



# Loreto Secondary School

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Office hours: 7.45am to 4.15pm Monday to Friday

Friday, 8 October 2021

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I wish to take this opportunity to update you in relation to several matters as set out below.

## Covid-19 and the operation of the school

It is pleasing to report that we are now in week seven of the school year without any period of closure.

I wish to thank all students and staff for their adherence to Covid-19 preventive measures and for their very high levels of vaccination uptake. The safety of the full school community rests upon each of us in our daily actions and attention to protocols.

Schools nationwide await instructions from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as to how to operate after the next phase of restriction lifting on 22 October. I shall write to you about this matter as soon as DES advice is issued. In particular, I hope to be able to address the issue of in-person parent-teacher meetings and general meetings of parents, all of which are postponed for the moment.

Happily, we have been informed that many extra- and co-curricular activities can now resume in compliance with all necessary control measures. This is great news for students and staff involved in sports, foreign tours, local trips, school show, debating and public speaking, retreats, John Paul 2 Awards, Rotary leadership – to name but a few. It lifts all spirits to see our pitches and sports hall returning to full use and to see buses carrying happy faces heading away on trips and activities.

## School Plan, 2021/2022

The phased return to normality has made it possible for our long-established School Planning Group to resume its important work.

Representative of staff, student and parent voices, the group meets after school every Thursday and has identified the following targets for the year ahead:

<b>Target 1</b>	To review the school's compliance with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)
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<b>Target 2</b>	To review the school's Wellbeing practices, in particular for students with very high levels of need, with reference to the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018-2025
<b>Target 3</b>	To develop and implement a whole-school approach to teaching study skills
<b>Target 4</b>	To review the school curriculum at both junior and senior cycles and to make provision for any additional programme deemed necessary e.g. Leaving Certificate Applied
<b>Target 5</b>	To review the structure of each school day with regard to the duration of classes (40 minutes or 60 minutes), length of lunch break, provision for extra-curricular activities and any associated matters of concern e.g traffic management at the end of the day
<b>Target 6</b>	To consider what positive learnings should be applied to school practices as a consequence of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic
<b>Target 7</b>	To review the process by which Head Girls are appointed

Steps in relation to target 3 have already been implemented;

- All students have been given a presentation on effective study skills by Guidance Counsellors
- Subject teachers are highlighting study techniques relative to their areas in school this week

In relation to target 4, we expect to begin planning after Halloween for the introduction of the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme from September 2022.

### Student Welfare

Everything that we do in school has, at its core, the welfare of our students.

To this end, meetings of Year Heads, the Student Care Co-ordination Team, Special Needs Assistants, Guidance Counsellors, Principal and Deputy Principals, Special Education Teachers, Transition Year Co-ordinators, Students and Prefects Councils all take place on a regular weekly or fortnightly basis. Each day, subject and class teachers keep a watchful eye on the students in front of them, supported at every stage by our administrative staff.

We plan to highlight our overall programme of student welfare at the next general meeting of parents, hopefully in November if Covid measures allow.

In the meantime, however, I wish to draw your attention to the following:

- There is no such thing as an acceptable level of bullying in schools. Should any student feel that she is the subject of bullying, it is essential that this be reported to a Year Head or Ms. O' Reilly (Deputy Principal). The school undertakes to investigate any such report as a matter of urgency.
- Every student in the school receives the required 400 hours of Wellbeing classes at Junior Cycle. This continues into senior cycle in the form of Wellbeing, Guidance, Physical Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Full details of these programmes may be viewed

on our website in the School Plan, 2021/2022. Additionally, further information may be obtained from the Liaison Teachers for Wellbeing – Ms. Pheasey and Ms. Whelan.

- The school takes all matters pertaining to child protection very seriously. Any reports of abuse – sexual, physical or emotional – and neglect will be referred by staff members to the school's Designated Liaison Person, Mr. O' Shea, for possible referral by him to Tusla, the State's Child and Family Agency. In his absence, the Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Ms. O' Reilly.

### **Voluntary Contribution Scheme, 2021/2022**

1. Loreto, Wexford seeks a voluntary contribution of €150 per family in respect of the 2021/2022 school year. This works out at 41c per day per family.
2. We thank families that have already made this contribution in recent weeks.
3. Funds raised by the Scheme are used to improve the school's stock of educational equipment and resources, particularly in relation to Information Technology and certain practical subjects e.g. Home Economics and Technology. We also use the funds to provide for the cost of the hockey pitch and floodlighting that must be paid by the school.
4. A family's voluntary contribution can be paid in any of the following ways:
  - a. One payment of €150
  - b. Three payments of €50
  - c. One or more payments of smaller amounts
5. The school will be happy to accept a donation in excess of €150 if any family, with the means to so do, wishes to make such a contribution.
6. Contributions can be made online by clicking on the Easy Payments Plus icon on the school website – [www.loretowexford.com](http://www.loretowexford.com). This method of payment provides an automatic receipt and, in these Covid-19 times, is the safest method of payment.
7. If online payment is not possible, cheques or cash can be paid to Maria Kehoe, School Secretary with cheques being made payable to Loreto Secondary School, Wexford.
8. Receipts are available on request from the School Secretary.
9. Please be advised that there is no need for you to contact me or the School Secretary to explain if you cannot make any contribution. We fully understand the severe financial constraints facing so many families. We also acknowledge that some parents may have a principled objection to such a request. I wish to emphasise again that this is a voluntary contribution to the school.
10. The only two people in the school who administer the scheme are the School Secretary and Principal. No details of individual payments are made known to anybody else. The work of the

School Secretary and Principal in this regard is subject to inspection on an annual basis by the external auditor.

Please feel free to contact me in relation to any matter in this letter – [principal@loretowexford.com](mailto:principal@loretowexford.com)

Kind regards to all Loreto families.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,  
Principal.