



**Loreto Secondary School,
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Thursday, 19 July 2018

Dear parents/guardians and students,

We write on behalf of the Board of Management in relation to recent developments regarding our new school at Pembroke Hill.

Since last Monday, a number of sub-contractors who have not been paid for their work on our new building have been involved in protest action at the site that has led to the cessation of completion works. Yesterday afternoon, the High Court granted an injunction sought by the Public Private Partnership Company against the protest.

The school is hugely sympathetic to the sub-contractors in question and is also most appreciative of the high quality of their work on site. We have received absolute assurance from the Department of Education and Skills (DES), National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) and the Public Private Partnership Company – the Dutch Investment Fund (DIF) – that all payments in respect of work done and fittings/furniture supplied up to 31 December last have been paid in full to the main building contractor, Sammon. It has become very clear that Sammon, now in liquidation, has failed in its responsibilities to pass these payments to the sub-contractors.

The school is aware that the sub-contractors must now engage with Sammon's liquidator in an attempt to recover as much as possible of what is owed to them. We are also aware that they will shortly be meeting with Brendan Howlin, T.D., NDFA and Office of Government Procurement officials to see what can be done to prevent this situation from recurring in the future and to see if any further legal remedies are available to deal with their current situation. We are also aware that Woodvale, the new contractor on site in place of Sammon, is actively reaching out to the sub-contractors to engage commercially with them in relation to the completion of unfinished work on the sites affected in Wexford, Bray, Carlow and Kells.

In an attempt to give as much practical support as possible to the sub-contractors, I, as Principal, have met with them twice this week to listen to their case. I have indicated to them that the Board of Management will take every opportunity possible to represent their case to the NDFA, DES, DIF and local T.D.s and councillors. This work has already started. The school is also of the view that families who wish to give lawful support to the sub-contractors should contact their local T.D.s and councillors in similar fashion.

The Board of Management, however, also has serious responsibilities for the welfare of its 780 students and 66 staff. As the school bears absolutely no responsibility for the non-payment of sub-contractors and because it is not party to any possible resolution of this situation, it is felt that no action should be taken that threatens the move to the new building from the end of August. We have a duty to point out that failure to move to the new school for the commencement of the 2018/2019 academic year will impact very negatively upon the education of our students, the quality of teaching and the overall welfare of both students and staff. Put starkly, the existing building at Spawell Road will not be able to cater for the 780 students due to attend Loreto from September.

In brief, we will continue to lawfully advance the case of the sub-contractors who have been so unjustly treated by Sammon and we encourage Loreto families to do likewise in the manner described earlier. However, the students and staff - innocent bystanders - must not be allowed wait any longer than the end of this summer to finally move into the new building for which they have waited for the past 20 years. It must be clearly understood that the school is not in any trade dispute with the sub-contractors and that any action taken by them that threatens the welfare of students and staff is both unfair and unwarranted. There are other lawful means of protest and lobbying in which the school will play its full part in support of the sub-contractors.

We shall keep you informed of further developments.

Kind regards,

Yours faithfully,

Sr. Helen O' Riordan,
Chairperson, Board of Management.

Billy O' Shea,
Principal and Secretary to the Board of Management.