

Loreto Convent School Gibraltar



13 Europa Road, Gibraltar, GX11 1AA
Email Office: admin@loreto.gi

Telephone: +350 20075781
Email Accounts: accounts@loreto.gi

Fax: +350 20044889
Website: www.loreto.gi

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Dear Parents,

First and foremost, I would like to thank you for your unstinted support at this uncertain time. Your emails and words of praise for the school and for the teachers have meant a great deal to us all. As we start the Easter vacation period, I would like to take time to share with you the plans for schooling as we move forward.

This period will go down in history as one giving rise to anxiety and uncertainty for teachers, parents and pupils alike. When faced with the closure of school, staff responded in a characteristically supportive and robust manner.

During lengthy meetings, we reviewed options, always keeping our key Loreto values at the core of our discussions. We are proud of our school, our heritage and our traditions and will strive to do the very best for all our pupils. As a staff, we felt strongly that we wanted, as far as possible, to deliver the curriculum, so that our children do not miss out. Teachers and assistants worked long hours to upload relevant learning material on to the SharePoint Resource and parents were given login and passwords to access it. We are proud of this huge achievement and will continue to deliver it for the duration of the school closure.

As requested by parents, the material for the following week will be uploaded by 5pm on the Friday before, allowing you to plan in advance. We are committed to making this Learning Resource as user friendly as possible and working hard on the quality and ease of instruction. As we move into Week 3, which will be available from Friday 17th April, please keep the following in mind:

- You will find the work interspersed with video clips / teaching points presented by teachers
- We will be setting up small group sessions with your child's teacher. This will start with a half hour session on the week commencing 20th April via Microsoft Teams
- Extra activities will be provided by the Library, Music, PE and Nursery departments
- Support for Spanish families will be provided by Miss Mir and Ms. Fernandez
- SEN will be ongoing with Mrs Byrne
- Science lessons will be introduced once a week by Mrs Garner for years 4 – 7
- Wednesday lunchtime chess sessions will take place
- A weekly communication will keep you updated on new items coming up
- Reach out to us if you need help. We are all on a learning curve and need to support each other.

I know that some parents have requested full time online teaching. This has been thoroughly investigated and is not feasible. Following extensive discussion with colleagues both locally and world-wide, we are confident that a combination of the Learning Resource and some online meetings, activities and teaching is the right way forward for us. Many schools which have gone down the online working route are struggling, parents and children too. What may be possible for a small group of secondary age students does not translate to a class of primary age pupils. Likewise, we have considered some of the 'ready-made' platforms which some schools are using. They are activity based and do not cover what we, as a school, want to deliver. We are ambitious for our children and do not want to tread water.

We will be opening up discussion forums with class reps over the next two weeks and will be happy to take onboard your comments and act on anything we think will enhance our provision. With a high level of communication and collaboration, we will make our response the best it can possibly be.

Teachers will be signing off for the next two weeks as they prepare their timetables for small group meetings on Teams. Please look out for some Easter challenges which I will be sending for children, should they wish to be creative!

At this time of year, we would normally be in the process of distributing fee invoices for the summer term of school. However, we are in exceptional times and are sensitive to the challenges we are all facing. Thus, we are postponing the billing process until after the Easter holidays and the payment due date will be extended accordingly until the end of May. This grace period will hopefully be appreciated as we continue to support each other through these worrying times.

The Spring term has ended in an unexpected and unprecedented way. Traditional Easter Egg hunts and the much anticipated Pupils v. Teachers matches did not take place and the school building remains quiet. However, the resident blackbirds chatter and sing in the Palm Tree Playground, the wisteria is coming into bloom and will soon be delightful. When the sun shines, the light filters through into Chapel and we light candles and pray for the school community, for our town and for the world.

I leave you with a message from His Lordship, Bishop Carmel.

Dear Parents, students and staff of Loreto School.

We have come to the end of this term in an unforeseen manner. We are living in an unprecedented situation, due to which the Health Authorities have advised us to stay at home and keep social distance for our own safety and protection from the Corona virus.

Unfortunately, we couldn't end the term with the usual celebrations and activities.

The Headmistress Louise Napoli together with the school staff have done their very best to face this situation and to do what is best for the students in the circumstances. We have followed the advice given by Government and our Health Authorities, and once it was clear that the school was not able to continue its normal functioning it was agreed to keep in touch with parents and pupils through the platform of online learning. I hope that this has been a great help for both parents and children.

The celebration of the passion, death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ this coming week in a way is an assurance that after this period of social distancing and lack of community sharing, this period of suffering and loss will be conquered. We will, with the help of God, experience a kind of resurrection when we are ready to go back to a normal way of life. It is possible that the kind of life we may be leading after this extraordinary situation will be quite different from the kind of life we have experienced before all this happened. Yet we are confident that as a community we will pull together to help where help is needed and to accept help when this is necessary.

It is my duty to encourage you to pray in this period for those who are not usually in the front pages, but who are risking their own lives in caring for those who become ill: doctors, nurses, medical personnel, carers and cleaners, volunteers and all those working in essential services who are doing their utmost to protect us and to help us when experiencing difficulties.

I would like to thank you, parents, for your understanding and support to the school in these extraordinary circumstances. Once they are over and we are able to get together again in Loreto School, we will get together to celebrate and to thank God for keeping us safe and to thank the Virgin Mary for her protective care as our heavenly mother. May God bless us and look after us as our Good Shepherd.

Carmel+

Wishing you a peaceful, reflective and safe Easter from all at Loreto and we hope you enjoy the attached video clip [Click here to play the video.](#)

Best wishes,

Louise Napoli