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5<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parent(s)/Guardians(s)

Working and studying from home during Level 5 restrictions this half term has been particularly stressful for students, staff and their families. I know we are all looking forward to the mid-term break despite the limitations.

Following a brief review of the progress of remote learning since 11<sup>th</sup> January, we will be trialing a *cameras on* policy from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February for one week only. Students should log in to class with cameras on and may then be asked by teachers to turn cameras off at different stages of the class. Students have also been given access to some school backgrounds and they should be used. It is hoped that camera use will help address the sense of isolation being experienced by some students and encourage greater class engagement and socialization. We are aware that there may be some technical issues relating to Wi-Fi and devices as well as reluctance on the part of some students to be on screen but we would ask that parents encourage students to engage with the trial for one week. We have spoken with all students except TY.

We are also aware of the amount of time being spent by students in front of their screens. Classes are finishing five to ten minute before the due time and students should use the time to move, stretch and give their eyes a rest. A Challenge Wheel has been sent to all students that will give them the opportunity to break up their day. No homework is being set on Wednesday for all students and teachers have been asked not to set homework for 1<sup>st</sup> years in the option subjects next week and where possible set assignments for completion in class time. First years in particular study a large number of subjects are spending a disproportionate amount of time doing work after the end of the school day.

We hope to have some information next week about the anticipated reopening of schools and some guidelines regarding the Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations. Be assured we will pass on the news to you and the students. Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February has been set aside by the JCT as a whole-school in-service day for all staff and there will be no classes for students that day.

Yours sincerely

Deirdre Gogarty

**Principal**