

Dear Mr Goggins,

As parents of students preparing for the June 2020 Baccalaureate exam, we have a few thoughts about contingency measures being planned in case of school closure or widespread quarantine due to the coronavirus outbreak and in particular measures to mitigate the impact of such a situation on Bac students. These relate to three areas:

- the use of online/remote learning tools to ensure pedagogical continuity and the complete coverage of the syllabus by end of year
- the possibility to make changes to the format, content or requirements for the Bac examinations
- communication to universities/higher education institutions where kids are intending to apply based on Bac results (or have received an offer contingent on a particular Bac result)

Online/Remote Learning Possibilities

We think it is important that our school, like many of the schools across Europe, prepare for the eventuality of an extended remote learning period by students of all ages and stages. (See annex for measures proposed.) In this case, we believe that the S7 and S6 classes should be prioritised in the planning, and highest priority should be given to supporting teachers of S7 and S6 Baccalaureate preparatory courses. Particular consideration should also be given to those teaching key S5 and S4 Bac preparatory courses leading to harmonised exams.

Baccalaureate Examinations

As we understand, the possibilities to make changes to the content or format of the written Bac exams are very limited. The development of each year's Baccalaureate exam is a drawn out and extremely controlled process, and we understand that changes at late notice would put into question the quality of exams and trustworthiness of results. Moreover, as teachers are given relative freedom over the order and manner in which they teach the syllabus, there would be little coherence in the content gaps from school to school and class to class.

That being said, we think there is some scope for adjustment in the oral Bac exams, which are presided over by teams comprising the students' teacher and an external examiner. In this case, the examining team could easily limit in advance any questions which may not have been covered in a class due to school closure. We believe this contingency should be considered by the Bac Unit, which might establish fair and transparent procedures to enable this.

As for the possibility to adapt the actual marking criteria/instructions or adjust scores, here we hope that the Bac Unit will prepare contingency measures (e.g. special instructions for Bac examiners) in the case that schools are closed and be ready to make further adjustments if any notable anomalies are found in the student results.¹

We assume that any needed adjustments to the non-centralised exams/tests would happen at the level of each school's subject coordination team, but this should be ensured as well.

Communication to Tertiary Institutions

Even if above measures are considered, we think that it is still necessary for school career guidance team to prepare in advance a communication to be sent to all relevant tertiary education institutions explaining measures taken to contain the outbreak—e.g. school closure over extended period—and the potential impact on the schooling and Bac results of S7 students. A list of institutions (including admission office contact information) should be prepared in advance and should include:

¹Another possibility which could be considered is the postponement of exams—though this might jeopardise admissions in some countries/institutions so should only be considered in a situation of real urgency.

all institutions where S7 students have an interest in applying or have already applied, and for which the Bac results are taken into account as part of the final decision.

We thank you for your time and are at your disposal to discuss such contingencies in more detail and/or to provide any support as needed.

Kind regards,
Parents of S7ENa/b

ANNEX I

Pedagogical Continuity and Remote Learning Measures

- **Course Planning and Continuity:**
 - ALL teachers should have ready at any given moment a detailed course programme for at least 14 days ahead, including lecture plans, assignments and possible outside support material. (Forward planning should be confirmed by subject coordinators or level coordinators.)
 - ALL teachers should be required to put course programmes, lesson notes and upcoming assignments on SMS and (for secondary) on O365 for access.
 - Coordinators should prepare a replacement plan in case of teacher sickness.

- **Set Up of Communication Tools:**
 - ALL teachers should ensure that they have access to SMS and know how to use its course functions (assignment planning, attachments, etc.).
 - ALL primary teachers should ensure that they have a current class parent email list.
 - ALL secondary teachers:
 - should be instructed at minimum to log in to O365 and to familiarise themselves with its basic teaching and collaboration tools;
 - should ensure that on O365 there is a group portal (e.g. teams) for each of their classes, which replicates completely the attendance list for the class.
 - ALL secondary students should be instructed at minimum to log in to O365 and to familiarise themselves with the basic learning and collaboration tools.
 - The school management should be ready to offer substantial and targeted IT support for the above, and an IT team should be put in place to offer continuous onsite and remote support (including account management) to teachers and students

- **Remote Functionality:**
 - ALL secondary teachers, particularly those in the upper cycle, should be offered the tools to undertake the following activities:
 - online video lectures with question and answer possibilities as well as the possibility to record for publication online and later viewing (e.g. built-in O365 solution; Zoom or other video conferencing software);
 - online video meetings with individual or small groups of students;
 - online chat with whole group, small groups or individual students;
 - real-time lecture notes or collaborative documents that can be shared with large or small groups;
 - sharing documents with class and accepting documents (privately or publicly) from individual students.
 - ALL primary teachers should be offered a suite of online classroom possibilities (e.g. SMS, Zoom); important that in this case, solutions found are lightweight; no new account management responsibilities should be imposed on the school IT team.
 - IT Team prepares basic written support material for the suite of tools available to primary and secondary teachers.
 - IT Team offers live or online training in any of the above tools—either individual help-desk style training or in groups as relevant.
 - Given the flexibility of the online environment and variety in teacher practice, ALL teachers should make a plan—describing which tools will be used for what purpose—to be presented to the class or individual students/parents in case of need.
 - ALL teachers should run pilot tests implementing their plan with the class parents (in primary and early secondary) and pupils (secondary).

A plan covering all of the above remote learning and teaching continuity measures should be set down in writing and accessible to several key figures, in particular as the school management itself may be impacted in case of outbreak.