

# *Drumshanbo Vocational School*

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Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I wish you and your family a happy 2021. Clearly this is not the start to the school year that we had all hoped for. We're back to the on-line teaching and learning but of course we are all hoping to have all of our students back in the classrooms as soon as possible. In the meantime, all of our classes are taking place on-line. This 'blended learning' model, as it is known will be a combination of many 'live' classes, some recorded classes and some assignments given to students for independent research. As you know we are using Microsoft Office Teams as our platform for all classes and all of our students have access to the full Microsoft Office suite, using their username (dvs e mail address) and password.

While we have all learned a lot from our experience during the last lockdown, there may still be issues that we cannot resolve satisfactorily, such as poor broadband coverage for some of our students and teachers. Teaching on-line presents many other challenges, in particular for the practical subjects and for some students with additional educational needs. There are also challenges for parents, trying to provide quiet learning spaces and access to devices.

In so far as possible, classes are to take place in accordance with the students' normal timetable. Roll call will be taken for each class so if your child cannot attend, you should let the Year Head know using the attendance app on VSware as you normally would.

Teachers will let the students know, in advance their plan for the week ahead – when classes will be live or recorded and when students are expected to be doing assignments independently. Students can contact their teachers directly via TEAMS if they have any queries. Parents that need to contact Teachers, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor or Learning Support Co-ordinator should do so by e mail to the teachers address and not via the student TEAMS. Year Heads can also be contacted via the VSmile if you have downloaded the VSware app.

Students need to be aware that normal school rules apply. If any student uses the MSoffice platform inappropriately or refuses to co-operate with the teacher, their access rights will be removed. If there is poor engagement with the process, the Year Head will contact you.

I know there are many questions we do not have the answer to at the moment such as the status of practical exams & orals for Leaving Cert or CBAs for Junior Cert. We hope to be able to update you on mock exams before the end of this week. First Year parents will be concerned that their child may not get to try one of the options subjects. The plans we put in place to resolve this issue depends very much on when the school can re-open for students.

We have a number of useful links at the bottom of the home page of our web-site on using Teams and Vsware.

Please check in to this web-site from time to time as I will be using this to update you.

Yours sincerely

Martin Fallon