



LETTER CIRCULAR

Date: 17th October 23

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To: Permanent Secretary, Directors General, Directors, CIO, Heads of College Network, Education Officers, Secondary Schools (State and Non-State), Heads of Entities

From: Penelope A. Fitzgerald E.O. Biology and Audrey Vella Bondin E.O. Physics

Subject: Thematic STEM Debate Secondary

Heads of School are kindly informed that the Science Centre within the Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes, is organizing the sixth edition of the Thematic STEM Debate. The aim of this activity is to engage students to become active critical thinkers and skilled debaters. Through effective participation in the debate, students will:

- examine ideas, reports, audio-visual material and policy documents;
- verify the value of evidence for concepts;
- recognize strengths and weaknesses of arguments;
- engage with opposing views and speak strategically.

The theme to the debate is '*Adolescents Under Pressure: Inevitable or avoidable aspect of life?*'. Through the debate, participants can use Maltese and/or English to present their arguments.

In preparation for the Thematic STEM debate, student participants together with their mentors are requested to carefully read and analyse the documents found in the booklet attached to the letter circular.

The following criteria will be used by a team of professionals to adjudicate the debate:

- organization and clarity – main arguments and responses presented in a clear/orderly way;
- use of argument – response given to support the arguments;
- use of cross-examination and rebuttal – identification of weaknesses in other's arguments and ability to defend own arguments.
- presentation style – tone of voice, clarity of expression, precision of arguments.

The Thematic STEM Debate for Year 10/11 students will be held on Thursday 14th December 2023 from 10.00 am to noon at Institute for Education (IfE), Pembroke. A location map will be sent on registration. The programme of the event is attached to this circular. Each school can nominate **one Year 10/11** student by accessing this registration link - <https://forms.office.com/e/UKFpjLDv8y> - **by Friday, 24th November 2023.** Registrations are on a first come first served basis. Kindly note that travel to/from IfE should be co-ordinated by the participating school. One adult (teacher/guardian) can accompany the student.

Three participants will be presented the *Top Debater Award*. Winners will be announced towards the end of the debate. Certificates of participation will be presented to all students while winners will be awarded a set of headphones by HSBC Foundation Malta.

Any queries can be put forward to Ms Penelope Fitzgerald (penelope.ann.fitzgerald@ilearn.edu.mt)/ Audrey Vella Bondin (audrey.anne.vella.bondin@ilearn.edu.mt)

Thank you for your collaboration.

Melanie Casha Sammut

Director

Directorate for STEM and VET Programmes