

Hi everyone,

I hope this finds you all well, safe and happy. I am thinking about you all, both students and staff, as three weeks ago yesterday, St Kevin's Community College shut its doors. As we are approaching Easter, you are all in my thoughts and prayers especially all of those in our school community affected directly by the virus in different ways.

Many of you have a family member who works in a Hospital, the civil service, homeless charities, grocery shops or the defence forces, to name a few. These people are at the centre of this pandemic and have shown us how vital they are in our everyday lives at this testing time. They deserve all our respect and admiration during this time. Maybe, if you know someone who is risking their health on a daily basis, you can let them know that you are grateful for their hard work.

I am also thinking about, and praying for, those in our lives who have had to cancel important plans such as birthdays, family functions, weddings, communions, confirmations, holiday's concerts, matches and so on. Once this has blown over, you will have a chance to celebrate. I hope these events are even more enjoyable than you first thought. They say 'Absence makes the heart grow fonder' and in this case I have no doubt it will.

I am also very sympathetic to our third year and sixth students during this time. An event like this has not happened in my lifetime so I have no idea what it must be like for you all, especially with the lack of information out there on what is going to happen. I am sure it can be hard to keep motivated without being in school, but keep going. Do what you can do and know that there is a community of staff there for you on the internet to offer guidance and to give help. Keep a timetable, set up a quiet space to work in and most importantly, keep going!!!

For all students and staff who may be feeling extra anxious during these times, Aware are offering an online life skills programme you can register to do – check out www.aware.ie/education/life-skills-online-programme . Their site also gives good advice for managing your mental well-being at this time. aware.ie/information/covid-19-and-awares-services/ .

Many mobile apps have made themselves free to use during this time and are worth checking out here: <https://covid19.shanehastings.eu/giveback/> . I highly recommend downloading the headspace app and using it during this time. I also hope you are all following the guidelines outlined by the Irish government and helping to stop the spread of the virus (Here is a reminder if you need it: www.rte.ie/news/2020/0325/1126413-time-off-school-coronavirus/). The Ember team are putting together a message for staff and students at this time, which you will be able to find on the schools Facebook and Twitter page shortly.

I really hope you all are well and happy. Enjoy your time with your loved ones, and have a Great Easter.

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