

18<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Parent / Guardian,

As we approach the mid-term break I wanted to write to you about a number of upcoming events and to request that you remind your son/daughter of the expectations and standards we aspire to as a school community.

**Study Skills Week:**

This week runs from **23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017**. A number of specific events are timetabled particularly for examination years. A good study routine and timetable combined with using effective study techniques are proven to support the academic performance of students prepared to engage with the study process. As a school we will highlight with students how best to approach their own study schedules and the most efficient methodology to adopt. I am sure you will address this area at home. I will be meeting all senior cycle students in the coming weeks to discuss with them on an individual basis how they are progressing with their study timetables and their understanding of the demands of the Leaving Certificate course. First term examinations in late November 2017 are an important indicator.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Year Parent Teacher Meeting:**

The above Parent Teacher Meeting will take place on **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017**. From 3.30pm to 6.00pm sharp. Venue will be the study hall. There will be no evening study that night.

**Bullying Awareness Week:**

This week is scheduled to run **from Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017**, immediately after the mid-term break. Specific events are planned. Mr Corrigan, Guidance Counsellor is coordinating the week's scheduled events on behalf of the school community. Along with Year Heads and our established Student Care Team the school is pleased to announce that Ms Laura Meighan, a member of our teaching staff will also become the school's Anti Bullying Officer. Ms Meighan will work closely with the school management and teaching colleagues to support any student who feels they are vulnerable in any way and simply want to talk. Students can approach Ms Meighan directly if they wish.

This is another initiative demonstrating our proactive and "hands on" approach to an awareness of bullying in our school and how it is appropriately and sensitively managed.

You will appreciate that there are significant costs associated with arranging for external groups to visit the school and for designated activities to occur during a week of this kind. We would therefore request a minimum contribution of €6 per student. Prefects will collect this on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November. Thank you in advance for your support.

**School Opening Times:**

Class begins at 8.45am. The main gates to the school (adjacent to the Teanglann) will open from 8.20am. All other gates will not open until after 8.30am. The enclosed corridor adjacent to the school building will be open from 8.20am to allow students to seek cover from inclement weather however

you must know that the school will not be providing supervision for your child until after 8.30am when the school building opens. Between 8.30am and 8.45am the school can only provide minimal supervision of children as we have only limited resources at this time. Once school starts at 8.45am the standard school supervision begins and will run until the end of the school day when students have 15 minutes to leave the school site unless they are participating in a scheduled after school activity, Clann event or evening study.

#### **Attendance and Punctuality:**

Good regular attendance and punctuality to school is imperative. Schools records are maintained and students whose attendance and punctuality is inconsistent or should be improved (unless there are valid, extenuating circumstances which have been communicated to the school) will be challenged. You will also receive notice in writing. The school are legally obliged to put in place procedures and practice that challenge attendance and punctuality that is poor.

#### **Reminders for Students:**

- The use of mobile phones is prohibited on school grounds. If students are found using mobile phones they will be confiscated and parents will be asked to collect. Ear phones are also not permitted.
- Students have a responsibility to their own learning and the learning of others. Disruption to lessons and a blatant disrespectful attitude to teachers will not be tolerated. Expect appropriate sanctions. **Students have the right to learn and teachers are entitled to teach in order to give the vast majority of students who want to learn the very best learning opportunities.**
- Behaviour on corridors, between lessons, during lunchtime and break time is equally important. We have placed a greater number of staff on supervision at both break time and lunchtime. The school prefects are also timetabled to assist with supervision each day. However, the school building is confined and we have a large population of students. Students have a responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Continue to support the Clann programme. Very successfully launched this year and well attended by students. Get involved with extracurricular sporting and non-sporting activities as well. There is lots to do and my thanks to staff and indeed parents who give of their time voluntarily to enable these programmes to run successfully.

#### **School Closure for Essential Staff CPD (Continued Professional Development):**

Parents, you will know that the new Junior Cycle Framework is in place in schools with the following subjects already being taught under the new specifications:

English, Science, Business Studies, Gaeilge, Art and Modern Foreign Languages.

Teaching staff are required to attend two full days of CPD which will mean the school will close for students. The first date we have been given is Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018. There will be no school on that day. The second date has not been provided yet. As soon as it is known I will communicate it to you.

In addition the Board of Management are keen to provide training for all staff in the principles of Restorative Practice.

*The intention of Restorative Practice is to develop a culture of care and respect that allows people to flourish and, maximises engagement and productivity. The restorative mind-set and practices encourage high expectations to be our own best self and offer the support and care we need to reach this potential. Restorative Practice, when dealing with conflict, moves us away from blame and frustration, and instead ignites a path towards connection, solutions and innovation.*

Educational research confirms that restorative practice in all of us works! We want to add this way of thinking and acting to how we manage the school environment, how children react with each other, how we manage conflict and ultimately how we can enhance the positivity of our school community. Again, the date on which this training will occur will be communicated to you in good time.

Finally, the attendance of so many parents at our recent Parents Association AGM was very encouraging. It confirms the superb work of the Parents Association and all that they do on your behalf and for our students.

As I outlined at the meeting we face challenges (as do all schools) however, by and large the vast majority of parents are supportive, understanding and fully engaged with the learning of their children. Mr Dunne, Deputy Principal, my teaching colleagues and I will continue to work as collaboratively as we can with you and your child/children to maximise their learning opportunities while they are in school.

Yours sincerely,

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Dermot Lavin  
Principal