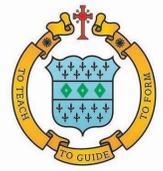


CB STAFF NEWS



March 2020



A message from Mairéad

Dear Fellow Colleagues,

It's hard to believe the pace of change for us in the educational field since last Thursday 12th March. Who would have thought an obscure and unusually named virus from a far corner of the planet could have closed all the schools and have us teachers remote teaching from home? Indeed, since last Thursday the pace of change and the effects on how we are living our lives in Ireland has been dramatic. If ever there was a time to remember that wonderful poem The Desiderata by Max Erhamm where we are advised to stay calm and be wise.... now is the time. I thought the following lines taken from the poem particularly apt

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with dark imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.....

And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.



During this time of upheaval, social distancing, constant washing of hands etc., it's time to remember all that makes us good. The way, as a group of teachers we have gotten together, embraced the new technology, supported and helped each other with truly no real way of knowing when this is all going to end has been inspiring. From our senior leadership team, lead so effectively by Marie-Thérèse, all our postholders, the teachers who are stepping up to provide help and resources to us all, our admin and office staff who are a constant presence and support and our SNAs has been very reassuring and indeed our caretakers who are keeping the school secure and safe, makes me believe that in this time of difficulty and struggle, we will prevail.

Our primary duty as educators is to our students. At this time, their need for stability and reassurance will be crucial. Providing them with that stability and structure will be our contribution to all those hard working and selfless Health Care workers. I am so proud of them and I believe we can support them by ensuring that we continue to provide stability and an effective learning environment for all our students. The negative reports about teachers at the weekend is not who we are in Coláiste Bríde.

To this end, many resources, learning apps and websites are there, to provide us with material to make our work easier. Some worth-

while sites to pay attention to are Scoilnet and PDST websites. These are websites many of us use in our daily work, but they contain very good lesson plans etc. – no point in reinventing the wheel here. Sarah-Jayne has also created a bank of videos to help those of us engaging with teams to help get people more comfortable with the tech. Furthermore, Orla Coughlan has agreed to put in a video in Teams to show teachers how to access material suitable for our SEN students. All these videos are available on the team site called Teachers Remote. Please feel free to use this space if you think you could contribute to furthering our professional knowledge.

Finally, for those of you who are on Twitter a very good resource for all things educational now is #edshareie. Great stuff is being shared here. It was set up over the weekend by committed educationalists to help with the situation we find ourselves in. Sarah-Jayne and I will endeavour to keep you informed of any tech developments that may be useful to you. I will be sending out a staff newsletter on all things Teaching and Learning so if you have any ideas or come across anything useful please let me know. I can include it in the newsletter.



Wash your hands for 20 secs  **Use a tissue for coughs**  **Avoid touching your face**



On another note it is very important that we keep a record of what work we do with our students. The Dept of Education will want accountability and it will be up to us as professionals to ensure traceability of our work. Remember, during the snow days crisis back in 2018, we had to ensure the same. It is one reason why working on Teams is so good, as you can record your work with your classes, and you can save your work to the Cloud. This process neatly avoids all GDPR issues with students. Just a note to remind you of the importance of turning off the record button when your teaching is done,

we don't need a record of any unexpected student- teacher exchanges... flowery language is not a departmental requirement!!

The Wellbeing of ourselves and our students at this critical time is very important. I know that many of you are very conscious of your responsibilities but it's now about embedding all the new practices that we have been learning. We need to remind ourselves that we have so much done and have huge capacity.



Remember Marie-Thérèse's advice

Slow, Steady and Simple is the way to go.

Take a deep breath, be kind to yourself – learning new technology can be draining and challenging, learn to turn off your camera, be engaged with your students but set

clear boundaries. No one is expecting you to be on-line for hours on end. Like you do in the physical classroom, establish boundaries for the virtual classroom as well. Be polite online, remember if you start an online call, be the last to leave and remember we are all in this together.

I was listening to the catholic priest from Celbridge Fr. Joe McDonald talking about how, in this time of crisis prayers can help us. When God's plans for the universe are not clear, taking time out to pray and meditate can only help. He's an inspirational priest and listening to him was calming. For those of you who would like to commune with God, the following link might provide you with some celestial wisdom!!

<https://twitter.com/CatholicBishops/status/1240040257317482500?s=09>

That's it folks, sorry for the long message! I will be keeping in regular touch but future messages will be shorter. For now stay calm, stay focused and don't lose hope.

Kind regards
Mairéad Earley
Deputy Principal

And the people stayed home.
And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed.
And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

Word of the Day

PATIENT

(adj.) bearing pains or trials calmly or without complaint; steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity

Goal:

Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting. Be patient and stay positive as better days are coming.

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Self-Care Tips FOR VIRTUAL TEACHING

- **Set "office hours."** It is easy to let working from home creep into every hour of your day, because your "classroom" is always with you. Set a time by which you will sign-off your email and computer, as if you were leaving the building for the day.
- **Have a routine. Write it down.** Keep it similar to what you normally do. Get up and shower, have breakfast, and get ready for the day. Add things like mindfulness, gratitude, movement breaks. Sense of routine staves off depression and mitigates anxiety.
- **Practice Mindfulness.** Utilize the Free version of Calm.com. Try the 7 Days of Calm challenge. Also Headspace for Educators is free, and so is Insight Timer. Always be mindful of your breathing.
- **Have a dedicated workspace, if possible.** This signals to your brain that it's time to work, and then signals the end of work when you leave. It also sets a boundary between work and the rest of your life. It doesn't have to be a full room, it can be a corner of a room where your laptop and materials stay.
- **End your work day with something purposeful** to signify to your brain that you are done working. Maybe a few stretches away from your computer. A cup of tea. Something that lets your brain know work is done.
- **Take breaks during the day.** No, not your lunch with students over video chat (though, do that too if you can!) A time for you to take some deep breaths. Schedule these into your day.
- **Try new things with family/those in your home.** Use the time together to do a project you've been putting off, a craft that's been sitting in the closet. If you have good online resources for others to use, share them. Google "12 Virtual Tours of Famous Museums" - this could be a great thing to do remotely.
- **Make some healthy meals.** Eat the best whole foods you have access to. Get creative in the kitchen if you can. Nutrition is key to our immune system, and also to our mental health.
- **Don't get cooped up. Get outside.** If you can sit outside while you film a teaching video, do it. If you can take a walk, do it. If you can just sit and have some coffee outside before other people in your house wake up, do it.
- **Have a Check-In Buddy.** Someone you feel comfortable with that you can reach out to and talk to, outside of your home. Set a time to check-in and video chat. Try not to "talk shop" too much.
- **Get enough sleep.** Working from home can impact sleep patterns. Be sure you are getting enough rest. Try to keep it similar to your regular sleep schedule. If you're having trouble sleeping Calm has free sleep stories, and there are many sleep podcasts.

YOU'VE GOT THIS! ❤️ @rebeccamoeri