

21/12/'21

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We hope that this letter finds you all well. It is really hard to believe that we are at the end of this school term. It has really been a rollercoaster!

#### **School Development:**

This term has seen our student numbers almost triple, our campus size increase by 40% and staff numbers jump from 13 to 21. In addition to this we opened our first AS class, now called 'The Grove,' our school website was shortlisted for the Education Website of the Year and prep work has been completed on site for the first pocket forest in D6W, all in the midst of a global pandemic! That is not to even mention the wonderful learning experiences that our students experience on a daily basis.

#### **Feedback:**

We had originally planned on getting Second Year parental feedback on our parent/ teacher meetings this term. However, we have decided to combine this research with a survey on the assessments, and to include First Year families after their parent/teacher meetings in January.

#### **Student Council:**

Student Associate members have attended two full board meetings this academic year. They have given the board updates on the work of the student council and provided valuable insights into the student experience in our school. We are grateful to Ciara and Paula who coordinate the council, Lorraine who oversees student voice in our school as well as the entire student council. In particular, we would like to thank our two board of management student associate members, Lucas and Ofri for their continued commitment to our board.

#### **Permanent Accommodation**

As you know, An Bord Pleanála were due to make a decision on our permanent accommodation by yesterday (21<sup>st</sup> December). It appears that no decision has yet been made. Please keep an eye on their website over the break. We will update you all in the new year as soon as we get news. Our planning reference number is 311174. Fingers crossed.

### Debating:

This has become a very popular activity in our school. We have engaged in a number of debates this term and are fortunate to have a very articulate group of young people in HCETSS. Big thanks to Rowie, Ciara, Dan and Michael for organising and coordinating and to two of our students, Lucas and Isaiah for their help with judging.

### HEPA filters:

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> December, the school received a minor works grant for ventilation which we will use to purchase HEPA filters for each classroom. We are currently researching options and we aim to procure and install units early in Term 2.

### Online Learning:

While we are hopeful that we will open as normal on 6<sup>th</sup> January, it is prudent for us to prepare for the worst. If it is the case that we need to migrate to remote learning, we have detailed protocols and procedures ready and they will be shared with you and your children in advance of remote learning commencing.

### First Year 2022:

The Board has decided to limit the number of places to 72 (three First Year classes) as per our admissions notice. We have almost completed round two of the offers process. There is still a considerable waiting list.

### SWAY:

The Sway newsletter is a fantastic way to read and hear about all of the amazing things that we have been up to this term. You will find a link to the SWAY accompanying this letter. Thanks to Rowie for her work designing, compiling and editing this important account of our term.

### Thank You:

We want to thank each of our colleagues for all that they have done this term. Leading strategy teams, teaching expertly, working hard on really positive teacher/ student relationships, organising lunchtime and afterschool activities, dealing sensitively with a range of challenges, creating, advising, guiding and much else. Our team of SNAs are second to none and it has been a pleasure to have Alex on board as our school administrator and Fergus as our school caretaker.

We also wish to say a huge thank you to you, our parents and guardians. Without our wonderful students, there is no school but without you, our parents and guardians there is no school community. We are very grateful for the trust that you have placed in us and for your continued support as our wonderful school goes from strength to strength.

### Return to school and the school calendar:

We have attached an updated version of our school calendar. Although we will notify you about any changes to the calendar, we strongly advise that you also follow us on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram (hcertss). There are some compulsory closures for our school during the next two terms. These relate to Junior Cycle training and training for the whole staff on supporting the work of the Autism Support Programme (ASP). These closures are on the attached calendar apart from the ASP training which will be confirmed closer to the time. We return to school on Thursday, January 6th 2022. Staff are meeting first to plan for the academic year 2022-2023 from 8.20am-10.16am. Students are to return for lessons commencing at 10.31am.

May we take this opportunity to wish you and your families every peace and prosperity over the holiday season and for 2022.

Best wishes,



Pádraig Conaty

Principal



Mick Heffernan

Deputy Principal