



Newsletter

Welcome Back...

January 2019 Volume 7 Issue 02

Dear Parents/Guardians, welcome to the second newsletter of the School year. It's hard to imagine that we are well and truly into the New Year. School life in the past few months has continued to be busy, active and productive. As the New Year dawns it's important we keep you up to date with developments within the school since the last newsletter.

Best Wishes,
Richard Prendiville,
Principal

Board of Management

The members of the school Board of management are:

- Mrs. Mary McGillicuddy (Chairperson)
- Ms. Ann Flavin
- Cllr. Jim Finucane
- Ms. Ann O'Dwyer, Kerry RTB
- Ms. Niamh Wall
- Mr. Ted O'Connor
- Ms. Anne O'Sullivan
- Mr. Andrew McNamara
- 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.

Parental Contribution for 2018/19 and beyond

The yearly contribution of €65 (€110 per family) which we ask from parents helps us offer a wide range of opportunities for our students that they would otherwise have to do without. Extra-curricular activities such as games are a vital part of the life of any School. Unlike other Schools however we do not ask students to routinely bring us in money for buses etc. The Parental contribution allows us remove this drop by drop drain on parents and allows us offer amazing supports to students in the School.

The contribution is used as follows: student insurance providing 24hour cover all year round, Study Skills for Leaving and Junior Certificate students, school reflection days, buses for all matches and all extracurricular outings, all photocopying etc.

As you can see the money is put to very good use and allows us offer opportunities and supports to our students in a wide spectrum of areas.

However in recent years the costs in these areas has continued to rise and the School has attempted to absorb as much as possible in an effort to minimise the impact on parents. It is therefore vital that ALL parents realise the benefits of this contribution so that we can maintain all of the above services. Naturally should the costs begin to outweigh the contributions then I must re-examine how and if all of these services can be maintained. From 2019/20 School year the yearly contribution will be €70 (€120 per family). As always your support is hugely appreciated.

School drop off and collection

Can I remind parents that the front gate of the school is not an appropriate area to turn in the mornings and evenings. Instead it is advised to use the upper bus gate to turn. Students can then be dropped at the bottom of the steps. **The main gate needs to be kept free as an entrance and exit point – the risk of an accident is greatly reduced by using the upper gate to turn.**

Remaining Parent Teacher Meetings

The school calendar 18/19 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 remaining 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 & LC1** (only) students that **students themselves must also attend along with their parents.**

**1st Year & TY2 PT Meeting
Thursday 10th January 2019**

**LC1*/LCA1* P/S/T
Meeting & TY3
Monday January 28th 2019**

Digital Textbooks for Junior Cycle Pupils

A reminder to parents that all Junior Cycle pupils can access FREE Digital Versions of their Textbooks On-Line and at home on PC, Mobile or Tablet by using their School Gmail Account. It is hoped that through this initiative the weight of school bags will be reduced as now heavy textbooks can be stored in School whilst Digital Versions are accessed at Home for Study and Homework.

New Texts are continually being added so please check in. Any queries can be directed to the School or email "textbooks@tarbertcs.ie"

Christmas Exams, School Reports & VS Ware

Christmas/Autumn Exams ran from Tuesday November 27th to Friday November 30th. Students have been reminded about the importance of these Christmas exams as a key stepping stone in their State Exams preparation and as an indicator on their progress in school to date. I again wish to remind parents that **exam results will not be posted home** – instead they can be retrieved online through VSware. By now all parents have been issued their VSware login details.



VSware is the schools computerised administration system. All school reports are available to view online on VSware for your child or your children. Please feel free to contact the school if there are any issues concerning access or viewing these reports. Naturally the onus is on parents to keep their login details secure. In no way should login or password details be shared with others. The school will text home all parents to alert them as to the availability of the results online. It is my hope results will be available to view from mid-December 2018.

If you have difficulty going online or have internet problems at home and cannot view these results - then please contact the School and we will make alternative arrangements for you.

Pre Exams 2019

Mock exams for Junior and Leaving Cert students begin on 5/2/19. They will cost €110 per student and capped at €110 if you have more than one child doing pre exams this year. The money is being collected by the secretaries in the main office whereby a receipt will be issued and is due before **Friday, January 25th, 2019.**

Please be aware that the actual cost of pre exams is higher than **€110 per student.** However the school will subsidise this exam fee for all parents and for those parents who are medical card holders or currently unemployed and in receipt of social welfare. If you are in this situation, you will need to fill out a form, and return it to the school with your **medical card and the reduced fee of €40.** The medical card will be copied and returned to you. Please note, a GP visit card is not acceptable either for these exams or for the State Examinations.

The Pre Exam form will be given to students of exam classes in early January with full details. As with all matters financial, please feel free to contact myself or Ms Moloney around any concerns or difficulties you may have and the matter will be dealt with the upmost of sensitivity and discretion.

Use of The School Journal

The school journal is one of the main methods of communication between school and home. It is therefore vital that parents of **all year groups** view it regularly. Journals are collected weekly at Junior Cycle by class teachers and monitored by core subject teachers at senior cycle. All notes should be signed by a parent/guardian. These signatures should be made in full (not initialled – this lessens the tendency of forgery) There should be no tippex appearing on notes and pages in the journal are numbered, gaps in page numbers may indicate a page has been removed.

As the journal is crucial in Home/School communication it is of paramount importance that parents of **ALL** year groups monitor its contents on a regular basis.

Advice for Exam Success

As we approach the Pre-examinations I want to remind all students that exam success can come in many forms. Not all students can get the top grades or 625 points. Here in the Comprehensive School – we simply want you to reach your full potential - whatever that potential is!

From my experience I wish to emphasise that Examination success can often be put down to the following key factors:

- High rates of school attendance
- Completion of homework to a high standard
- Student self-motivation and commitment
- A healthy competitive element between friends
- Asking for help and assistance from teachers or indeed friends when necessary
- Taking advice from teachers (many of whom are State Examination correctors) on board. On many occasions this may revolve around dropping to Ordinary level for exams. Why take the risk failing a paper? After all it is worth remembering that an O1 grade at Ordinary level is equivalent in points to a H5 on a higher paper.
- Maintaining a positive attitude towards education as well as a sensible social life outside of school – senior students who socialise to excess on weekend nights are exhausting themselves and find concentration more difficult midweek. Equally those students who overly involve themselves in numerous sports teams find a similar problem. Try and find a healthy balance.

Bad Weather and the possibility of School Closures

Any decision, by the Board of Management, to close the school is not taken lightly. In recent years this has mainly occurred as a consequence of severe winter weather conditions or power loss. The school tries to strike a balance between, on the one hand, ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of both students and staff to the best of its ability while on the other hand, preventing the unnecessary disruption to teaching and learning of its students.



As with last winter, Bus Éireann has indicated that as a precaution against severe weather and in the interest of child safety, to introduce a policy applicable to all school transport services that it provides under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Scheme nationwide - for ALL Met Éireann **Status Red weather events**.

This means that when a Red alert is issued by Met Éireann for our area the school bus services will not operate.

This policy is available on www.buseireann.ie/statusred.

All parents should be aware that:

- Bus Éireann has sole responsibility for school transport and NOT school personnel
- A Status Red weather warning automatically means all school transport services provided by Bus Éireann under the School Transport Schemes are cancelled – in the affected areas – while the warning is in effect.
- Weather warnings are carried on all national and local news bulletins.
- Those families using private bus operators should contact their bus operators directly for up to date information about transport availability
- **While Bus Éireann may not be providing school transport services because of this new policy, it understands that when any severe weather is forecast, it remains for each individual school to decide whether that school should close or not. Therefore the school may open as normal, if it so decides.**
- In the event that the school authorities decide to officially close the school for poor weather or indeed for any reason – a text message will be sent to all parents regarding the closure – every attempt will be made to do this as early as possible, keeping in mind that as Principal, I often rely on many others for information/recommendations before a decision is made and conditions can change rapidly in the early mornings.
- Parents should only accept text messages with the **'TarbertCS'** username.

Year Heads / Co-ordinators

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. So if you have any concerns at all then you should contact your child's Year Head in the first instance.

The Year Heads for the academic year 2018/19 are:

1st Years	Ms. R. O'Donoghue
2nd Years	Ms. G. O'Callaghan
3rd Years	Mr. J. Connolly
LC1 & LCA1	Ms. E. Fitzgerald
LC2	Mr. J. Dore
LCA2	Ms. Moloney
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.

The School Uniform

As you are aware by now consultation on a change to the current uniform jumper has been ongoing for over a year. At a recent Board meeting a final decision was made on the appearance and style of the jumper. Pictured here is Luke Dillon in St. Fergus wearing the new approved School jumper with an updated crest and yellow neck stripe. A gradual phase in period has been also agreed by the Board so as to allow for minimum financial impact on parents.



The new jumpers will be compulsory for:

- All new 1st years in September 2019
- All new 1st years in September 2020 and
- All students in September 2021

The Board have also instructed all future uniforms stocked in shops to be of a single high quality jumper type (70%/30% - acrylic/wool combination) so as to ensure they are long lasting.

Recent TY Trips

Congratulations to all our TY students who recently travelled to France on a school exchange at the end of November for 5 days while the remaining students went to Northern Ireland (and Mayo!) to sample some of the history, geography and culture of the 6 counties. Both trips were a tremendous success and we compliment all the students for their attitude, maturity and levels of co-operation.

I also wish to thank the members of the teaching staff who organised and attended on both trips. Without their efforts - none of this was possible - Ms Anne O'Sullivan (foreign trips copordinator), Ms Margaret Hogan (TY coordinator), Mr Martin Trench, Ms Helen Lane, Ms Gerardine O'Callaghan and Mr Kevin O'Keefe.

