix.ie)

**This is free to EVERY student and teacher in the school. I sent the access code via text and all students should have it.**

**Free teacher access**

* All the teaching staff at all schools in Ireland can set up a free account using your school's teacher access code. Just get in touch if you don't know this code and we can send it on along with instructions for your staff.
* Teachers can use our Exam Builder to set their students worksheets remotely and our Quiz Builder that allows your staff to set their students quizzes that can be shared with their students. Once students have taken the quiz the teacher gets a full report showing individual student's performance in that quiz.

**Student access**

* + Students can use Studyclix to manage their own learning online. Aside from the usual features such as questions by topic, videos, notes and quizzes there is also increased levels of live support via live chat tool on the site. The content and learning tools on Studyclix are structured such that they are specific and targeted to the year that student is in (1st - 6th) as well as their chosen subjects.

Other online resources include:

* + - [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)
    - <https://irevise.com/ie> (Additional notes and tutorials)
    - [www.examinations.ie](http://www.examinations.ie) (Past exam papers and marking schemes)
    - [www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)
    - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html>
    - [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie) – (Education related news)
    - [www.kiddle.co](http://www.kiddle.co)
    - www.holyfamilyns.ie/gaeilge
    - http://www.getepic.com
    - http://www.storylineonline.net
    - http://www.scoilnet.ie
    - World book (access through Scoilnet.ie)
    - Learning paths (access through Scoilnet.ie)
    - http://www.storyjumper.com
    - http://www.makebeliefscomix.com
    - http://www.pobble365.com
    - http://www.kahoot.com
    - http://www.mathsbot.com
    - http://www.splashlearn.com
    - http://www.mindmeister.com
    - Scratch online – https://scratch.mit.edu/
    - http://www.code.org
    - http://www.hourofcode.com/ie
    - Nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs and other interactive games
    - http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/learning-activities/languages/words/naming-nouns/
    - Discuss types of language and words
    - http://www.eduplace.com/tales/index.html
    - Science week website
    - http://www.science.ie/
    - Resource section
    - http://www.science.ie/resources/primary-schools/
    - Climate kids website
    - http://climatekids.nasa.gov/
    - BBC science
    - http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/science/
    - Bill Nye the Science guy
    - http://billnye.com/#educational
    - Bob the builder
    - http://www.bobthebuilder.com/usa/index.asp
    - Brain pop science
    - https://www.brainpop.com/science/
    - Science bug
    - http://www.sciencebug.org/
    - Marine institute lesson plans on Science
    - http://www.marine.ie/Home/site-area/areas-activity/education-outreach/science?language=en
    - Engineer girl
    - http://www.engineergirl.org/
    - Schoolearthed
    - http://www.schoolearthed.ie/
    - European Space Agency kids website
    - http://www.esa.int/esaKIDSen/
    - Engineering Europe project
    - http://www.engineer-project.eu/
    - Teacher created science activities
    - A group of lesson plans for experiments in the classroom.
    - http://www.primaryscience.ie/activities\_advanced\_search.php?type=teacher\_created&page=1
    - Bird watch Ireland.
    - There is a kidszone which contains 18 projects for children based on birds around the school.
    - http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/
    - Paddy Madden’s school garden videos
    - Commissioned by The Blackrock Education Centre, Paddy Madden and Tomás Ó Briain created a series of short videos aimed at teachers and students who wish to carry out projects in their school garden. There is a different series of videos for each month of the year.
    - http://schoolearthed.ie/paddys-school-garden/video-index.html
    - Habitats
    - A website full of primary resources
    - https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary
    - New Zealand science resources
    - http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/
    - Huge App list, one for each day of the year:
    - http://project252.donenda.com
    - [www.educationonair.withgoogle.com – (For staff)](http://www.educationonair.withgoogle.com – (For staff))
* **Non-Examination Years**
  + Over time as teachers build their capacity for online engagement, they will issue guidance to students in non-exam years to support their ongoing engagement with the curriculum in due course.
  + Parents are encouraged to get their son(s) or daughter(s) to organise and create a bank of flashcards, mind maps and other suitable study aids.
* **Wellbeing**
  + We would encourage you to stay in contact with your friends. Please do NOT hang around in gangs/crowds. Peer learning is one of the most effective methods to support curriculum engagement. Use technology ***sensibly*** to connect and learn together.
  + Breaks, exercise and healthy diets are crucial to staying healthy.
* **Subject Choice for 2020-2021**
  + The deadline for subject choice is March 18th 2020. This relates to 3rd and TY students only. This year we are choosing subjects on rcs.vsware.ie, If you have any issues accessing Vsware, please contact Ms. O’ Connor via email asap. If you have been offered a place in TY or LCA you still are required to choose your preferred 6 subjects online.
* **All years – General study guidance**

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| **Timetable subject** | **Learning Activity** | **Preparing for assessment** | **Assessment**  **at the end of the week** |
| History – Pick a topic in your textbook | Make notes/mindmaps/flashcards on the topic under review | Use irevise/studyclix to identify questions from past papers and prepare answers and notes | Use studyclix to create exam questions to test themselves. |

This is an unprecedented situation, and the school community is conscious that in these difficult times, we will come together to find solutions. We always work in the best interest of our students. It is an unusual time for us all, and we need to work together to delay and limit the transmission of the COVID-19 virus. **We encourage parents to emphasise the importance of social distancing to all in their care, so we as a nation can protect the most vulnerable in our communities.**

I also want to acknowledge that many of our students might find the uncertainty of the forthcoming weeks quite unsettling. I want to take this opportunity to reassure parents and students alike that the SEC and DoES have always made decisions which are student-centred and mindful of the immediate environment.

We have no control over what decisions the state agencies make; we do, however, have control over what actions we can take. So please remain focused on your study schedules and your preparations for the state examinations.

At this juncture, I would also like to say that that our teaching staff are the most professional, dedicated and invested teachers I have had the pleasure and privilege of ever working with. I know that they will do their very best to support our students through this difficult and uncertain time. However, many of our teachers have young families that they too are at home taking care of, our teachers too are social distancing, our teachers too are caring for those vulnerable within their own families, our teachers are also trying their very best to keep your child informed.

So, I would like to thank our staff for their assistance and proactive actions to support your daughter(s) and son(s).

The staff and your daughter(s)/son(s) are a credit to our school community.

If you wish to contact me, I am available at rachel.oconnor@ramsgrangecommunityschool.ie .I will make every effort to respond to your query promptly and support you in any way I can.

Yours sincerely,

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Rachel O’ Connor, **Principal**