



Newsletter

A Warm Welcome...

October 2019 Volume 8 - Issue 01

Hello and welcome to the first newsletter of the new school year. I especially want to welcome parents and guardians who are new to the Tarbert Comprehensive School community. 81 new first years joined us on August 26th as well as new students into senior cycle from other schools and other countries. These students are beginning to settle into the School already and are a welcome addition to our student body.

This summer break has brought some changes to staffing. I especially want to thank Ms Ann O'Halloran for their commitment and contributions to the school over many years. We wish her well in her retirement.

It is my hope to have a Newsletter like this sent to you 3 times a year. It is designed to keep you informed on various matters in our School. A more current and regular snapshot of our School can be gained by downloading the School app to your smartphone or by consulting the School website. I encourage all parents and guardians to regularly stay in touch through these outlets.

Richard Prendiville - Principal

Parents Association AGM

Tarbert Comprehensive School Parents Association AGM will be organised in the coming weeks. The Association is an important link from the School to the parent body and new committee members are always welcome. Upcoming details of the AGM will be sent via text message closer to the time.

Year Heads / Co-ordinators

If you have any concerns around your child then you should contact your child's **Year Head** in the first instance. Naturally from time to time there will be settling problems at school, indeed there may equally be issues at home affecting your child, in any year group, therefore it is vital that we are let know if there are any concerns or difficulties; no matter how small they may appear.

Year Heads & Co-ordinators 2019/20 The Year Heads for the academic year 2019/20

- 1st Years** Mr. J. Dore
- 2nd Years** Ms. R. O'Donoghue
- 3rd Years** Ms. S. Fitzgerald
- LC1 & LCA1** Mr. J. Connolly
- LC2 & LCA2** Ms. E. Fitzgerald
- TY Co-ordinator** Ms. M. Hogan
- LCVP Co-ordinator** Mr. P. McElligott

You may contact any of the above by telephoning the school office. All members of staff have their own formal timetabled classes and so may not be in a position to speak to you instantly but they will get back to you at their earliest convenience. Equally the Guidance Counsellor (Ms Griffin), School Chaplain (Ms Yvonne O'Connor), Deputy Principal and Principal may be contacted.

If you require a face to face meeting with any staff member then it is vital a pre-arranged appointment is made through the office. Unfortunately arriving at school without a pre-planned appointment in the hope of meeting a staff member cannot be accommodated

School Closures

As part of the new Junior Cert, whole School teacher training continues this year. To facilitate this training Tarbert Comprehensive School will therefore close on certain days for students - **Friday, 20th September 2019** and **Thursday, December 12th 2019**. A third day is also likely in 2020, however, Parents will be reminded by text closer to the day in question.

1st Year Mass

The traditional 1st year mass will be held on Thursday October 10th 2019 at 7.30 pm in Tarbert Church. This is a lovely occasion where students new to the School mark the transition to the Comprehensive School. Further queries can be directed to your child's RE teacher or School Chaplain.

Student Insurance

Parents should be aware that we pay accident insurance for all our students. We pay this from the parental charge that we receive each year from parents. Students have 24 hour cover 365 days a year. This means that in the event of even a minor accident at school or at home, even during holiday times, that incurs any medical expense, then the money can be claimed through the Insurance Policy. Claim forms are available from the School Office.

Meeting of 1st Year Parents

All parents of 1st Year students are invited to attend a meeting in the school on Tuesday, October 15th 2019 at 7.15pm. The meeting is designed to give parents guidance on option choices following sampling for 1st Years as well as explain other School structures in place to assist 1st Years. Your attendance is advised.

Revised Science Labs

Work on revamping our new Science labs continue apace and we are hopeful that they will be complete by mid-October 2019. The new labs will be available to all Junior and Senior cycle students and will benefit our students for decades to come.

Attendance

School attendance is becoming more and more to the fore in the media of late. Túsla, The Child and Family Agency are planning to launch a new attendance awareness campaign in the coming weeks called Every School Day Counts. However here in Tarbert Comprehensive we are in our final year of our 3 year strategy (2017-2020) designed to increase attendance and reduce absence rates. So far the School has made great strides in the previous 2 years of the strategy and while School statistics are above the national figures, I still would like one final push to improve the rates even more.

Research has shown that regular student attendance is very important. Good attendance for example has been shown to lead to a positive impact on teaching and learning, increased student engagement and a positive impact on a student's educational outcomes. Equally there is less pressures for students when students don't miss out on classes and key parts of the curriculum.

All stake holders are involved in this strategy. However you as a Parent or Guardian have a central part to play and I wish to highlight the important roles you have:

- Take responsibility for your child's attendance
- Provide feedback on the policy and strategy through the Parents Association
- Be mindful that Extra Curricular Activities (ECA) must be balanced with over all school progress
- Keep updated on the importance of attendance at every level of school contact e.g. Newsletters, text messaging, website, app, information meetings etc.
- Use VSware as a resource to view attendance (including partial and whole day absences)
- Attend Parent Teacher (PT) meetings to discuss attendance
- Avoid taking family holidays during term time
- Comply with school absence procedures
- Encourage your child to value the entire school curriculum not just the academic as it fosters their holistic growth and development

It should also be noted that attendance can have just as much impact on student exam performance as their work rate or levels of study. In fact there is a direct connection between underperformance in school and poor attendance rates.

School attendance should never be seen as something that can be treated as casual or irrelevant. All School staff will monitor attendance rates as an area of priority. The School will liaise with parents and outside agencies where attendance rates are significantly poor. However together, I am confident, we can meet our targets set for this final year of the strategy and improve overall attendance rates by all students. Your cooperation as parents and guardians is therefore vital and your support is greatly appreciated.

Mentoring Programme

Almost fifty Leaving Certificate students returned to school a day early this year to meet and help our First Year students settle into their new school community. Working in groups, the LC2 Mentors are giving practical information about being a student in TCS to our new students. The Mentors are also organising various lunchtime activities such as Art Club, Irish Dancing, Basketball, Soccer and Zumba for the First Years to enjoy.

In-House Exams

I want to remind Parents/Guardians that we inform you about in-house exams dates at the beginning of each academic year so as to ensure that every student is available for the full duration of his/her scheduled exams. Every effort will be made to accommodate any student who may miss an exam/part of the exams as a result of a **bereavement** or **certified sickness** but only within the duration of the in house exam dates themselves. In some situations parents may be asked to administer a missed exam in a controlled environment at home to their son/daughter. Unfortunately no exam can be administered to a student ahead of the scheduled exam date. *Students who miss an exam or exams due to family holidays, sporting or cultural commitments such as concerts, weddings, etc. cannot be accommodated in this manner.* Parents are also reminded that students must be present for the full days during the exams and late arrivals or early departures are not allowed.

This year the autumn exams run from **Tuesday 26th-Friday 29th November 2019.**



Student Collection

Parents are reminded that should they wish to collect their son/daughter from the school they must do so in person from the main office and sign them out. This policy is equally true for parents of students from Tarbert village. This procedure is designed as part of our **Child Safeguarding measures.**

Of equal importance is the necessity for Parents to provide their children with a note when they arrive after 9 a.m. This note should specify the reason for lateness.

School Calendar/Parent Teacher Meetings

The school calendar 19/20 is available to view and print from the school website under Policies & Publications. The calendar includes holidays, other school closures and important dates to remember. My advice is for parents to print it off and keep it nearby. The following however are the planned dates for Parent Teacher Meetings. All meetings run from 4.15pm to 6.45 pm. Parents are asked to arrive no later than 5.45pm so as to be assured of meeting your child's teachers.

A reminder to Parents of LC2/LCA2 & LC1/LCA1 students (only) that the students themselves must also attend along with their parents. The aim of this is simple – parents AND senior students should get feedback from teachers as regards the level of progress students have made in that subject to date and should hear directly on how to improve or maintain their grades. Senior students will have, we hope, the maturity to take the feedback on board and use it in a positive manner.

- LC2*/LCA2* P/S/T Meeting - Monday 14th October 2019
 - 3rd Year P/T Meeting - Thursday 7th November 2019
 - LC1*/LCA1* P/S/T Meeting - Thursday 5th December 2019
 - 2nd Year and TY P/T Meeting - Tuesday 14th January 2020
 - TY PT Meeting - Monday January 27th 2020
 - 1st Year PT Meeting - Monday January 27th 2020
- *Please note that the students themselves must also attend this year groups meeting along with their parents*



TIME CONSTRAINT!



This teacher has a high number of Parents to see this evening – Please limit your discussion to 3 minutes!
Thank You! Mr. Prendiville

I again would like to highlight with parents that there are some teachers at every parent teacher meeting who teach a high number of students from that year group and can therefore have close to a hundred parents to see. It is crucial that, in order for these teachers to provide feedback to all the parents, that attending parents limit their meeting with these teachers to a few minutes. Teachers will discuss 3 main areas with you – **attendance, behaviour and exam results.** If you require a more in depth discussion with a specific teacher then I suggest you contact them again at a later date through the school office in order to arrange a meeting/phone call.

This procedure will allow teachers with large numbers to see all the parents in a timely fashion. At some parent teacher meetings a red labelled clock may appear on a teacher's desk who has a high number of parents to meet, in order to alert you that they are under these time constraints.

Leaving Cert Results 2019

Congratulations to the class of 2019 who received their excellent results on August 13th last.

A statistical analysis shows that our school is yet again well above the national averages in the point's race. I am also really pleased with the high number of H1 grades achieved this year. On average students received 66 points more in Tarbert CS for their top 6 subjects than the national average. Overall practically 1 student in every 3 got over 450 points while 3 in every 5 got over 400 points. I am very proud of these results that are a remarkable testament to the comprehensive, mixed ability, co-educational ethos that infuses this school. I wish to congratulate the students and teachers on the quality of these results.

This year our highest achieving students was **Sasha Godley** from Tarbert who managed to get the top grade in 5 of her subjects. We wish Sasha and indeed the entire class of 2019 well in their future studies and careers.



Leaving Certificate Class of 2019



Sasha Godley pictured with Principal Mr. Prendiville

Book Grant

The Book Grant is used to help those who experience financial difficulties with back to school costs. The money is distributed as equitably as possible. It is used primarily to support LC1 students and book grant forms were distributed to each LC1 student.

The grant is then used to pay for the Pre Examination fees for those families who hold medical cards. Any money then left remaining in the fund is used for families of 1st Year students who may be experiencing financial difficulties. It is hoped that these grant forms will be processed as soon as possible. From time to time families can experience financial hardships. It is never our intention to add to those hardships. However by their nature schools will always have costs associated with them e.g. supervised study, book rental, pre exam fees, TY fees, school outings or field trips. However at Tarbert Comprehensive we try as much as possible to keep these fees as low as we can and we compare very favourably with other second level schools. I would never want a situation to arise whereby a student is deprived an opportunity to participate in any activity or is embarrassed because of an inability to pay. So if this arises for you during the year please contact Mr Prendiville, Ms Moloney or Ms O'Connor, Chaplain, and the matter will be dealt with sensitively and in total confidence.

After School Study

For different reasons many students find it difficult to study. Often there can be too many distractions. The internet, snapchat, text messages, noise and Instagram cause havoc to students, even those with the best of intentions. For some the problem is a lack of self-discipline to get into a regular study pattern. It is very frustrating knowing that valuable time is being wasted. At Tarbert Comprehensive School we offer a supervised study program from 4.15pm to 6.15pm Monday Tuesday, Thursday. When sufficient numbers of leaving certs sign up, they are allotted their own study centre. Students have found the program very beneficial in recent years and have the satisfaction of having most if not all of their learning done by early evening. The cost is kept to the bare minimum and hopefully as affordable as possible.

Any parent interested in the service for their son/daughter can look at the School Website for more details under the Curriculums dropdown or you can contact Mr Trench. I strongly encourage all students to consider this great facility, particularly if you are a student of an exam year or if you find it difficult to motivate yourself at home.

Guidance Department

The final year of school is one of the busiest and most challenging times in a young person's life. While studying, there is the added stress of having to decide the next step on the career journey. Students should take time to fully research all their options (check entry requirements, course content, possible careers etc) and always ensure they have a "Plan B".

The new Leaving Certificate Grading Scale with Revised Points is highlighted for your attention. Also listed are some very important websites and key dates. The school will host an information evening for parents on the CAO application process ("Hear"/"Dare" schemes, SUSI Maintenance Grant etc) later in the term. Students should consult the Guidance Notice Board, the school app and the "Guidance" section of the school website for up-to-date information.

***Success is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration!
Best of Luck for the year ahead!
- Jeanelle Griffin.***

Lourdes 2019

Congratulations to all of our Leaving Certificate students who attended the annual Lourdes Pilgrimage. All four students worked exceptionally hard on their trip assisting those less fortunate than themselves. Students also fundraised for the trip and were exceptional in their enthusiasm and dedication. Thanks also to Sr. Frances Day, former Chaplain, who attended with our students.



Child Safeguarding Statement

Parents are directed to the School website under the policies section in order to view the School Child Safeguarding Statement. All students, staff and students of the School should be aware that Mr Richard Prendiville is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for all child protection concerns in the School. Ms Leila Moloney is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL). The full Statement and Assessment is available on the School website.

Board of Management

The members of the school Board of Management are:

Mrs Mary McGillicuddy (Chairperson)
Cllr. Jim Finucane
Ms Niamh Wall, (Parental Nominee)
Sr Frances Day
Mr Andrew McNamara

Ms Ann Flavin
Ms Ann O'Dwyer, Kerry RTB
Mr Ted O'Connor, (Parental Nominee)
Ms Anne O'Sullivan
Mr Richard Prendiville (Secretary)

Should you wish to communicate with the Board of Management you may do so by writing to the Secretary of the Board at the school address, or contacting either of the parent's nominees, again using the school address. All correspondence addressed to members of the Board is treated as private and confidential and is not opened in the school.

School Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Planning

The Department of Education, and the Inspectorate, provide us with a framework - called 'Looking at Our Schools' - to examine how teaching and learning works in schools. Using this framework all schools decide on areas of teaching and learning they would like to focus on or build on. This process is called School Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Planning. The process has six steps - shown below.

From time to time we ask parents, students and other members of the school community to complete surveys, take part in focus groups, or share their ideas and opinions with us on various topics. The purpose of this is to evaluate our current practice, and to plan for future actions. Details of our current School Self-Evaluations and School Improvement Plans can be found on the school website: www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie



New Junior Certificate

Junior students now study the JCSA (Junior Cycle Student Award) and it continues to be phased in. At the end of their exams students will get a certificate called the JCPA – Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. Currently, students in 1st year are doing all of their subjects as part of the new Junior cycle while students in 2nd and 3rd year are doing a combination of new courses and old.

The following year groups will have the new JCSA in the subjects listed:

- 3rd years 2019/20 - English, Science, Business, Irish, French and Art
- 2nd years 2019/20 - as above + Maths, Home Ec., History, Geography, Music
- 1st Years - All subjects

With new courses come new forms of assessment and new ways of teaching. Our 2nd year students will undertake their first CBAs (Classroom Based Assessments). The emphasis here is on continuous assessment. The assessment will take many forms, depending on the individual subjects, ranging from written work to oral or visual presentations/projects. The aim of the CBAs is to give the students an opportunity to showcase and get credit for skills developed in subjects outside of the traditional exam.

The grading for the CBA's will be the following:

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In Line with Expectations
- Yet to Meet Expectations

The assessment of these will appear in the summer reports along with end of year exam grades. They will also however appear on your child's JCPA which will be presented to the year group in the academic year following their Junior Cycle exams.

When in 3rd Year these students will also undertake a second CBA in each of these subjects. An Assessment Task will be completed on this CBA2 under class supervision. This will count for 10% of their overall grade in these subjects.

Subject	Window for completion (in Tarbert Comprehensive)
Visual Art	January 6th - April 3rd
Home Economics	January 6th - March 13th
History	January 6th - January 24th
Geography	January 13th - January 31st
English	February 24th - March 13th
Mathematics	March 9th - March 27th
Science	March 16th - April 3rd
Business	April 20th - May 15th
French	April 27th - May 15th

AT's or Assessment Tasks are also completed in 3rd year. It is a written task completed in class time (double class) and is sent away to the SEC for correction. The task is specifically linked to the 3rd year CBA so that students are comfortable and familiar with the topic. The AT is worth approximately 10% of the final grade in most subjects. These dates are for current JC3s only.

Subject	CBA Window for completion	Assessment Task Window
Irish (CBA1)	September 23rd - October 11th	N/A
English and Science	December 2nd - December 20th	January 6th - January 10th
French and Business	January 6th - January 24th	January 27th - January 31st
Irish (CBA2)	February 24th - March 13th	March 16th - March 20th

All students in the new JCPA also have other areas of learning. So the more your child is involved in School related activities the better – such as being involved on the School football team, choir, young scientist, student council etc. Students from 1st year will keep a log of what they do – by 3rd year this is verified and recorded by the School and acknowledged on the official results.

New Junior Certificate

All JCPA students must also study the area of Wellbeing – this is a combination of SPHE, CSPE, PE and other aspects of care that the School offers. In second year for example, Tarbert Comprehensive computer classes will also contribute to wellbeing as students will examine the notion of digital wellbeing – so that students are aware of appropriate online behaviour, dangers online etc.

Finally students will have the normal sit down exams in June of 3rd year. However the final grades have also been changed. A, B and C grades are being phased out. From now on students will have the following descriptors:

Junior Cycle	
Percentage	Grade Descriptor
≥ 90 to 100	Distinction
≥ 75 and < 90	Higher Merit
≥ 55 and < 75	Merit
≥ 40 and < 55	Achieved
≥ 20 and < 40	Partially Achieved
≥ 0 and < 20	Not Graded (NG)

All in all the changes are exciting and we will keep you up to date with developments. For further information please go to www.curriculumonline.ie

New JC and subjects studied outside of School

Parents should be aware that students must study a minimum of 8 subjects and maximum of 10 for the new JC.

Where a student wishes to undertake a subject outside of the recognised school setting, then Parents need to be aware that:

- Students who choose to study a subject outside of their school cannot complete the requirements for the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Assessment Task
- Subjects undertaken outside of a school setting count as part of the maximum of 10 subjects for certification. In other words it is now virtually impossible for students to take on an extra subject outside of their own school under the New JC.

Revised Suspension and Expulsion Policies

The Board of Management has recently ratified updated suspension and expulsion policies of the School. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with them.

To view these and indeed all School Policies and Procedures, please visit the School website under the Policies and Publications tab online at www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie.

College Open Days

EVENT	DATE	VENUE
Open Day	14th Oct.	UCC Cork
Limerick Colleges Open Day	17th/18th Oct. (U.L., Mary I. & L.I.T.)	
Tralee I.T. Open Day	25th Oct.	Tralee Institute of Technology
Kerry IGC Careers Fair	20th Nov.	The Brandon Hotel, Tralee

Important Closing Dates

NAME	DATE	DEADLINE
UCAS	15th Oct. 2019	Some Courses Close
	15th Jan. 2020	All Courses Close
CAO Application Deadline	Online Application Facility Opens	5th Nov. 2020
	15th Jan. 2020	Early Application Online Discount €30
	1st Feb. 2020	Normal Application Online/Paper €45
	Change of Mind facility opens	5th May 2020
	Change of Mind facility closes	1st July 2020
HEAR & DARE Schemes	1st Feb. 2020	Apply ONLINE as part of your CAO application
Higher Education Access Route ("HEAR") and Disability Access Route to Education ("DARE")		
	1st Mar. 2020	HEAR & DARE Supporting Documents
Post Leaving Cert Courses	Apply Mid Feb 2020 to August 2020	
SUSI Maintenance Grant	Apply April - July 2020	

Important Websites

- www.qualifax.ie (Essential Course Search Engine)
- www.cao.ie (CAO Information & Application)
- www.accesscollege.ie (Hear & Dare Schemes)
- www.careersportal.ie (Essential Course & Career Portal)
- www.ucas.com (Study in England)
- www.studentfinance.ie (SUSI Grant Information)

All College Websites for Ireland - www.name.ie
 e.g. www.ucc.ie, www.ul.ie, www.dcu.ie



Best of Luck for the year ahead!