

# Presentation Secondary School, Waterford



Principal: Orla Bolger



## **Our Changing School Environment**

Since the scramble on 12<sup>th</sup> March to ensure that all students had emails distributed, and that everybody was adequately armed with books, notes and other resources for the weeks ahead, learning and teaching has taken on a very different guise in the Pres. Team sports have been replaced by Microsoft teams, and break-time chatting in the social area has been replaced with social distancing and on-line chat, and terms such as 'remote teaching' and 'distance learning' have made their way into our daily vernacular.

## **Continued Teaching and Learning**

As a school, the entire school community has taken on the task of replicating the functions of a school without the actual school building. The extenuating circumstances we found ourselves in saw us all experimenting with new technology, learning new skills, and exploring new methods of teaching to continue to provide learning opportunities for our students.

Using a blend of resources from the Office 365 suite, Zoom, texts to parents, our school website, and the postal system, daily contact is maintained with all students, who have the opportunities to participate in virtual lessons, upload and submit work, and seek clarity from their teachers. Contact is maintained with all families through the year head system, with phone calls home to offer practical support and encouragement to students who may be finding it difficult to participate in the new ways of learning.

Our Leaving Cert students continue to be our priority, and each student has been scheduled to engage in a one-to-one virtual meeting with the Guidance department to ensure that she remains motivated and focused, in spite of the lack of clarity that still surrounds the Leaving Cert exam.

## **Physical and Mental Health**

The PE, SPHE, Guidance, and Religion departments have also been working very hard to ensure that students and staff are not neglecting our physical and mental health needs. We are provided with regular information, uplifting messages, and practical exercises to encourage us as we navigate through these difficult times. The 'Thought for the Day', posted on our school Twitter account also helps us all to stay positive and motivated.

The PRES (**P**lease **R**emember to **E**xercise **S**afely) challenge, devised by the school PE department has also been put in place to prevent any of us from getting lazy! This is an intensive, enjoyable weekly fitness programme, for which students can earn credits, around normal daily activities that can be done at home or within our 2km limit.

We may be uncertain of what lies ahead for our school in the coming weeks, but what is certain is that our classrooms may be empty, but Pres Waterford is most definitely not closed for learning and teaching!

*Orla Bolger*

*Principal, Presentation Secondary School, Waterford*