



December 2020

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**Update to Parents and Guardians**

I would like to take this opportunity to bring you a further update as we continue to navigate through an unprecedented school year.

**Business 'as usual'**

- In so many facets of school life things are continuing and progressing as they would in a typical school year. Our first years have settled in well and have completed their regular vaccinations with HSE staff visiting the school in early November.
- Cognitive Ability Testing has been carried out with all first year students. A copy of your child's report will be sent home with the student and parents will be alerted by text.
- Our TY students recently completed Differential Aptitude Testing. The results, along with explanatory information will be issued to parents in early 2021. This may assist with subject choice for Leaving Certificate.
- Parents/Guardians of current first year students will be contacted again in January with information around subject options for Junior Cycle. Similarly, Parents/Guardians of current third and fourth year students will also be contacted in the new year, as these students will need to decide which route they hope to follow next year - Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied or the traditional Leaving Certificate, and if so, which subjects they would like to study. It will not be possible for us to have face to face meetings with you, however we will communicate virtually with you on these issues.



- Congratulations go to our Meitheal team who helped with the collection of donations during our Colours Day in October. In total the Colours Day raised over €1400 for Marymount Hospice and Crumlin Children's Hospital. December will see the organisation of a number of fundraising events for the local SVP, an annual and much anticipated undertaking by our school community.
- We've held a whole school online assembly as well as a Remembrance Service for the relatives and friends of our school community who have passed away.
- Our Transition Year tidy area group has also been busy picking up rubbish in our neighbouring estates each week.
- 3rd, 5th and 6th year students have completed their November assessments and reports for these year groups will issue before the Christmas break. Years 1, 2 and 4 will be working on their assessments over the next two weeks and these groups will receive their reports once school re-opens in the first week of January. These assessments have brought a focus for our students and have provided a feeling of 'normality' to a very non-normal school year. I'd like to commend our students on their preparation for, and performance in, the various forms of assessment. Our students have shown great resilience throughout this first term and have managed to maintain their focus on their education during these trying times. This has been aided hugely by the support given by their parents/guardians and the professionalism and care provided by their teachers. Together we have all worked to make this the best possible experience it can be for all involved.



- This year we continue to work with Jigsaw on the “One Good School” Initiative. This initiative recognises the vital role that schools play in promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people and all those within the school community. In the coming weeks the first year students will complete workshops on Mental Health Awareness with their Wellbeing teachers. Sixth year students will also complete a workshop on “Managing Exam Stress” prior to the commencement of their Pre Examinations. We are very grateful for the support from Jigsaw Cork, and I thank them for asking us to take part in this pilot initiative.
- Classroom Based Assessments (CBA’s) are part and parcel of the Junior Cycle Programme. They give students an opportunity to demonstrate the learning and skills that may not necessarily be assessed in a traditional written examination. Third year students are completing their CBA’s at present. Second year students will complete CBA’s in their various subjects between January and May. Results of CBA’s are recorded alongside the State Certified Final Examinations on the school issued Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

### **Vsware App**

I would like to thank all the parents and guardians that have downloaded the Vsware app. This is an important part of how we communicate with you. Term Reports, once issued, will be available on the app, therefore it is essential that you retain your login details. If you have a number of children in the school they should all appear on the one log in screen. If for some reason you have multiple logins, one for each child, please email us and we will rectify it. Please also ensure that you have notifications enabled in the settings on your phone. The message sent to parents/guardians of students that are absent, is initially sent as an app notification, thereby saving the need to send it as a text message if the notification is read. Please continue to input reasons for absences along with any upcoming appointments your son/daughter may have. The further in advance that requests to leave school early are received, the more likely they will be processed in time by the relevant Year Head. Please remember if your son/daughter has to leave school during the school day and this has not been arranged in advance, it is essential that you phone the school to arrange same. For Health and Safety reasons



we need an accurate list of who is in school for each part of each day. If your son/daughter is unwell during the school day they should ask to speak with their Year Head or a Deputy Principal and we will phone parents/guardians. Please ask your son/daughter not to text you to arrange a collection.

### **Cold Weather**

In my update on October 2nd I explained that *room ventilation is a key preventative measure in this pandemic. Classroom windows will be open in all weather.* If you feel your child(ren) will not be warm enough they should continue to wear additional layers underneath their uniform. We are continuing to be more flexible this year with regard to uniforms, in that students are permitted to also wear their PE jumper and/or the school coat over their regular school uniform while in the building. This gives them more options and additional layers that can be worn either over or under the standard uniform.

As we enter into the colder months of the year I have agreed a further derogation from the school rules on the wearing of the school uniform following consultation with the Student Council, staff and management.

**From December 1st, until the beginning of the Easter break on March 26th, students will be permitted to wear an extra layer (jumper/coat) OVER their uniform while in school. Hoods cannot be worn up** inside the school premises as this, along with face coverings, would have the potential to render students unidentifiable.

As you are aware, we place huge importance and emphasis on the correct wearing of the school uniform. Therefore, this decision to allow students to wear a non school jumper or jacket over their uniform is something that we haven't taken lightly. We are



however very cognisant of the welfare of our students at this time, and we acknowledge that the school can be cold. It is essential however, for all to understand that this is a short term derogation and once the weather improves, and hopefully we get back to some type of normal again, we will revert back to expecting the highest standard of uniform for our students again.

### **Face Coverings**

We would ask that parents/guardians ensure that students have spare masks with them in their school bag each day. No one is allowed into the building without a face covering.

### **Social distancing at small and big breaks**

There continues to be excellent compliance with covid safety regulations within the school building. Students and staff alike have worked hard to keep everyone safe and it is important that all the school community continue to do so throughout the weeks and months ahead.

However we are finding that the compliance by our students during break time, with regard to the wearing of face coverings, hand sanitisation and social distancing, isn't at as high a standard. Teachers are continually reminding pupils to step back and/or correctly position their face covering. I would appreciate it if you could remind your daughter/son of the importance of abiding by the safety guidelines in all situations.

I would again appeal to parents/guardians to ask your daughter/son not to congregate with their friends at the local garages, Lidl etc during lunch break. Such gatherings go against public health advice and can be upsetting to other members of our community who also use these establishments.



The Christmas break is always welcome to the school community but never as much as this year. It has been a demanding time for all in CCS. Never before has our school motto of “Together we achieve” been more relevant. Our goal is to keep our school community safe at all times. We have had to respond to very unusual circumstances and this newsletter outlines some of those responses. All of our individual actions will dictate the success of our school in the current climate.

It is VITAL that we all continue to follow the basic guidelines of social distancing, respiratory etiquette, regular hand washing and wearing of face masks throughout the holiday season. It will be the key to staying safe and ensuring that we all can return in January feeling somewhat refreshed. Complacency is not an option. We can all tire at times of following the basic guidelines but it is of the utmost importance that we do. Like many other schools, we have remained open since late August and we need to keep this up. It is important also to maintain a level of normality throughout the school day. The correct wearing of school uniform, respect for all and an empathetic attitude is necessary both in the run up to Christmas and in the new year.

I would appreciate it if you can work through the contents of this newsletter with your child. Thank you all for your cooperation, it is greatly appreciated. I hope each and every one of you manages to have a happy and peaceful Christmas, and that you all manage to stay safe and well.

***Please note classes will finish for students at 12.35 on Monday 21st December. School will reopen for students at 9am on Wednesday 6th January.***

*Stay safe & protect each other.*

***Kind regards,***



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***Paul Burke***  
***Principal,***  
***Secretary, Board of Management.***