

25th October 2018

Dear Parent / Guardian,

We are almost at the mid-term break. This seems like an opportune time to write to you and to keep you updated on a number of educational projects identified for completion this academic year as well as the many positives we can draw from our recently expanded resources.

Firstly, I wanted to place on record my thanks to you this term for your understanding and forbearance with the disruptions to the organisation and running of some school days. We have all had to put up with wind and weather events and, while it is never guaranteed, I anticipate we will not get through the remainder of the winter without further disruption. I hope I am proved wrong! Obviously, we will keep you posted if other disruptions are likely or warned in advance. We will be guided by the advice of Met Eireann as well as other external stakeholders.

In addition, with the implementation of the new Junior Cycle Curriculum on a phased basis this has resulted in significant pressure and strain on the smooth operation of the normal school timetable and has forced us to function on specific days with reduced student numbers. Parents have been extremely accommodating and this is much appreciated.

Furthermore, you have been patient with the challenges faced by the school when we have not been provided with access to the sports complex and, as a result, cannot deliver the PE curriculum as effectively as we would want. PE, like any other curriculum subject has an entitlement to a classroom space to teach PE. Students, as part of a generic whole school "Well Being" programme, have the right to tuition in PE and to receive PE through the medium of qualified and experienced staff, an adequate and resourced classroom space and a timetable that operates on a weekly basis. The Board of Management have raised serious concerns with the College Trustees regarding the regular and consistent provision of PE classes required by the school curriculum and timetable. We await their responses however we will be reiterating our demand that the delivery of our school curriculum is an absolute priority.

In recent academic years we have opened five new classrooms, a brand new fully functional, "State of the Art" Music room and a fully stocked student library accessible to students at lunchtime, courtesy of the commitment of members of the Parents Association who give of their time voluntarily to staff this superb asset.

In September 2018 we opened a brand new bespoke Autism unit, "Teach Francis". This facility, while aimed at a specific cohort of students and their particular needs also serves to promote our very inclusive ethos in a practical and relevant way. Students accessing "Teach Francis" also have the opportunity to integrate in to mainstream lessons while at the same

time students who form part of mainstream provision and who require additional support and intervention can be given access to “Teach Francis”. This approach, like many others, demonstrates our holistic style and our commitment to the needs of all our students.

We are resolute in our determination that despite the ongoing challenges we face with an aging building and infrastructure , we nonetheless are fully determined that our focus must remain on good quality Teaching and Learning, providing the most appropriate range of supports to promote the well-being of our students and to ensure that the technology we employ is done so within the best educational environment available to us.

There are many smaller projects that are currently being undertaken or planned. Two major projects I am pleased to bring to your attention:

When we return after the mid-term break a dedicated area for the secure parking of student’s bicycles will be in place. We know many of our students cycle to school and we are aware that the current provision for the daily storage of school bikes is inadequate. We are changing that. This is a priority. We also intend to upgrade significantly one of our Teanglann studios to enable it to be used for talks, guest speakers, information evenings, assemblies etc. While it can be used now it has an older, tired feel and we want to renovate the space (with technology) to bring it up to a more modern, and technically advanced venue. We don’t have a date for completion however anticipate it will be this year.

On behalf of Mr Dunne, Deputy Principal and myself thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Dermot Lavin
Principal