



Our Lady's Grove Secondary School

Our Lady's Grove, Goatstown Road, Dublin 14

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We have just printed, packaged, labelled and sealed the last of the Junior Cycle assessments. They will be collected for external correction this afternoon. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your assistance in facilitating an entire suite of State Exams online. As far as we know, we are one of the first schools to attempt this and you all deserve considerable acclaim for the part you have played.

Of course, there were teething problems. We forewarned everyone about the potential for these. From the technical side there are so many variables with wifi, individual device settings, device size and storage etc. However, the manner in which problems were addressed and overcome in partnership with those of you at home, was deeply appreciated.

We took the decision to offer these exams for a number of reasons:

- The danger of listlessness and disengagement
- Independent Formative/Diagnostic feedback for students on work invested
- Feedback for teachers on how best to approach the remainder of Junior Cycle
- Indicative experience of multi-day State Examinations

We are aware that what we facilitated is not an exact replica of traditional exams but in the context, it was the best we could offer. We were very flexible with time, allowing the girls what they needed to complete exams. In addition, in the interests of the girls receiving fair feedback, we have clearly marked questions where they collectively experienced technical problems and have communicated to the company about the challenges of typing/drawing answers. Teachers will review scripts when they are returned, before they are distributed to students.

The girls deserve a lot of credit in how they have taken on this challenge and overcome it. This experience, although challenging, will add to their confidence and resilience. Our experience would suggest that the 'fear of the unknown' can be a significant contributory factor to anxiety in young people. The girls have vanquished this particular unknown. From what we have observed over the last two weeks, this cohort should now look towards senior cycle with self-confidence and vigour.

Kind regards

Colm Dooley

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