**We recommend that you use the below as a template in your contact with your local representatives. If you have direct experience of this issue, be sure to include this as part of your email. Thank you for your support.**

RE: Alternate sitting of Leaving Cert Exams 2022

Dear **Deputy/Senator**,

I hope you are keeping well. I am contacting you in relation to the alternate sitting of the Leaving Cert in 2022 which was announced by the Minister for Education last year.

The alternate sitting is for students who ***“are unable to sit the main set of examinations due to close family bereavement, COVID-19 illness and certain other categories of serious illness to be determined.”***

While this is a welcome development, I understand that there has been no further information circulated on what will be included under ***“other categories of serious illness.”***

Epilepsy Ireland have been campaigning that epilepsy must be included under this category.

Seizures are typically followed by a period of physical exhaustion and a range of temporary cognitive impairments.  A seizure before or during a Leaving Cert exam will at worst mean the exam is not taken or completed; and at best will mean the student is being judged on a paper that is nowhere near their true level of ability. In addition, stress and anxiety can lead to seizures for many people living with epilepsy. We know that the Leaving Cert exams are a stressful period for all young people.

However, for students with epilepsy, they have the additional stress of wondering what will happen if they have a seizure before or during their exam – this compounded stress inevitably leads to seizures for some students.

**As a person with epilepsy/family member of a person with epilepsy,** epilepsy must be included as being eligible for access to the alternate sitting. Unfortunately, the issue of having a seizure during an exam has affected many young people with epilepsy in years gone by. They have had no other choice but to repeat their exam in the following year’s exam cycle. This cannot be allowed to continue, and this opportunity must not be missed to address this issue for future generations of young people with epilepsy.

As my local representative, I would appreciate if you could pursue this matter on my behalf to ensure epilepsy is included for the alternate sitting.

Should you require further information on this, you can contact Epilepsy Ireland Advocacy & Communications Manager, Paddy McGeoghegan by emailing pmcgeoghegan@epilepsy.ie.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to hearing from you on same.

Yours sincerely,

**Name,**

**Contact Details**

**Address.**