



22/08/'24

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope this email finds you all well and that you and your families have had a restful and relaxing summer break. We are really looking forward to welcoming your child back into school. Please see the following important updates relating to our school campus, routines and expectations.

School Updates

Permanent Accommodation

We are delighted to inform you that work has continued at a solid pace over the summer months on our permanent accommodation. Demolition of the old grandstand is due to be completed by the end of September and once these materials are removed, construction of our new secondary school building will commence. We expect to move into Phase I in September 2026. Phase I will consist of the main block of classrooms, specialist rooms and our four autism classes. Phase II will be constructed from September 2026 – January 2026 and will involve decanting the existing prefabs off-site, construction of our 600 square metre sports hall, student gym and completion of our five basketball courts, student outdoor social spaces and school garden. Exciting times indeed!

Access to the School

For the next two academic years, access to our school will be via our pedestrian gate off Grosvenor Lane located towards the rear of the school. We are asking for all parents to speak to your children about the need to be respectful of our neighbours on Grosvenor Lane as they travel to and from school. We also ask that students do not loiter on Grosvenor Lane at the end of each school day.

As per last year, we ask that any parents who wish to drop their child to school or collect from school adopt a park and stride approach and avoid driving down Grosvenor Lane. Additional school signage will be installed this week directing school visitors around to this gate.

We will monitor this access point very closely and school staff will be present at the gate every morning from 8.00am – 8.20am and every afternoon at the end of the school day. Our local Community Guard will also be present at the start of term to monitor road usage and to ensure that school access at the start of term runs smoothly.

The second pedestrian gate from our campus that opens into Harold's Cross Educate Together National School (HXETNS) will remain for the use of HXETNS students, parents and staff only. This gate is not to be used by any members of our school community.

We will have two Bus Escort taxis which will use Grosvenor Lane each morning travelling in a one-way system from the direction of Grosvenor Square up and around to Leinster Road. Both drivers will be briefed before the return to school on these new protocols.

Interim Accommodation

We have made significant improvements to our interim accommodation over the past three months. Feedback from our students last year highlighted the need for additional outdoor covered learning and social spaces. Students also emphasised how much they enjoyed Food Village meals at lunchtime.

Based on this feedback, we have installed a second canopy with astro turf and some purchased some additional picnic tables. We have also installed additional bike parking and additional outdoor student noticeboards. Please note that these improvements were funded solely by Parent Staff Association fundraising and parent/guardian annual contributions. We are hugely grateful to each one of you for your support in enabling us to provide the educational experience that your children need and deserve. See below images.



Catering

We are also delighted to inform you that our food providers Food Village (www.foodvillage.ie) have agreed to now offer affordable snacks at break-time (10.28am – 10.43am) each day as well as lunchtime meals (12.39pm – 1.14pm). Their service will commence on 3rd September. We will update you next week with details how you can set up and add money to your child's account and when they will be on-boarding new students to set up fobs etc. Please note that your child will not be permitted to use the app on their mobile phone to collect their food. They must use their assigned fob only.

CCTV

To improve our campus security, over the summer, we installed CCTV cameras at our main access point and main walkway. Please see attached CCTV ratified by our Board of Management.

Ipads

In order to support our students to connect with each other at break and lunchtimes, engage with our lunchtime clubs, get some fresh air and exercise, this year, we are asking that students do not use their iPads at break or lunchtime. Students are permitted to use iPads before school if they need to complete any homework or assignments.

Staffing

We have a number of talented teachers joining our school this year. These teachers bring a wealth of experience with them teaching across all second level sectors in Ireland as well as experience from the private sector.

Please see below details:

Megan Brodie	P.E & Science
Áine Burns	Spanish & German
Aodhan Clabby	Business, P.E & Learning Support
Brendan Daly	Maths & Geography
Hannah Doyle	Art
Alannah Dunne	Irish & Maths
Hazel Egan	History & Classics
Brian Fitzgerald	Economics, Business, P.E & Learning Support
Lottie Hughes	Science & TY Chemistry
Paul Kavanagh	Maths & Science
Lucia Kennedy	ASD Lead Teacher & CSPE
Caitriona Maher	Classics, Geography, Climate Action & SPHE
Caoimhe Naughton	History & English
Caoimhe Quigley	Home Economics

Subject/Area Coordinators

Our full list of subject coordinators can be found below:

Subject	Coordinator
Accounting	Caoimhe McHugh
Active Leisure	Claudia Murtagh
Art	Hannah Doyle
Artistic Performance	Leonna Condron
Biology	Amy Kerins
Business	Caoimhe McHugh
Career Guidance	Lorraine Galvin
Catering	Amy Kerins

Classics	Caitríona Maher
Coding	Niamh Hogan
Computer Science	Niamh Hogan
CSPE	Amie Hughes
Economics	Brian Fitzgerald
English	Daniel Clark
Ethical Education	Caoimhe Naughton
Geography	Claudia Murtagh
German	Áine Burns
Graphics	Ger Vickery
History	Caoimhe Naughton
Home Economics	Caoimhe Quigley
Irish	Amie Hughes
Junk Kouture	Hannah Doyle
Maths	Ger Vickery
Music	Leonna Condron
Outdoor Pursuits	Megan Brodie
PE	Niamh Small
Physics	Lorraine Galvin
Politics & Society	Daniel Clark
Robotics	Niamh Hogan
Science	Lorraine Galvin
Student Enrichment Modules (SEM)	Daniel Clark
Spanish	Laura Power
SPHE	Leonna Condron
Sports Science	Niamh Small
Technology	Niamh Hogan
The Arts	Emily O' Dwyer

Year Groups

Please find below an overview of our year coordinators and tutors.

Group	Year Coordinator	Tutor
1A	Laura Power	Jenny Tynan
1B		Niamh Hogan
1C		Megan Brodie
2A	Ciara Mealy	Amy Kerins
2B		Caoimhe McHugh
2C		Brendan Daly
3A	Ger Vickery	Emily O' Dwyer
3B		Aodhan Clabby
3C		Brian Fitzgerald
4A	Leonna Condrón	Amie Hughes
4B		Aideen Kinsella
4C		Caitríona Maher
5A	Daniel Clark	Áine Burns
5B		Niamh Small

Your child's subject teacher is the first point of contact for any subject based queries. Your child's class tutor is the point of contact for any general queries relating to school life, academic progress, student wellbeing etc.

Shared Expectations

As a school community, one of the factors which has led to our continued progress and success has been the shared expectations all members of our school community have for themselves and each other. With that in mind, please note that the following behaviours will lead to an immediate suspension from our school:

- Leaving the school campus without permission
- Possession or use of a vape on school grounds or in the immediate vicinity of the school
- Sharing a toilet cubicle with another student

Attendance & Punctuality

Our school day commences at 8.20am each morning. Students can access the school campus from 8.00am onwards. Please note that our pedestrian gate will be closed at 8.20am each morning. Any students who are late will need to use the intercom system located at this gate to ring through to the school office. They will then need to sign in at the office. Please encourage your child to get into good routines around punctuality from 29th August onwards. If your child is absent from school

or has a medical/dental appointment etc., please contact Alex in the school office via our school app. Positive educational outcomes are directly correlated to attendance, punctuality and engagement in school.

HX Park & Surrounds

We ask that all students are mindful of our local neighbours, particularly at the end of the school day as almost 370 students depart our campus. Our local park is beautifully maintained by Dublin City Council and is a fantastic asset to our local community. We ask that any students who wish to use the park after school do so in small groups and are respectful of other park users. Any students who wish to play football/hurling etc. after school must use an alternative park as ball sports are strictly prohibited in Harold's Cross Park.

Similarly, we ask that any students who wish to use the Centra on Harold's Cross Road do so in a respectful way and do not congregate in the shop, causing inconvenience to fellow shoppers. Students must pay in full for any food items they wish to purchase. We ask that students do not congregate behind Centra, in Leinster Park as this has previously impacted on our local residents' ability to access their cars.

The Coughlan family who own our local Centra have been huge supporters of our school to date sponsoring a number of full sets of our GAA jerseys. It is important that our students are seen as positive ambassadors in our local area and that our school as a whole add value to Harold's Cross Village and other local areas. We ask that you speak to your child about our school's expectations of the above and also remind them that all relevant school policies such as our Code of Positive Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy and Suspension and Expulsion Policy etc. very much apply to behaviour in our local area as well as on school campus.

Lockers

This year, to improve the user experience, we have replaced our dial locks with combination locks that are fitted into each locker. This locking mechanism is much easier for students to use and will prevent locks going missing and students having to pay any additional charges. Your child's tutor as part of your child's induction will demonstrate to your child how to use their lock. All mobile phones must be switched off and locked in the locker before 8.20am each morning. All valuables, monies etc. should also be locked away. Headphones and earphones are not allowed during the school day. If your child wear headphones or earphones into school, please remind them that these items must be locked away before 8.20am.

Students can access their lockers at four separate periods during the day.

- Before School - 8.05am – 8.15am to lock away valuable, and mobile phones and collect textbooks, copybooks, materials which they required for Period 1-4.
- Break-time – 10.28am – 10.43am
- Lunch-time – 12.39pm – 1.14pm to leave back materials and collect anything they need for periods 5- 6.
- After school 3.10pm (Friday at 12.35pm) to leave back materials, collect anything they need for homework and collect phone and any other valuables.

E-Scooters

From Monday 20th May, e-scooters were made legal to use and operate on a public road under the Road Traffic and Roads Act 2023, however, students should note the following rules and restrictions for their age group. E-scooters can only be used by people over 16 years of age.

E-scooters are not permitted:

- to be used by people under 16.
- to carry goods or passengers.
- to be used on footpaths, pedestrianised areas or on motorways.
- To exceed a speed limit of 20 km/h.

Admin Charge

For any parents who have still to pay our administration charge of €175, we ask that you pay this charge within the next five school days. Please note that this charge covers such items as 24 hour student insurance, lockers, taster subject materials, Office 365 licences, Vs ware subscription, Schoolwise subscription, School App, web-text, telephone, photocopying and administration charges, many of which we have already paid for 2024-2025. Please speak to Alex in the school office, in confidence if you wish to set up a payment plan for this charge.

Annual Contribution

In an ideal world, our schools would be funded at a level which would allow them to flourish and plan for the future, but unfortunately, the capitation grant that we receive from the state covers the bare minimum required for heating, lighting, security, cleaning, water & bin charges, broadband and communications, insurance, maintenance contracts and ICT.

It is your annual contribution which will enable us to purchase high quality equipment which we need to ensure that your child receives the best possible educational experience here in HCETSS.

Annual contributions go some way in enabling us to provide our students with the best educational tools. Our Board of Management suggest a contribution of €275 for your child. If you are in a position to pay more, we would really appreciate this to allow for parents who may not be in a position to contribute this amount.

Your contributions will greatly help contribute to our efforts to provide the best teaching and learning experiences possible for your child. Contributions are gratefully received via our school app.

By donating €275.00 we can claim €130.00 approx. tax back from Revenue, so your very generous donation of €275 is actually worth €385 approx. to our school. Please liaise in confidence with Alex our school administrator around what exactly works best for you. We fully appreciate that every family's personal circumstances are different, particularly during this time. Your support is really needed and hugely valued.

Dress Code

Students in HCETSS do not wear a school uniform. We encourage diversity and self-expression. Our dress code enables self-expression in our students, while maintaining a sense of fairness, and fostering their understanding of work/professionally appropriate attire, and the need for those things.

In order to facilitate this learning, students and their parents/guardians are given guidelines known as the Dress Code to help them make the right choices in terms of their school clothes and to realise that some forms of clothing are not appropriate for school.

This code works in conjunction with our Code of Positive Behaviour, the Anti- Bullying Policy, SPHE and RSE policy. These Dress Code guidelines also apply while on school outings, sporting events and trips. A positive proactive approach will be taken towards discipline and every effort will be made to implement this code in a fair, reasonable and consistent manner.

Please note that it is not acceptable for any student to express judgement or criticism of what another student is wearing. This is a serious offence and such behaviour may involve implementation of Code of Positive Behaviour and our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Guidelines

- Our expectations are that clothing will be clean and comfortable and allow freedom of movement for active learning.
- Please ensure that your child avoids the display of inappropriate slogans, graphics or offensive language on clothing and/or accessories.
- Hats, caps, hoods, other headgear (except for religious head coverings) and sunglasses must not be worn indoors.
- It is expected that all students will be identifiable and that any make-up or coverings such as hats, caps, hoods and sunglasses will not interfere with communication during teaching and learning activities.
- Jewellery should be appropriate to daily school life. Jewellery that is very long, loose or large is a health and safety issue in practical classes and on crowded corridors and should not be worn.
- Torn/ripped jeans may only be worn if the rips/tears are **at the knee or below** and do not pose a health and safety risk in the school environment.
- Flip flops are not permitted.
- Vest tops/sleeveless tops must not be worn.
- Tops that expose the midriff must not be worn.
- Clothing should cover underwear and should not be see-through.
- Shorts, skirts and dresses should be mid-thigh length
- Outdoor coats cannot be worn in class.

Hair Styles

- Hair should always be clean
- A student's eyes should not be covered by a hairstyle.

Make-Up

- Make-up is allowed in school it should be applied in moderation.
- False/acrylic nails that impede writing, typing or practical work must not be worn to school.

During PE and other sporting activities

- Please ensure that sportswear and trainers/runners are worn
- No jewellery other than a sport watch to be worn.
- Football shorts or similar shorts are permitted for sporting activities only.

HCETSS understands that some students may need exemptions for sensory reasons. Permission for such exemptions should be sought from your child's Year Coordinator.

Mobile Phones

One of the key priorities for us this year is to continue building positive relationships in our school. Positive relationships are fundamental to the learning environment that we aspire to create. To achieve this, we need your continued support with our mobile phone policy.

We want to create an environment where students are focused on their learning, building social connections and are not distracted by mobile phones. We recommend that students do not bring mobile phones on to the school campus. To facilitate this, you can always pass a message to your

child during the school day through the school office. Similarly, if your child wishes to contact you, they can use the school phone.

However, if your child wishes to bring a phone in to school, they must switch it off and lock it away in their locker before 8.20am each morning. Phones can only be accessed at the end of the school day after the last lesson. Please do not call your child during the school day on their mobile phone and strongly discourage your child from contacting you using their phone.

We ask that you consider the following before allowing your child to bring their mobile phone to school.

- Mobile phones are valuable items which may lead to theft. The school is not responsible for replacing a lost, stolen or damaged phone.
- Use of camera phones can lead to child protection and data protection issues.

If a mobile phone is used without permission, it will be confiscated, placed in a zip lock bag and locked away in the school office for collection by your child at the end of the school day. In the event of a repeat, phone will be confiscated and only returned to a parent/guardian who will need to make an appointment prior to collection.

We wish to ensure that the start of term goes well for your child and that we develop positive routines around high-quality learning and teaching. With this in mind, we would appreciate if over the next few days, you could discuss this matter with your child and remind them of our policy.

Office Hours

This year, we have extended our office opening hours to 8.20am – 4.00pm (Monday to Thursday) and 8.20am – 12.40pm (Friday)

Finally, one of the best ways as a parent to support your child in the next few days and weeks is to help them to develop a good routine around switching off screens, phones charging downstairs, getting to bed earlier, healthy diet etc. These are simple key messages which we will also emphasise here in school.

We are really looking forward to meeting with your child and supporting them to making a great start for 2024-2025. Please do not hesitate to contact Alex at office@hcertss.ie if you have any queries relating to any area of our school.

Kind regards,



Pádraig Conaty
Principal



Mick Heffernan
Deputy Principal