



5 March 2021

Mr Tom McGauley
Castleknock College
College Road
Castleknock
Dublin 15

Dear Mr McGauley,

As a former teacher and eternal student of the subject, I would like to take this opportunity to strongly encourage your students to continue their study of history.

It is a common misperception that studying history simply involves recalling people's names, events, key dates, and places. But history is far more than rote learning, it is the study of change. The world is constantly changing and understanding change in society helps us to interpret the world in its current state. History provides us with an appreciation of why things change, the mechanisms driving change and the significance of change.

In studying the Leaving Certificate History course students develop an awareness of their historical inheritance and gain insights into their own identity and traditions. Students also develop an understanding of different concepts that are relevant to life today – democracy, human rights, power and authority, conflict and reconciliation.

Studying History teaches us not only how to uncover information but also how to learn from the lessons of the past. As part of the Leaving Cert course, students explore how to evaluate the usefulness of particular sources and their limitations, how to detect bias and how to identify propaganda. These skills will sharpen their critical thinking ability, which will be of benefit to them in any career and indeed in life generally.



Similarly, history affords students the opportunity to explore their own personal interests and research and report upon a particular aspect of the past that may resonate with them.

In choosing to study History, you can gain a range of transferable skills, from informed citizenship to research and general knowledge which can not only develop you as a person, it can prepare you for any number of future careers and enable you to participate fully in society as you move towards adulthood.

I am heartened to see the continuing popularity of History as a Leaving Cert subject with 11,743 candidates taking the exam in 2019, an increase on the previous year. If this trend continues and our young people can learn from the lessons of the past, the future ahead is bright.

Yours sincerely,

Micheál Martin T.D.
Taoiseach