

Email received from education.gov.ie dated 13th May 2021

Dear Principal,

Further to the Department's letter of 5th May to school principals, it has come to the attention of the Department that some post primary schools have/or are planning to have end of year celebrations that potentially undermine current public health guidelines.

Schools should not have end of year graduations ceremonies for sixth year students in whole year groups or facilitate the attendance of parents or other family members either on the school premises or in any other locations.

It is very important not to carry out any activities that may put sixth year students at risk of exposure to COVID-19 particularly in the last remaining days before the commencement of the Leaving Certificate examinations. Schools should also strongly encourage students to act responsibly and not to attend any social events such as 'raves' or other events leading to large congregations or smaller events in houses which greatly increase the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Accredited Grades will be provided to any candidate, eligible to receive them, who are unable to attend for any of their examinations for COVID related reasons set out above; due to other medical emergencies including hospitalisation; or in the event of a bereavement. There will be no alternative sitting of any of the examinations at the 2021 Leaving Certificate for any circumstances including bereavement. This contingency measure applies in the case of a candidate being unable to attend for their examinations and equally in circumstances where it might not prove possible to provide examinations such as if there is a more significant disruption such as a school closure or a local, county, regional or national lockdown.

Furthermore it is important to note that schools are required to continue in-school learning for all year groups, including sixth year students until the 28th May to ensure that the minimum of 167 days of tuition is delivered. Schools can close earlier if the required number of days has been delivered before the 28th May. However, developing schools that do not have Leaving Certificate students may remain open in the week of 31 May to 4 June to fulfil the requirement to provide the minimum of 167 days of tuition.