



12th December

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope that this communication finds you well. We are writing to you with regard to various aspects relating to our school.

Orange Weather Warning

As you know, the weather is expected to remain very cold for much of this week. Our avenue, walkways and footpaths will be gritted each morning this week at 6.30am. However, please remind your child/children to exercise caution on their journey to and from school and in and around our school campus. A number of the footpaths around Harold's Cross were quite hazardous this morning. We would also appreciate if all students could wear warm clothes to school, particularly for the rest of this term. Over the past two weeks, our cleaners have found a number of winter coats, hat and scarves left in classrooms and in the yard at the end of the school day. Please ask your child/children to check the lost property box tomorrow in the main office if they are missing any of these items. Any clothing not claimed by 22nd December will be donated to charity.

Break and Lunchtime

One of the challenges which we have had this term is with the Department of Education's reduction in staffing resources for supervision of secondary school students at breaks and lunchtimes. As a result, we do not have adequate supervision resources to safely supervise students across all nine base classrooms as well as our three outdoor yard areas/social spaces. In addition to this, with our interim accommodation, we do not have one large canteen area where students can eat or socialise indoors. This has meant us asking all students to go outside at break and lunchtime when the weather permits. When the weather is wet or cold like this week, students can eat and socialise in their base classrooms for the duration of break and lunchtime. We are meeting with our student council this week to explore more options to ensure that students can relax and have a comfortable break and lunchtime while still being adequately supervised. As well as our lunchtime clubs, we are looking into adding a student-led library to add to the lunchtime recreation options on offer. We have contacted Rathmines Library to support us with this initiative and we may also look for donations of books for this library space from our PSA. We will be in touch about this in the new year. Please note that there is no easy solution to this issue but we do our best to resolve in a student-centred way given the physical facilities and staffing resources that we have at our disposal.

Campus Furniture & Equipment

A huge thanks to all of you who have made an annual contribution to our school. Your financial support has enabled us to purchase two new outdoor table tennis tables along with additional student picnic tables and benches. Going forward, our campus caretaker Fergus will ensure that the

table tennis tables and student seating are stored safely at the end of each day and clean and dry each morning and ready for student use.

Accommodation

Interim

The Department of Education are currently working on the design for the expansion of our interim accommodation to provide additional classrooms and specialist rooms for 2023-2024. We have also requested a prefab as part of next year's accommodation to be used as a small canteen area for 2023-2024.

Permanent

The tender for the construction of our permanent accommodation went to tender today. We are sending you today a link to share the final version of drawings.

<https://we.tl/t-txmumcRKLR>

We will keep you updated when we are notified regarding the appointment of a contractor and agreed timelines and schedule of works.

One Night Only Talent Show

We are very excited that we will be holding our first ever talent show - 'For One Night Only' - on Wednesday 14th December in the Assumption Junior National School, Walkinstown. We have fantastic students across all three year groups who will be taking the stage to showcase their talents. Tickets are limited as the hall is relatively small and we are currently prioritising the families of the students who are performing. All the monies raised will go towards putting on other future productions such as 1st and 2nd year musicals, TY and 5th year plays, concerts etc. If you would like to attend and support this event, please ask your child to go to Room 13 for the first 15 mins of lunchtime over one the next three days. Tickets are €7 for students and €12 for all others.

UCD Innovation Academy

On Wednesday 7th December, Alan Morgan and David Delaney from UCD's Innovation Academy visited our school and along with two of our teachers, Evan and Ciara facilitated a design thinking challenge for all of our Third Years. The day finished with a student showcase of ideas on how to enhance the student experience of our school campus. Our Third Year students presented their innovative ideas to all of our school staff, as well as teachers from Blackrock ETSS and Firhouse ETSS not to mention Educate Together CEO, Emer Nowlan. The presentations were superb and our Third Year Student Council reps will now link in with the overall student council to feed back their proposed innovations and action a large number of the ideas. This event was another important step in our school's partnership with the Innovation Academy and we look forward to future events next year.

New LS teacher

We have recently appointed a new Learning Support teacher. Amie Hughes has joined our school team and will be working in our Additional Support Needs (ASN) Department as a co-teacher in mainstream lessons as well as delivering a number of targeted interventions to smaller groups of students. Her bio will shortly be added to our website.

Vaping

You may have read about the recent evidence review by the Health Research Board that found a strong association between smoking cigarettes and e-cigarette use. Teenagers who experimented with e-cigarettes were five times more likely to becoming cigarette smokers and see their

lifespans shorten by between 10 and 15 years as a result. As you may know approval is currently being sought which will ban the sale of vapes and e-cigarettes in Ireland to those aged under 18. Last week in all our SPHE lessons, your child's tutor focused on this whole area, the health implications of vaping, the law and upcoming legislation as well as our own school's expectations. In terms of our Code of Positive Behaviour, vaping is treated the same as cigarette smoking and sanctions for students found vaping on our campus include possible suspension. We would encourage all of our parents to discuss this area with your child particularly the health implications, addictive properties of nicotine and potential damage to adolescent hearts and lungs.

Chewing Gum

Please note that we are a chewing free campus, for all staff and students.

Parking & drop off

We wish to remind all parents that it is not possible to drive on to the school campus to drop your child off unless this has been pre-arranged with either a Year Coordinator or our Additional Support Needs (ASN) coordinator. Please contact the office if for mobility or other reasons, you wish to request access to the campus to drop or collect your child. If you drive your child to school, please do not drop off or collect at the main entrance as this impedes the bus lane, bike lane and particularly Harold's Cross Educate Together National School children who scoot in to school using the footpath.

Attendance and Punctuality

We have seen a big improvement across all three year groups in terms of student attendance and punctuality. We thank you for your continued support in this area. We understand that this is not always easy but please know that by getting your child in to school each morning for 8.05am/8.10am, you are enabling them to start their day ready to learn as well as developing very positive habits for young adulthood and beyond. Please continue to use the school app to notify us if your child is going to be absent from school or late due to an appointment. Any student arriving late to school must sign in at the school office before going to their timetabled lesson.

TY Survey

A massive thank you to all of you who have completed our Transition Year survey. Even if your child is not in current Third Year, please note that your feedback and input is hugely valued and will help to shape our Transition Year Programme for a number of years to come. If you have not yet had a chance to complete the survey, it will remain open until Friday 16th December and only takes six minutes to complete. Please see link: <https://forms.office.com/r/caUP4bMqhy>

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Pádraig Conaty

Principal

Mick Heffernan

Deputy Principal