

August, 2018

Dear Parents / Guardians,

As the new school year begins, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support and co-operation during the past year. I would also like to thank our students for their positive contribution to the life of the school over the year. They helped to make it a very successful year for the entire school community. The involvement of many of our students in various activities has been most impressive. We are very proud of our students and their excellent contribution to their school.

Please note that while incoming second and third year form classes will remain unchanged, there may be movement between class groups for core subjects (English, Gaeilge, Maths).

**PAYMENTS AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION:** For your convenience, this year we have introduced a payment system for school expenses through VSWare. By logging in to the system you can see expenses that are due for your son. These can be paid online or through the office. We are very grateful for all voluntary contributions made by parents during the past year and encourage you where possible, to make a voluntary contribution of €100.00 again this year. Department of Education cutbacks have led to insufficient funding. We must turn to parents for more help in order to maintain the high standards of support and service provided to our students. All contributions are greatly appreciated.

**DE LA SALLE ETHOS:** I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you once again of the core values at the heart of a De La Salle School:

De La Salle schools are Christian schools that share the mission of the Catholic Church and where people show care and respect for each other.

De La Salle schools offer a quality education to all students.

De La Salle schools are built around partnership, involving parents, students, staff and Management.

De La Salle schools are concerned with the needs of the disadvantaged at all levels.

In order to maintain our high standards and develop your son's full potential, we need your continued support and co-operation, especially in the following areas:

**CODE OF BEHAVIOUR:** The College Code of Behaviour is based on mutual respect for all persons and its aim is to ensure that the school environment is a respectful, safe, secure and happy place for all members of the school community. The Code of Behaviour is designed so that the work of the College proceeds smoothly enabling us to realise our aims. A revised Code will be distributed in the coming weeks.

**Upholding the good name of the school is an extremely important aspect of the Code of Behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour by a small number can reflect badly on every student in the school. I would ask you, therefore, to encourage your sons to behave well outside of school - at lunchtime, going to and coming from school and when on school outings. It is especially important for our students to respect the property of those who live in the vicinity of the school and to treat the residents of the area with courtesy. Students are not allowed into any local housing estates at lunchtime. Full lunch facilities are available in the school and all junior students must remain in the school at lunchtime.**

**Students may enter and leave school grounds through the Mill Road and Castleblayney Road gates only.**

I would like to point out that our students have an excellent reputation in this regard. We frequently hear compliments about their behaviour on school outings, both at home and abroad - all the more reason that a small number should not blemish the good name of the majority.

**MOBILE PHONES: Students are encouraged to leave mobile phones, i-pods and other recording devices at home. Students who bring such items to school do so at their own risk as the school will not be responsible for any loss or damage incurred. Any mobile phones or other recording devices brought to school must be switched off during the school day.** I'm sure you are aware that there are many instances throughout the country where internet sites such as Youtube host photos and video recordings of students and teachers. Students who use their phones for such purposes are in serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. Such activity must be condemned for a variety of reasons:

It is a serious invasion of privacy for both students and teachers.

These recordings are used to bully others.

They are also used to ridicule and humiliate both staff and students.

Incidents, such as fights, are deliberately planned for the sole purpose of recording them so that they can be put on these internet sites.

Enormous damage can be done to the good name of a school.

For these reasons, the regulations regarding mobile phones will be strictly enforced.

Any student publicising recordings or photos in any manner will face severe sanctions up to and including expulsion from the College. A student using a phone will have the phone confiscated. The phone will only be returned to parents/guardians.

**SOCIAL MEDIA SITES:** Students should use social media sites e.g. Facebook and Twitter responsibly and with conscious respect of others. The following guidelines are recommended:

- Never make friends with people you are unsure of.
- Never reveal personally identifiable information i.e. where you live etc.
- Never complain about your colleagues, teachers or friends.
- Never discuss sensitive information.
- Never upload or 'Like' controversial pictures, videos or websites.

We should all be aware of the dangers of cyberbullying and ensure careful and considerate use of social media and the internet in general. Any student involved in cyberbullying will face severe sanctions up to and including expulsion from the College. I would appreciate your full co-operation and support in stamping out these unacceptable activities and recommend that you monitor your son's use of the internet.

**ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY:** Absences should be kept to an absolute minimum and must be explained to meet with Túsła requirements. **The local Education Welfare Officer must be notified if a student misses 20 days in the course of a school year or if erratic attendance is giving cause for concern.** Notes must be provided and should be written into the appropriate section of the Student Journal. Frequent absences disrupt your son's progress. Text messages are sent daily to the parents of absent students. Please ensure that the school has your current contact details. Sanctions will be imposed for unauthorised absences. **You may now view your son's attendance on VSWARE.** We expect students to be on time for all classes. The official rollcall for the day will take place during the PC class each morning at 8.50 am. It is essential that your son is on time for school. Students are expected to report for

afternoon classes at 1.25/1.50 as appropriate (see Timetable section below). Poor punctuality will result in sanctions being imposed.

**HOMEWORK:** All homework (both written and learning work) should be completed diligently and on time. We recommend the following homework/study time for students:

YEAR	HOMEWORK / STUDY
1	1.5 hours minimum
2	2 hours minimum
3	2.5-3 hours
TY	2 hours
5	3 hours
6	3-4 hours

Students are advised to work in blocks of 30-40 minutes with a short break between blocks to maximise concentration.

**PART-TIME WORK:** We strongly advise that students should not work during term time. From our experience, such employment has a negative impact on a student's overall performance.

**The Student Journal should be used to record all homework assignments.** Reading/ Learning/ Revision assignments are just as important as written work and should be treated as such. Parents are asked to check the journal on a regular basis and sign it at the end of each week.

**UNIFORM:** The uniform is a very important element in the overall culture of the school. It identifies our students and should be worn with pride. I ask you to bear in mind the following:

- The College jacket is a **compulsory** part of the uniform and the **only** outdoor jacket allowed. Other jackets will be confiscated and returned only to parents/guardians. Please note: **Official School jacket available only from Michael Lynch Menswear.**
- School shoes (preferably leather) must be **all black, without logos.**
- The school tie must be worn at all times.
- Where there is a genuine reason for not wearing any part of the uniform, this should be explained by a note in the Student Journal. Any problem with the uniform should be resolved as soon as possible.

All students are expected to comply with the regulations regarding uniform. Failure to comply is regarded as a breach of the Code of Behaviour and will incur sanctions.

**LOCKERS:** Locker rental for the year will be €20.00, payable on the first day of return and not online. Locks are not needed. Students abusing lockers in any way will immediately forfeit the locker and fee. The school management reserves the right to inspect the contents of any locker.

**P.E. UNIFORM:** Compulsory for all students. Cost €80 for full kit. Fittings took place on Tuesday, 22nd August for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> years. A further date will be notified shortly. Times will be notified by text. Parents can order replacement items directly from a link on the school website.

**TIMETABLE CHANGES:**

**Classes will commence each day at 8.50 am with a Pastoral Care class.**

**Monday to Thursday: 8.50 – 8.55**

**Friday: 8.50- 9.10**

**Lunchtime will be shortened to 45mins.**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 1.10- 1.55**

**Friday: 12.45- 1.30**

**Friday classes will finish at 3.30 pm due to the re-introduction of PC classes.**

**Buses will continue to run at the normal times. Facilities will be available on Friday afternoon for students who wish to remain in the school until their bus arrives.**

**LUNCHTIME/ SCHOOL CANTEEN : CASHLESS SYSTEM:** As in previous years, All Junior students MUST remain on the school grounds during lunchtime. There will be full canteen facilities available to all students, provided by the School Food Company selling a range of healthy foods at reasonable prices. Alternatively students may bring their own lunch. This is as a result of parental requests and the Health Promoting Schools initiative.

We welcome the introduction of a **cashless payment system** over the coming weeks in the canteen and information will be distributed to parents shortly. Parents can register online, “top-up” their account and keep track of purchases. This will eliminate the need for students to bring money to school

**SCHOOL CALENDAR/ SCHOOL APP:** Please find also the schedule for the standardised school year 2018/2019 which gives details of holidays/mid-term breaks through the coming academic year. **We would strongly discourage parents from taking students away on holidays during school term-time.** It disrupts their learning and study routines and prevents progress. If examinations are missed, an accurate report of progress cannot be given.

We will shortly be launching a **De La Salle College School App** to facilitate communication between school and home and to keep you informed of school events and important dates. Further details will be provided over the coming weeks.

We look forward to working in partnership with you during the coming year to secure the best possible progress for your son.

Yours sincerely,

PATRICIA O’ LEARY,

PRINCIPAL.

## School Year 2018/2019

### **Autumn Term:**

Friday, 28th September - No classes.

### **October 2017 Mid-term Break:**

Monday, 29th October to Friday, 2nd November, 2018 inclusive.

Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> December - No classes.

### **Christmas 2018:**

School will close on Friday, 21st December, 2018, which will be the final day of the school term.

### **Spring Term:**

School will re-open on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

### **February 2018 Mid-term Break:**

School will close from Monday, 18th February, 2019 to Friday, 22nd February, 2019 inclusive. (Please note: If contingency arrangements are required the school may remain open up to and including Wednesday 20th February 2019.)

Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019: No classes

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019: Bank Holiday

### **Easter 2018:**

School will close on Friday, 12th April, 2019, which will be the final day of the school term.

(Please note: If contingency arrangements are required the school may remain open up to and including Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2019.)

### **Summer Term:**

School will re-open on Monday, 29th April, 2019.

Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.

The Summer term will end on Friday, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019.

### **State Examinations:**

Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations will commence on Wednesday, 5th June 2019.

The full school calendar for the year will be available on the school website from September 2018.