Loreto Secondary School
Letterkenny

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October 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are writing to share important information regarding the national **Senior Cycle Redevelopment** and to provide specific guidance on the **Additional Assessment Components (AACs)** for Leaving Certificate Science subjects (Business, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry).

## What is an Additional Assessment Component (AAC)?

In all redeveloped subjects, coursework and project-based components are formally designated as **Additional Assessment Components (AACs)**:

- **Weighting:** The AAC accounts for 40% of the final Leaving Certificate mark, with the remaining percentage awarded through the final written examination.
- **External Marking:** All AAC projects are marked externally by the **State Examinations Commission (SEC)**—the class teacher does not award the final grade.

For students taking Leaving Certificate Business, Physics, Biology, and Chemistry, official project coursework briefs were issued in January 2026.

The deadline for submissions is as follows:

- ***Physics: 11th December 2026***
- ***Biology: 26th February 2027***
- ***Chemistry: 23rd April 2027***
- ***Business 12th March 2027***

Note: Students will complete their project work ahead of these official state deadlines under an internal schedule managed by their subject teachers.

To ensure full compliance with SEC regulations, please note the following:

1. The gathering of primary experimental data will be facilitated by class teachers in school laboratories during designated class periods.
2. Experiments must be conducted strictly within the designated time allocated by the teacher. **There is no provision for trial runs in school laboratories beforehand.**
3. All other stages of the project (background research, secondary data analysis, writing up reports, and evaluation) must be completed by the student in their own time outside of class.

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## Academic Integrity & Student Responsibilities

As this assessment accounts for **40% of the overall Leaving Certificate grade**, it is vital that students consistently apply maximum effort and adhere to all class timelines.

- **Unaided Work:** The project is an individual effort. All submitted work must be completed unaided by the candidate.
- **Investigative Log:** To support authentication, students must maintain a continuous digital or written investigative log overseen regularly by their teacher.
- Students must read and familiarise themselves with the requirements of their subject brief.
- **Time Management:** It is the student's sole responsibility to adhere to submission dates.
- **Plagiarism & AI Policy:** Plagiarism, copying, or the unreferenced use of Generative AI tools represents a severe breach of SEC examination regulations.
- **Examination Level (HL/OL):** Students do not need to decide whether they are taking Higher or Ordinary level until they register for their written examination.

## The Role of the Class Teacher

Under SEC and NCCA guidelines, teachers act strictly as **Facilitators and Authenticators.**:

- Teachers will teach required practical skills, manage lab schedules, supervise in-school experimental work, and provide general, non-directive advice.
- Teachers are **prohibited** from correcting or editing project drafts, fixing grammar/structure, providing written suggestions for improvement, or offering model answers.
- Class teachers **will not sign off** on a final report if they cannot verify that it is an original, truthful reflection of work carried out by the student in class under supervision.

Full information on the brief for each subject can be found at the following links:
Business: Business AAC 2027
Physics: Physics AAC 2027
Biology: Biology AAC 2027
Chemistry: Chemistry AAC 2027

For further information on how post-primary schools facilitate the completion of the coursework, please click the link: Coursework Rules and Procedures

If your daughter has any questions regarding her project brief, she should speak directly to her subject teacher.

Yours sincerely,

Senior Cycle Redevelopment Team