

8th April 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We hope that this letter finds you all well and that you and your families had a restful Easter break. We are writing to you to update on various elements of school life.

Attendance & Punctuality

We would like to say a huge thank you for your support with our attendance and punctuality drive for Term 2. We saw a large decrease in the number of students arriving to between 1 – 10 minutes late. We ask for your continued support for Term 3. Students who arrive late to school are missing out on the important social aspect of connecting with their and this also causes disruption to class time which begins at 8:20am. There may of course be times when due to unforeseen circumstances that a student may be late, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Good attendance is vital (with the exception of illnesses of course) and ensures that our students are getting the most from their time in school and sets a good pattern for school and life going forward.

Effort & Kindness

In Term 2, our second focus was on our pillar values, effort. Padraig presented to each year group on the importance of effort in their lives, what effort looks like and how effort can help to build resilience. There were also presentations to the students who had received the most Vs Ware effort points in each year group in Term 2. From mid-March onwards, we turned our focus to Kindness which saw a 53% increase in kindness points compared to the previous month. In two weeks' time, Mick will present to all students in our weekly assemblies around the importance of kindness and how we can show kindness to ourselves and each other. Later this term, we will present awards to students in each year group who have received the most Vs Ware points for showing kindness towards other members of our school community.

Student Council & Toilets

Our student council are focusing this term on helping to improve the aesthetic and student experience of our student toilets. We have unfortunately had a small number of vandalism issues in our student toilets during Term 2. Over the course of the next two weeks, Student Council Reps along with Year Coordinators will present to all students in our weekly assemblies around the positive changes made and also ask of students that toilets are respected for all students. Vandalism of any school property is a very serious offence in our school as it negatively impacts on the student experience in our school. We ask that you speak to your child about this matter to ensure that our parents/guardians are re-enforcing the message which our student council and Year Coordinators will deliver this week and next.

Free Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Scheme

As you may be aware, the Department of Education recently announced a Free Book Scheme for all Junior Cycle students (Years 1-3) for 2024-2025. The rate per capita funding to be provided is €309 per student. This equates to €927 across the 3 years of Junior Cycle and takes into consideration that, in general, the cost of schoolbooks and core classroom resources is much higher in First Year than Second or Third Year. Please note that this rate is currently applicable to the 2024/25 school year only. The Free Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Scheme should dramatically reduce the cost of schoolbooks and core classroom resources for our Junior Cycle students. Schools will purchase and own the schoolbooks,

which will be provided on loan to students for the school year. For the 2024/25 school year, after all textbooks have been purchased, the scheme will also cover the cost of core classroom resources with any monies left. Such materials may include copybooks, hardback notebooks, school journals and calculators required for all subjects as well as subject-specific resource items such as lab copybooks for science subjects or dictionaries for language subjects.

Our management body, the JMB is actively working with the Department of Education to refine existing procurement processes and we have been advised to not purchase any textbooks until the Department provide clarity around procurement parameters and requirements for this specific scheme.

We have commenced work on the planning required for the implementation of the Scheme and are compiling booklists. We will update you further in May once the procurement process is finalised.

Recruitment

We have commenced recruitment for 2024-2025. At the moment, we are looking for teachers with one or more of the following subjects:

- Technology
- Graphics
- Economics
- Irish
- Spanish
- Science
- P.E
- History
- Geography

Much of the success to date of our school has been down to our ability to recruit and retain talented teachers committed to our school vision and motivated to ensure that your children receive the best educational experience possible. Our classroom learning environment and extra and co-curricular programme is testament to this. However, as I am sure many of you already know, there is currently a recruitment crisis within the teaching profession with the matter being most acutely felt in Dublin. If you know of any teachers qualified in any of the above subjects who would like to teach in an equality-based, inclusive school, please direct them towards educationposts.ie. Similarly if you or anyone you know might have a room to rent from September onwards to a prospective teacher, please contact Alex in the school office in confidence (office@hcetss.ie)

Dress Code Expectations

As the weather hopefully improves, we would like to remind you all of our student expectations with regard to student dress.

- 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 sports 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 by contacting school office - office@hcetss.ie.

HX Park & Surrounds

As the summer term commences, we ask that all students are mindful of our local neighbours, particularly at the end of the school day as almost 300 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 this term 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.

In addition, we ask that if your child needs to access Leinster Place (directly behind Centra on Harold's Cross Road) in order to get into or get home from school, they need to move through the area and must not congregate. Similarly, if your child does not need to access this area on their way to or from school, please ask them to simply avoid the area altogether.

As a school of and for our local community, we wish to enhance our local area and to never impact negatively on our neighbours right to safety and enjoyment of their environs. We thank you for your support with this important matter.

School Zone Installation

We are delighted to inform you that installation of our School Zone will commence today. A huge thanks to all our parents who engaged with the consultation process and supported our application. We commenced this process in January 2021 and it has only been with your support that we have managed to get to the installation phase. Parent power in practice! The Dublin City Council consultation hub has been updated with a synopsis of feedback received and the Council's responses to same. The design has remained the same and both drawings are still available on the consultation hub, which can be accessed [here](#). Installation should greatly enhance visibility of our school and by extension student safety around our school entrance.

Webwise Webinar & Parent Resources

Webwise are currently hosting a series of webinars led by Dr Colman Noctor – Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytical Psychotherapist. These webinars will provide excellent practical advice and strategies for supporting your child in the digital world. Webwise will also outline a suite of advice and resources for parents/families/guardians.

Please register via below link: <https://www.webwise.ie/trending/safe-and-empowered-supporting-children-online-with-colman-noctor/>

Calendar 2024-2025

We are in the process of finalising our school calendar for 2024-2025. Please note that school will re-open for First Years **only** on Friday 23rd August with all other year groups returning week commencing Monday 26th August. As per previous years, we will have a phased return.

In terms of school holidays, please see below:

- October Midterm: We will close on Friday 25th October and re-open on Monday 4th November.
- Christmas Holidays: We will close on Friday 20th December and re-open on Monday 6th January 2025.
- February Midterm: We will close on Friday 14th February and re-open on Monday 24th February.
- Easter Holidays: We will close on Friday 11th April and re-open on Monday 28th April.
- The academic year will end on Friday 30th May.

More detailed calendar to follow over the coming weeks.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you again for all that you do to help our school community thrive and flourish.

Kind regards,



Pádraig Conaty
Principal



Mick Heffernan
Deputy Principal