

Letters to Families, 2009/2010

Letter 9: Monday, 14 June 2010

Assistance towards the cost of school books in Loreto, Wexford – 2010/2011

Application Form

I wish to apply for assistance towards the cost of textbooks for the 2010/2011 school year.

Parent's/guardian's

name

Address

Daughter's name(s) and class:

Please tick the reason(s) for your application for this grant on the grounds of genuine financial hardship:

Unemployment/short-term working	
Prolonged illness of a parent/guardian	
Large family size with inadequate means	
Single parent/guardian families	
Other family circumstances indicating financial hardship	

Parent's/guardian's

signature

Date

Please return this form to Mr. O' Shea (Principal) before 12.00 p.m. on Friday, 13 August 2010. Late applications will not be accepted.

Any assistance provided will be in the form of a voucher issued by the school to a local bookshop.

Letter 8: Monday, 31 May 2010

Dear parents/guardians and students,

As the school year draws to a close I wish to refer to the following points:

State examinations

On behalf of the school community, I extend our very best wishes to the 238 students who will be taking their Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations in June. This is a stressful time for all of these students and their parents. It is important that they are strengthened by our thoughts and prayers at this time.

Booklists, 2010/2011

Booklists for 2010/2011 will be posted on the school website within the next week or so. I shall also update you as soon as I receive details of the new Free Books Scheme being introduced by the Department of Education and Skills.

School website – loretowexford.com

Your attention is once again drawn to the school website. Please visit this site from time to time as it is full of up-to-date and useful school information.

Voluntary Contribution

A sincere thank you is extended once again to all families who have kindly supported our Voluntary Contribution this year. Any outstanding contributions will continue to be accepted up until 25 June.

Summer holidays

The school offices will close for the summer holidays at 4.15 p.m. on Friday, 25 June and will re-open at 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 16 August. Please ensure that any Social Welfare forms are submitted for signing before 25 June.

During the holiday period, the school website will be updated from time to time as necessary.

Any urgent matter can be brought to the school's attention by e-mail to loretowexford@eircom.net

Commencement details, 2010/2011

All students are obliged to attend Introduction Meetings in the school as follows:

Monday, 30 August 2010

4th year	9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m.
5th year	11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
6th year	2.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 31 August 2010

1st year	9.00 a.m. to 10.20 a.m. Following the meeting, timetabled classes will be held for 1 st year students until 3.33 p.m.
2nd year	11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
3rd year	2.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Timetabled classes will commence for all students on Wednesday, 1 September 2010, 8.50 a.m. to 3.33 p.m.

I thank you all for your co-operation and kindness throughout 2009/2010 and I hope that your summer will be relaxing, safe and enjoyable.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,

Principal.

Letter 7: Monday, 17 May 2010

Dear parents, guardians and students,

I wish to inform you of the following matters:

Extension/refurbishment/summer works

Two reports from the school will very shortly be on the desk of senior officials in the Building Unit of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). One relates to the possibility of moving to a green field site whilst the other details the implications of building on the existing site on Spawell Road, excluding the protected convent block. Both possibilities have their merits and demerits and the school's hope is that the DES will engage meaningfully with us in the next few weeks to determine which route to take. We take every opportunity to remind the DES that this project is now in its 13th year and that the staff and students continue to work in unsuitable buildings dating back to 1792.

The school has been approved for summer works funding to repair/replace all windows and external doors in the convent block. This work will commence when the state examinations have finished.

Annual prize-giving ceremony

Loreto students and staff will gather as a school community in Rowe Street Church on the afternoon of Tuesday, 18 May for the annual prize-giving ceremony. Students who distinguished themselves in a wide-range of achievements - sporting, academic, attendance, leadership - will be formally recognised by the school at this significant event.

Graduation events

The 6th year Graduation Mass will take place in Rowe Street Church at 7.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 26 May followed by light refreshments in the Talbot Hotel. All 6th year students, their parents/guardians and teachers are warmly invited to attend this event.

The Talbot Hotel will also be the venue for the 4th year Graduation Ceremony on Monday, 31 May at 6.00 p.m. We hope to see all 4th year students and their parents/guardians at this celebration.

P.E. inspection

A P.E. inspector, Seanie McGrath, visited the school on Monday, 10 May and engaged in a very helpful dialogue with teachers, students and the Principal throughout the day. His report will be available on the DES website in due course.

German exchange

Despite a 24 hour delay on the outward journey due to volcanic ash, all 16 students and three accompanying teachers had a wonderful time in Villingen, south-west Germany last week. Our group visited many beautiful sites and engaged fully with their German host families and the staff in St. Ursula's school. The second leg of this exchange will take place between 10 and 17 September when Loreto will play host to its German visitors.

Voluntary Contribution Scheme

The school is very grateful to the many families who have already supported this year's Voluntary Contribution Scheme.

Like many of you in these very difficult times, the school is struggling to balance its books especially in light of education cut-backs and the ongoing high costs of maintaining such an old building.

If you have not done so already and are now in a position to contribute to this scheme, we would welcome your donation at this time. The request for 2009/2010 is as follows:

**€160 for one student
three students**

€250 for two students

€270 for

Payments can be made to the School Secretary, Noeleen Goggin, in full or in instalments. All monies received will be duly receipted.

State examinations

This year's Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations begin on Wednesday, 9 June. We extend our very best wishes to all Loreto students taking these examinations.

School website, www.loretowexford.com

Your attention is drawn once again to our school website. This website is updated regularly and contains a vast amount of information under several different headings - current news, reports from the Board of Management, Parents' Council and Students' Council, calendar, booklists, career guidance and all school policies. You are asked to check this website on a regular basis as it is the most effective way that the school has of communicating with all families and the broader public on a 24/7 basis. We use text alerts to bring any new letters to parents on the website to your attention.

Car parking at school entrances/exits

At the request of the Parents' Council and Board of Management a few years ago, Wexford Corporation kindly placed double yellow lines at the three school entrances/exits so that all vehicles could enter/exit in safety. Unfortunately, a number of drivers persist in parking on these double yellow lines on a daily basis, most particularly at the end of school. As a matter of considerable importance, we now request that such drivers would desist from this illegal practice as the dangers posed to those entering and leaving the school grounds are considerable.

Booklists, commencement of next school year

Full details of booklists and commencement details for 2010/2011 will be posted on the website in early June.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any enquiry or comment in relation to the above matters.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,

Principal.

***** www.loretowexford.com.This

Letter 6: Friday, 19 March 2010

To Parents of Transition Year Students

Work Experience is a key part of Transition Year. By now your daughter should have organized her own Work Experience and ***supplied me with all the details.***

If she has not done so already, she should do this without delay. If your daughter is experiencing difficulty with this, please encourage her to speak to me and I may be able to help.

Please note the following:

1. Your daughter is expected to attend the place of work during normal working hours on all days, or as arranged with her employer.
2. She is expected to dress in a way that is acceptable to her employer. Clothes may be formal or casual, but should always be neat.
3. If your daughter has any problems during Work Experience, she should endeavour to solve them herself - as this is an exercise in developing independence. However, if this is not possible, your daughter (or you) may contact me at 087 4117344.
4. Please encourage your daughter to keep a daily diary of her work.
5. It is essential that your daughter has given me full details of her Work Experience. We are required by our insurance company to have this information on file so that your daughter will be covered by school insurance while on Work Experience.

If she complies with the points above, and takes reasonable care, the period of Work Experience should prove to be very valuable and enjoyable for your daughter. I wish her all the best.

Should you have any questions re the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Bee McDonald (Programme Coordinator)

Letter 5: Friday, 12 February 2010

Dear parents, guardians and students,

I wish to inform you of the following matters:

All year groups

The school will close to students at 12.30pm on Wednesday, 24 February 2010 on account of a staff meeting being held that afternoon. Please ensure that students are collected from school at that time where necessary.

1st year parents/guardians

You are invited to attend an important meeting of 1st year parents/guardians to be held in the school's Concert Hall on Monday, 1 March 2010 beginning at 5.30 p.m. (sharp). This meeting will conclude before 6.30 p.m.

Agenda

1. Welcome and introduction.
2. Students' subject choices for 2nd year.
3. Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.)
4. Support systems for students.
5. Principal's Report, questions and answers.

It is hoped that every 1st year family will be represented at this information meeting.

3rd year parents/guardians

I wish to invite you to attend an important meeting of parents/guardians of 3rd year students to be held in the school's Concert Hall on Monday, 1 March 2010 beginning at 6.45 p.m. (sharp). The meeting will conclude before 8.15 p.m.

Agenda

1. Introduction and welcome.
2. Subject choices for 5th year – general guidelines, procedure.

3. Transition Year Option.

4. Questions/answers

Yours truly,

Billy O' Shea,

Principal.

Letter 4: Thursday, 4 February 2010

Dear parents/guardians and students,

Please find below the annual report from the Board of Management:

Report to parents/guardians from the Board of Management (BOM) on the operation and performance of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2009.

Introduction

This report has been prepared to comply with section 20 of the Education Act, 1998. It covers the period from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2009. It was approved at a Board of Management meeting on 2 February 2010.

The next report will issue in December 2010.

Spiritual

A variety of services and liturgies took place during the year, as follows:

- Start-of-Year Mass, Graduation Masses for 4th and 6th year students, Class Masses, Masses for Advent, Christmas Carol Service, November Remembrance Mass
- Commissioning of Eucharistic Ministers in 6th year by Bishop Denis Brennan

The school's Religious Education department was greatly assisted by our chaplain, Fr. Jim Fegan (Adm.) and by Sr. Carmel O' Brien throughout the year.

A large number of students and staff attended a special mass in Mullingar Cathedral in January to mark the 400th anniversary of the Loreto order. This mass was attended by representatives of Loreto schools from home and abroad.

Charity and Social Awareness

Students and staff raised considerable sums of money for the following charities:

Concern, St. Vincent de Paul, Bothar, Crumlin Childrens' Hospital, The Hospice Movement and Loreto Missions (with particular emphasis on the work of Sr. Winnifred in Peru).

Academic

Excellent results were achieved by the 117 students taking the Leaving Certificate. The school rejoices in the academic success of all students.

Very impressive results were achieved by the school's 121 Junior Certificate students in 2009.

A subject inspection of German took place in November 2008. The inspector's report was very positive and can be accessed on the Department of Education and Science (DES) website.

The BOM congratulates all students and their teachers on the continued excellence of results in the school.

Supervised Study was organized throughout the year and was availed of by an average 170 students each evening.

Staffing

The school's total teacher allocation from the DES for 2008/2009 was 44.82.

Of the DES total of 44.82, 0.93 was set aside for students with special educational needs under the overall co-ordination of the school's Learning Support teachers, Ms. Wilson and Ms.C. Larkin.

The BOM wishes every future success and happiness to Ms. Kai Gahan and Ms. Marianne MacGonagle who retired from teaching on 31 August 2009 and to Mr. Martin Boyd who moved to a new position in Loreto, Clonmel.

The school welcomed a new member of staff, Ms. Linda Jordan, to teach Religion and History.

The BOM appointed Ms. Pauline Finnerty to the position of Laboratory Technician for 10 hours per week in 2008/2009.

Information Technology (I.T.)

The Anseo system continued to monitor the daily attendance and punctuality of all students. Daily text alerts were sent by Sr. Carmel (Deputy Principal) to the parents of students who did not register their attendance in school. Additionally, text alerts were sent to notify parents of certain school events e.g. changes in school calendar, dates of parent meetings. Response to this development was extremely positive.

All Transition Year students studied for the ECDL information technology qualification.

Lunchtime access to I.T. for students continued to be facilitated.

The BOM appointed a member of the teaching staff, Ms. Siobhan O' Donoghue, to the position of I.T. Co-ordinator in the summer of 2009. Her role will be to further develop the use of information technology by both students and staff.

Capital Development

A considerable amount of capital development work was completed in 2008/2009, as follows:

- New car park for staff, students and visitors to the school
- Re-surfacing of the area around the St. Joseph's block as well as the re-painting of this area, internally and externally
- Fitting of new external windows in the St. Joseph's classrooms
- Fitting of new floors in 6 classrooms plus the staff area
- Re-painting of the Concert Hall, lunch room, corridors, office and 5 classrooms
- Installation of 3 interactive whiteboards, large screen in the Concert Hall and information screens in the foyer and outside the Concert Hall
- Purchase of additional projectors and laptops for different subject departments
- The commissioning of the new fire escape and internal emergency lighting and smoke detectors

The combined cost of all of this work to the school's Board of Management will be €138,000 over a two year period. In addition to this, the Department of Education and Science grant-aided the emergency fire safety works to the tune of €140,000.

It is with immense regret and annoyance that the Board reports very little progress in relation to its extension/refurbishment programme. This was in spite of having held two face-to-face meetings with the Minister for Education and Science, Mr. Batt O' Keeffe, T.D. and of placing solid proposals for a new green field site project before DES officials.

In the meantime, our 700 students and staff continued to work in 1792 buildings with leaking roofs, no sports hall, no dressing rooms, no library, insufficient and inadequate classrooms, no universal access for the wheelchair-bound, no canteen and with major health and safety concerns.

Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities

The BOM expresses its gratitude to the teaching staff for organizing the following activities for students in 2008/2009:

Irish and English debating
quizzes
hockey
basketball
badminton
tennis
soccer
yoga
rounders
athletics
football
camogie
self-defence
tag rugby
educational tour to France
field trips
theatre trips
school choir
school variety show
supervised internet access
horse riding
Maths Olympiad
Young Entrepreneurs competition
Log-on learning for senior citizens
Justice and Peace Group
Green School Committee

Transition Year

98 students took Transition Year in 2008/2009.

Student appraisal of the school's Transition Year programme continues to be very positive.

A major review of the Transition Year programme took place and has led, amongst other things, to the introduction of more modular courses for the future.

Child Protection

Child Protection Guidelines and vetting procedures have been in full operation throughout 2008/2009 following staff training in December 2005. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) was Mr. Billy O' Shea and the Assistant DLP was Sr. Carmel Swords.

Care of Students

All Class Teachers continued to take a keen interest in the pastoral care of their students. In addition, the school's two Guidance Counsellors, Ms. Fallon and Ms. Young, were available to assist in any possible way.

A dedicated Student Care Co-ordination Team continued to be very active in 2008/2009. Comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplain, Counsellors, Learning Support Teachers and Class Teachers where required, this team met at least fortnightly and ensured that adequate provision was made for all students experiencing particular difficulties in school and in their personal lives.

Student Empowerment

Maire Caulfield and Grainne Regan were the Head Girl and Deputy Head Girl respectively in 2008/2009. They were assisted by prefects and vice-prefects in each class group.

The Students' Council continued to be active and forged even closer links with the school's Parents' Council e.g. development of school policies, Christmas lunch for both councils hosted by the school.

A review of the operation of the Students' Council, however, found that its large size was a problem in terms of running effective meetings. It was decided to revert to a smaller size Council in 2009/2010.

Code of Behaviour

Students continued to co-operate in a very positive way with the school's behaviour code as evidenced by favourable comments throughout the year from teachers and visitors to the school. The Board thanks the students for this excellent behaviour.

Parental Involvement and Contact

The school organized information meetings for parents in 2008/2009 on the following matters:

- New 1st year students, September 2009
- Subject choices for 2nd, 4th and 5th years
- CAO/CAS
- Parent-teacher meetings for every year group

All meetings were very well attended by parents. Due to the fact that the school does not have the space to hold large general meetings of parents and students, it continued to be necessary to use a local hotel as a venue for some of these larger meetings and events.

The school website was updated weekly and contained a great deal of information for parents on current news as well as all school policies. For families without internet access, hard copies of all updates and policies continued to be available from reception.

The Principal, Deputy Principal and all teachers were available on an appointment basis to meet parents to discuss any concerns about students.

The Parents' Council continued to provide hot food for students at lunchtime and prior to evening study in co-operation with Taste Restaurant.

Representatives of the Council met with Mr. O' Shea, Principal, on a regular basis to liaise on school matters and the Council was also represented on the School Development Planning Group that meets weekly.

Parents were asked by the school throughout the year to help ensure a high level of attendance at school by their daughters.

School Development Planning

All policies that make up the school plan are available on the school's website: www.loretowexford.com.

The following have been the main developments in school planning throughout 2008/2009:

- The ongoing review of subject development plans in all departments
- The ongoing work of the School Development Planning Group, representative of staff, students and parents, to prepare draft policies for consideration by all educational partners in the school
- The formal review of the following policies:

1. Code of Behaviour
2. Admission
3. In-school management
4. Student empowerment, involvement and representation
5. Mission Statement
6. Transition Year
7. Uniform
8. Green School

Professional Development of Staff

Teachers attended DES and other in-service in a wide range of subject areas.

The teaching staff also engaged in detailed subject planning development.

Board of Management

The BOM held nine formal meetings in 2008/2009. At the end of each meeting an agreed report was approved for circulation by teacher and parent representatives. This report was also posted on the school website.

Financial Accountability

The Independent Auditors' Report to the trustees for the year ended 31 August 2009 concludes as follows:

" In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the school's affairs as at the 31 August 2008 and of its results for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Education Act, 1998.

We have obtained all the information and explanations we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit. In our opinion, the school has kept proper books of account. The financial statements are in agreement with the books of account.

In our opinion, the Board of Management's Report is consistent with the financial statements."

O' Brien Harnett & Associates,

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors,

97 Haddington Road,

Dublin 4.

The Board is very grateful to families who supported the Voluntary Contribution Scheme that yielded €66,983 in 2008/2009, an increase from €61,485 in the previous year.

Community Links

The BOM is particularly appreciative of the assistance provided by the local Wexford community in providing work experience placements for Transition Year and LCVP students in 2008/2009 and for its generous sponsorship of Transition Year mini-companies.

Throughout the year school facilities have been made available to the following groups:

Presentation Secondary School, Wexford Harbour Boat and Tennis Club, Wexford Parks Tennis, Wexford Ladies Hockey Club and the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Billy O' Shea,

Secretary to Board of Management.

Letter 3: Tuesday, 12 January 2010

Dear parents/guardians and students,

At the outset, I wish you all a very happy New Year and express the hope that you enjoyed the extended holiday period.

I would like to advise you of the following matters:

One

The HSE will be offering the swine flu vaccination to all students and staff in the school's Concert Hall on Tuesday, 19 January 2010. I enclose herewith the necessary Information and Consent Form as supplied to the school by the HSE. Students wishing to receive this vaccination must bring the completed Consent Form with them to school on this date.

I wish to make it perfectly clear that the decision as to whether or not to receive this vaccination is a matter for the individual student, her parents/guardians and medical professionals. The school has no role whatever in making this decision.

Two

The following changes to the school calendar have been made due to ongoing industrial action by members of the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland and in an attempt to make up for some teaching time lost due to the extended Christmas holiday.

Friday, 29 January 2010

1st year parent-teacher meeting 9.00 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

2nd year parent-teacher meeting 1.00 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

The school will be closed to students on this day.

The scheduled staff planning day for this term has been cancelled.

As an exceptional matter, there will be no formal parent-teacher meeting for 4th year in this academic year. However, any parent who might wish to discuss matters of concern is warmly invited to contact the school to make an appointment with any of the 4th year teaching team.

Three

The Board of Management has secured a meeting with senior planners in the Building Unit of the Department of Education and Science on Tuesday, 19 January 2010. The purpose of this meeting is to seek definitive decisions as to when and how our stalled extension and refurbishment programme may be progressed.

Four

You will shortly receive from the school a unique username and password that will enable you to access your daughter's report, attendance and timetable details - as well as brief school announcements - via the new e-portal software system. You will then be able to access this information at all times via your internet/broadband connection.

Additionally, this is the last circular letter that I shall be posting to all families. From now on, a text message will alert you to such letters which can then be accessed on the "letters to parents" section of the school website - www.loretowexford.com.

Five

The school is very grateful to the many families who have already supported this year's Voluntary Contribution Scheme.

Like many of you in these very difficult times, the school is struggling to balance its books especially in light of education cut-backs and the ongoing high costs of maintaining such an old building. Of particular concern to the Board of Management is the fact that all schools are now being billed for water use on a metered basis with effect from 1 January 2010. In our old buildings and with a total daily population of 767 students and staff this particular cost could be very high.

If you have not done so already and are now in a position to contribute to this scheme, we would welcome your donation at this time. The request for 2009/2010 is as follows:

**€160 for one student
three students**

€250 for two students

€270 for

Payments can be made to the School Secretary, Noeleen Goggin, in full or in instalments. All monies received will be duly receipted.

Six

Summary of recent school events

"Fiddler on the Roof"

In cooperation with the boys of St. Peter's College, the school musical "Fiddler on the Roof", was held in the Opera House. It was staged from the 8th-10th of December and was a great success.

Science Quiz

Two teams from Loreto, Wexford competed in the regional final of the Irish Science Teachers' Association quiz, with the winning team progressing to the national final which was held on November 28th. Well done to all who competed.

Football

The Senior and Junior Ladies' footballers have been competing in their respective championships since September. The senior team played in the 'A' Championship. Unfortunately, they were defeated in their three games. However, the players are young and they should be very competitive at this level next year.

The U-16 team have qualified for the Leinster semi-final. Hopes are high for this panel which consists of most of last year's Leinster U-14 champions. They will be playing St. Mary's, Edenderry in the semi-final in the second term.

Equestrian

Two equestrian teams recently participated in show jumping in Carnew. Both teams performed very well and will take part in both show jumping and cross country during the second term.

Hockey

Eight hockey teams are competing in the South East League Competitions. The Senior A team hope to retain their crown as South East Champions for the 6th year running. They beat Newtown and had a narrow last minute loss to Kilkenny College.

The Senior B team met stiff competition from St. Leo's, St. Declan's and Kilkenny College but are hoping for better luck in the Cup competition.

The Junior team, the Minor A's and the Minor B's have had mixed fortunes in their leagues. The 1st year teams will start their league campaigns in January.

Irish Hockey Trials

Four students from Loreto were chosen for the Irish Hockey Trials after representing the South East in the U-16 and U-18 Interprovincial Hockey Tournaments in October. Siobhán Cloake, Transition Year, was chosen for the U-16 trials and Jean Devoy, Zoe Codd and Natasha Quigley, all from 5th year, were chosen for the U-18 trials. The girls will attend three Irish training sessions before the final squad is chosen. Good luck to the girls.

Debates

The Transition Year Debating Team has been taking part in the Concern Debating competition. Motions such as 'The E.U. is failing Africa' and 'The West is not serious about combating climate change' have proved challenging, allowing the girls to demonstrate their debating prowess. The final debate in this league will

take place in late January. The girls will oppose the motion 'The West has a stereotyped view of Africa', which will take place in Presentation Secondary School, Waterford.

Justice and Peace Group

The Justice and Peace Group are working hard covering issues such as domestic violence and body image. They have begun work on an anti-bullying DVD. They are looking forward to welcoming 14 students from the Kenyan Justice and Peace Group in April.

Transition Year Activities

The Transition Year pupils have taken part in a wide variety of activities. These have included talks from representatives from the Hope Foundation, Orphan Relief, Gaisce and a visit from Gordon Darcy. Courses included: a dance workshop, percussion workshop and Road Safety Day. The girls visited Mountjoy Prison and the Ploughing Championships. Fundraising activities included a jersey day for GOAL, a flag day for breast cancer and gift wrapping in Sam McCauley's for Orphan Relief.

Christmas Events

The Loreto Choir was the only school choir to take part in a carol service in the Opera House which was broadcast on RTÉ.

A craft fair was held in the concert hall where the students displayed a wide variety of goods.

Operation Christmas Child was once again a great success. First years filled shoe boxes which were sent to various developing countries.

A carol service was held in Rowe Street Church on Monday 21st December, which got all in the festive mood.

Please contact me if I can be of assistance to you in any way.

Yours truly,

Billy O' Shea,

Principal.

Letter 2: Friday, 13 November 2009

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I write at this time to keep you informed about a number of important school matters, as follows:

Swine flu

Parents/guardians are asked to inform Sr. Carmel if their daughter gets swine flu. I make this important request so that we can monitor the situation in the school on an ongoing basis in the interests of all students and staff, particularly those with existing health concerns.

Students who are suffering from flu-like symptoms are strongly requested to stay at home until they have recovered.

Students are reminded again of the need to wash hands frequently and to dispose of tissues after use.

The school looks forward to co-operating fully with the H.S.E. when it offers the swine flu vaccination to all students later in the month.

E-portal

The school is presently installing a new software system intended to give all families instant access to a range of information relating to their daughters i.e. attendance, timetable, reports, special notices. The software is called e-portal and is expected to be operational by Christmas. All families will be issued with their unique username and password that will allow them to access this information on a "24/7" basis from anywhere in the world. As a result, school communications will be greatly-enhanced and there will be a considerable financial saving to the school in terms of postage and stationery.

To avail of this facility, parents/guardians and students will need internet/broadband access. If this is a problem, you are asked to complete the form attached to this letter and return it to me on or by Friday, 27 November 2009. We will continue to send all correspondence in paper format as normal to these families.

Voluntary Contribution Scheme

The school is very grateful to the many families who have already supported this year's Voluntary Contribution Scheme.

Like many of you in these very difficult times, the school is struggling to balance its books especially in light of education cut-backs and the ongoing high costs of maintaining such an old building. It is also very difficult for me to remind you of this matter with Christmas only 6 weeks away.

Nevertheless, if you have not done so already and are now in a position to contribute to this scheme, we would welcome your donation at this time. The request for 2009/2010 is as follows:

**€160 for one student
students**

€250 for two students

€270 for three

Payments can be made to the School Secretary, Noeleen Goggin, in full or in three equal instalments, one per term. All monies received will be duly receipted.

Day of protest – Tuesday, 24 November 2009

As I write this letter, there is every indication that members of the Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (A.S.T.I.) will join their colleagues in other public sector unions in withdrawing their labour on Tuesday, 24 November 2009. In this eventuality, the school will be closed to students as the Board of Management will not be able to guarantee their safety in the absence of teachers. When the situation has been clarified, I shall send a text message to all parents/guardians.

School show 2009 – Fiddler on the Roof

Once again we are joining forces with our good friends in St. Peter's College to produce a school show, Fiddler on the Roof. I draw your attention to the enclosed letter about this major event.

Tickets for the show are now available from the Wexford Opera House. Additionally, if you complete the enclosed booking form and return it to Mr. Gunning or Mr. Murphy, you will be able to obtain your tickets through the school.

Hot lunches

Through the good work of the Parents' Association and in co-operation with Taste Restaurant, hot lunches continue to be available to students in the lunchroom on a daily basis.

School website

You are asked to check our school website – www.loretowexford.com – on an ongoing basis to keep your self up-to-date with school news and policies.

School Development Planning Group

The School Development Planning Group is representative of staff, students, parents and management and meets on a regular basis to review school policies. The particular policy that is under review at this time is the inclusion of students with special educational needs.

Any member of the school community who might wish to make a submission on this policy, written or oral, is warmly invited to contact me over the next few weeks.

I shall write to you again in February 2010 with further information on school business.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,

Principal.

Letter 1: Tuesday, 15 September 2009

Dear parents/guardians and students,

I write at the start of the 2009/2010 academic year to bring you up to date with a number of important matters relating to our school, as follows:

Staff changes

Over the summer months we said goodbye to three members of our teaching staff who have each given great service to Loreto, Wexford in their careers of varying lengths – Ms. Gahan (retiring), Ms. MacGonagle (retiring) and Mr. Boyd (new position in Loreto, Clonmel). We wish all three every success and happiness for the future.

New to our staff this year is Ms. L. Jordan who will teach Religion and History. We hope that she will enjoy her time in our school.

Summer developments

A lot of work has either been completed over the summer or is nearing completion at this time, as follows:

- New car park for staff, students and visitors to the school
- Re-surfacing of the area around the St. Joseph's block as well as the re-painting of this area, internally and externally
- Fitting of new external windows in the St. Joseph's classrooms
- Fitting of new floors in 6 classrooms plus the staff area
- Re-painting of the Concert Hall, lunch room, corridors, office and 5 classrooms
- Installation of 3 interactive whiteboards, large screen in the Concert Hall and information screens in the foyer and outside the Concert Hall
- Purchase of additional projectors and laptops for different subject departments
- The commissioning of the new fire escape and internal emergency lighting and smoke detectors

The combined cost of all of this work to the school's Board of Management will be €138,000 over a two year period. In addition to this, the Department of Education and Science grant-aided the emergency fire safety works to the tune of €140,000.

Swine Flu

The school has implemented the various measures recommended to it in an attempt to reduce the possible impact of swine flu i.e. liquid soap dispensers and paper towels in all toilet areas, instruction in "respiratory etiquette", increased daily cleaning of the premises, alcohol-based hand rub stations in main corridors. Please note that the school will remain open as scheduled unless otherwise directed by the health authorities, in which case a letter will be sent home to you.

Parents' Association

The Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association will be held in the Concert Hall on **Monday, 5 October 2009 beginning at 8.00 p.m.** This meeting is open to all parents and guardians of current Loreto pupils. We would like to encourage as many of you as possible to attend as it is an excellent opportunity to meet other parents/guardians and also offers a platform to air and exchange views.

We very much look forward to seeing you at the A.G.M.

Voluntary Contribution Scheme

Given the very considerable expenditure incurred by the Board in improving school facilities, as outlined above, it is vitally important that as many families as possible would support this year's Voluntary Contribution Scheme.

The request for 2009/2010 is as follows:

€160 for one student €250 for two students €270 for three students

Payments can be made to the School Secretary, Noeleen Goggin, in full or in three equal instalments, one per term. All monies received will be duly receipted. Contributions are now being received.

The school acknowledges the generosity of so many families in supporting this voluntary contribution in the past. It is our hope that the same level of generosity will apply once again this year even though the financial pressures on most families are considerable.

Attendance

I ask your help as parents/guardians to ensure that your daughter attends school with a very high degree of regularity. Such attendance is linked closely with improved academic performance. Any absence must be explained in writing by you in the student's diary. The Deputy Principal, Sr. Carmel, will send a text message each morning to the parents/guardians of students who fail to register their attendance in school.

Absence should only occur in the event of genuine illness, particular family events e.g. communions, weddings etc. or medical appointments. Indeed, every effort should be made to have such appointments outside of school hours.

Students have been asked by me to remember that once a class is missed the material covered by the teacher will not be taught again for the benefit of any absentee.

School website

Your attention is drawn once again to the school's official website – www.loretoxford.com. This facility has been further upgraded over the summer and is used increasingly by the school to communicate with all families as well as the general public. Please log onto it on a regular basis. I refer you in particular to the Current News and Career Guidance sections.

School mass

The start-of-year school mass will be held in Rowe Street Church on the afternoon of Wednesday, 23 September. Students will be accompanied to and from Rowe Street by their class teachers.

Please contact me if you need clarification on any of the above items.

I shall write to you again in November 2009 with further information on school business.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,

Principal.