

Letters to Families, 2011/12

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Number 8

Monday, 28 May 2012

Dear parents/guardians,

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 230 students who will be taking their Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations this month. 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.

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. The booklists and calendar for 2012/2013 will be posted on our website within a week. Additionally, the application form for the Free Books Scheme will shortly be available for downloading from the website.

We continue to make a hard copy of all correspondence/forms available at Reception for the benefit of families without internet access.

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 Friday, 22 June.

Summer holidays

The school offices will close for the summer holidays at 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 22 June and will re-open at 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 13 August. Please ensure that any Social Welfare forms are submitted for signing before 22 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, 2012/2013

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

Monday, 27 August 2012

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, 28 August 2012

1st year 9.00 a.m. to 10.20 a.m. Following the meeting, timetabled classes will be held for 1st 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, 29 August 2012, 8.50 a.m. to 3.33 p.m.

2012/2013 Timetable

Details of students' timetables will be available on e-portal from about Monday, 20 August 2012. Please note that, as allocations of students to Irish, English and Maths classes in 2nd and 5th years will not be made until the commencement of term, the stated teacher on e-portal for these subjects may not be the allocated teacher from September.

School Planning and Self-Evaluation

The school wishes to thank the 228 parents who completed the recent online survey.

The full copy of the Teaching and Learning: School Evaluation Report arising from this survey will be published later this week on page 161 of the School Plan that can be accessed from the home page on www.loretowexford.com

This report will be followed in September 2012 by the publication of a Teaching and Learning: School Improvement Plan that will seek to address issues raised by the outcome of the survey.

Please contact me if you need any clarification in relation to the above matters.

I hope that you and your family have a very safe, enjoyable and refreshing summer holiday and I thank you for your positive support of Loreto, Wexford throughout the year.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

HOST FAMILIES REQUIRED

SIX SPANISH STUDENTS

WILL BE COMING TO LORETO, WEXFORD

SIX WEEKS (31ST AUGUST-11TH OCTOBER)

SCHOOL MONDAY TO FRIDAY

FULL ACTIVITIES ON SATURDAY

If you are interested in being a host family please send us an email:

Virgen de Mirasierra School. Madrid. Spain.

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

twinschools@virgendemirasierra.eu

Number 7

Thursday, 03 May 2012

Dear parents, guardians and students,

I write on behalf of the Board of Management to inform you of an important development with which we require your assistance.

The Board is both mindful and appreciative of the very high standing that the school enjoys in the local community and beyond. This reputation is due in no small way to the dedicated work, care and commitment of so many people since the school was established in 1866 – staff, students, parents, trustees, suppliers and other people of goodwill.

In line with good practice and in compliance with what is now required of all schools by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), we now wish to embark on a process of meaningful self-evaluation of our school. This will focus on three dimensions – teaching and learning, management and leadership, support for students. This process will become a permanent feature of how the school operates as we strive to deliver the best possible service for all stakeholders. It will be conducted in accordance with very helpful draft guidelines prepared recently for all schools by DES.

As we move through this process, we will report to you on the outcome of our findings and on the improvement plan that we will put in place. This information may be accessed by clicking on the School Plan tab on our home page at loretowexford.com

To commence the process, we now ask you to complete an online survey of current Loreto, Wexford parents/guardians, details of which are as follows:

1. This initial survey has teaching and learning as its main focus. Future surveys will deal with other aspects of the school's operation.
2. You may access this survey by clicking here: [Online Survey](#)
3. The survey does not require you to identify either yourself or your daughter.

4. Only one survey must be completed in respect of each student currently in the school.
5. A separate survey should be completed in respect of each student if there is more than one daughter in the family currently attending the school.
6. The survey will be live online from Friday, 4th May 2012 to Friday, 11th May 2012. It will not be possible to complete the survey outside of these dates.
7. When answering the more open-ended questions towards the end of the survey we ask you to refrain from naming any individuals.

The Board of Management thanks you in anticipation of your response. We look forward to reporting on the outcome and to working with you on an ongoing basis as we embark on this very worthwhile process of school self-evaluation.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss any matter relating to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

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

Number 6

Tuesday, 13 March 2012

Dear parents, guardians and students,

I write on behalf of the Board of Management to inform you of a most significant development in relation to the school's building programme.

I am delighted to be able to confirm that our school has been included on the Department of Education and Skills' list of schools to go to construction in 2015/2016. Whilst the list currently states that the development will be an extension, negotiations with the Department in the coming months will be centred on the Loreto trustees' and Board of Management's strong preference for a new school on a 10 acre greenfield site at Pembroke Hill, Wexford.

The Board of Management has been working on this building project since 1998. There have been many difficult days and false dawns in that 14 year period. With a definite date for construction, guaranteed funding under the government's capital programme and an attractive greenfield site option, the Board feels that Loreto is, at last, well-positioned to finally secure a building that will properly serve the needs of students and staff.

The Board wishes to place on record its very deep appreciation of the considerable support for this project being received from the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Brendan Howlin T.D. and Councillor George Lawlor.

Loreto, Wexford celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2016. Our vision is to do justice to that important celebration in a building that will honour our proud past and be the centre for a bright future as we play our part in meeting the educational needs of the town and county for generations to come.

I shall keep you informed of significant developments in relation to this major announcement as they occur.

Yours sincerely,

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

Number 5
Monday, 9 January 2012

Dear parents and guardians,

I take this opportunity to wish and your family every happiness and joy throughout 2012. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of my colleagues if we can be of assistance as we work together in the best interests of our students.

Some points for your consideration:

One

We start a rather short 5 week term today that takes us up to the mid-term break in February (13-17 inclusive). This will be a particularly busy time for our 3rd and 6th year students who will sit their mock-examinations in the final two weeks of term. It will also be an important time for 1st and 4th year students and their parents when we address the issue of subject choice for next year in week 3 of the term. I shall be writing in more detail to those involved in these events at a later stage.

Two

On behalf of the Board of Management, I wish to outline two key aspects of Budget 2012 and the impact of the proposals on this school.

» Allocation of Teachers

Up to now each school received an allocation for guidance/counselling in addition to the standard staffing allocation based on the number of pupils in the school. The removal of this additional allocation for guidance/counselling means fewer teachers will be allocated to each school commencing in September next. This school will lose 1.36 teachers due to this measure. This translates to a loss of 44 teaching periods per week.

Except in the case of increasing enrolment, every school will have fewer teachers allocated to it in 2012/13 than for the current year. A loss of teachers means a loss of subjects. Schools will be faced with an incredibly difficult choice of reducing the curriculum being offered to pupils. Subjects and programmes will be lost. Schools will be forced to choose between maintaining the important and valuable guidance/counselling provision against removing some important and valuable subjects or programmes from the timetable.

Taking into account the cumulative impact of all of the cuts in teacher allocations to schools since 2009, schools will find it impossible to provide the same level of subject options, programmes, class sizes and separate classes for higher and ordinary levels in the future.

The specific impact of this cut will become apparent in this school over the next number of months as detailed planning of next year's timetable takes place. I shall keep you informed of developments in this regard in subsequent letters.

» Financial Resources

A 2% cut in capitation and other grants in 2012, coming on top of a 5% reduction in 2011,

means that many schools will find it impossible to make ends meet. A 2% decrease in grants means €11 less per pupil in 2012. This results in a total loss of €7,700 for this school in 2012.

The financial well-being of schools is even more acute when one considers increases of up to 10% in the cost of essential items such as insurance, energy and transport charges for extra and co-curricular activities over the past year. All of this is happening at a time when €3 out of every €10 spent in this school each year must be raised locally. In the current recession such levels of fund-raising are very difficult to sustain in local school communities.

Three

With this reduction in state-funding, it is more important than ever that the school's **voluntary contribution scheme** would be well-supported by families, even though the demands on our household budgets are escalating all the time. Sincere thanks are extended to all who have contributed to this year's voluntary contribution scheme of €150 per family. This contribution makes it possible for the school to continue its programme of improving facilities for students and staff.

Payments in line with what your individual family can afford can now be made to the School Secretary, Noeleen Goggin. All monies received will be duly receipted.

Four

Please note that the staff meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, 31 January has been brought forward to Thursday, 12 January. All classes proceed as normal on 12 January but supervised study will not be held on this day.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss any point in relation to the above matters.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

Number 4

Monday, 14 November 2011

Dear parents and guardians,

I wish to update you with the following news items:

1. Internet Acceptable Use Policy

The Board of Management has recently approved a new policy on internet acceptable use in the school. This policy is to be found in the policies section of the school website – www.loretoxford.com. For your added convenience, I include it below:

Introduction

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for the internet is to ensure that students and employees will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's internet resources in a safe and effective manner. It applies to all students for the full duration of their studies in this school and to all those employed by the school.

Internet use and access is considered a school resource and privilege. Therefore, if this AUP is not adhered to this privilege will be withdrawn and appropriate sanctions – set out below – will be imposed.

This policy is framed in the context of Loreto's being a health promoting school. Consequently, the school is one that seeks to promote healthy lifestyles for all in a safe, supportive and non-threatening environment. The policy is also

mindful of the need to bring the key components of the school's mission statement – truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – into the daily lives of all who work in the school.

Legislation

There is no specific legislation governing internet safety at school level. This is complicated by the fact that the internet functions in a global context whereas the law functions in a localised one. The following pieces of legislation, however, have relevance to internet safety:

- The Child Trafficking and Pornography Act, 1998

This Act legislates against any one who knowingly produces, prints, publishes, distributes, exports, imports, shows, possesses or sells child pornography.

- The Interception of Postal Packets and Telecommunications Messages Regulation Act, 1993

This Act stipulates that telecommunication messages can be intercepted for the purpose of an investigation of a serious offence.

- The Video Recordings Act, 1989

This prohibits the distribution of videos which contain obscene or indecent material which may lead to the depravation or corruption of the viewer.

- The Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003

This Act was passed to deal with privacy issues arising from the increasing amount of information kept on computer about individuals.

A. Strategy in relation to the school's internet resources

General

- Students can only use the school's internet resources when supervised by a teacher.
- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Computer teachers will regularly monitor students' usage of the school's internet resources.
- Students, parents and teachers will be provided with professional input in the area of internet safety. Such input was provided in April, August and October 2011 and will be kept under ongoing review by the school's SCCT.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- The use of personal floppy disks, memory sticks or CD-ROMs in school requires a computer teacher's permission.
- When using the school's internet resources, no one – staff or student - will undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- It will be the responsibility of the school's ICT Co-ordinator to ensure that all IT equipment is properly protected by anti-virus software and firewall system. The nature and extent of the firewall will be kept under ongoing review by the ICT Co-ordinator and Principal. Child protection will be the foremost principle underpinning such review.

World Wide Web

- No one will visit internet sites from the school's internet resources that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or

otherwise objectionable materials.

- Students will use the internet for educational purposes only.
- Students/employees must be aware of and comply with copyright issues relating to online learning.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information.
- Students are to be aware that usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.

Email

- On a phased basis from January 2012, students will use approved class email accounts under supervision by or permission from a teacher.
- No one using the school's internet resources will send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students must not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never use email to arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.

Internet chat

- Students will only have access to chat rooms, discussion forums or other electronic communication forums on the school's internet resources that have been approved by the school. These forums will only be used for educational purposes and will always be supervised.
- Usernames will be used to avoid disclosure of identity.
- Face-to-face meetings with someone organised via internet chat will be forbidden.

School website

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the world wide web.
- The publication of student work will be co-ordinated by a teacher.
- Students' work will appear in an educational context on web pages with a copyright notice prohibiting the copying of such work without express written permission.
- Photographs, audio and visual clips will focus on group activities and not on individual students. Video clips will be password protected.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will be omitted from school web pages.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.

B. Strategy in relation to student personal devices (phones, i-pod, i-pad etc.)

Students using their own technology (with or without internet access) in school in the following ways will be in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy:

- leaving a device turned on or using it in class
- sending nuisance text messages via phone or social networks
- the unauthorized taking of images with a mobile phone camera, still or moving

- accessing obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials

C. Sanctions

Misuse of technology as set out in A. and B. above may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities.

D. Role of parents

It is expected that, as primary educators and protectors of their daughters, parents will inform themselves of child protection matters relating to internet safety and impress upon their daughters the need for absolute compliance with the terms of the above policy and procedures.

E. Review

This policy will be reviewed in September 2012.

You are asked to read this policy and to ensure that your daughter is aware of it. In particular, your attention is drawn to sections B, C and D of the policy.

This policy is now in place and is obligatory for all members of the school community.

2. School building improvements

I am pleased to inform you that the school's new heating system has been commissioned and that the improvement throughout the entire building has already been felt. We should all have a much more comfortable winter than heretofore!

In addition, the Board of Management has upgraded the toilet facilities at the entrance to the convent building and has installed a disability access toilet.

3. Voluntary contribution scheme

Many thanks to all who have contributed to this year's voluntary contribution scheme of €150 per family. This contribution makes it possible for the school to continue its programme of improving facilities for students and staff.

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.

4. Child Protection Policy

New procedures in relation to child protection will be posted on the school's website on Thursday, 17 November – school policies, section 4.16, page 88.

These procedures are of particular importance and should be read carefully by all parents.

5. School musical – "Grease"

We join forces once again this year with the staff and students of St. Peter's College to bring to stage the ever-popular musical, "Grease", in the Dún Mhuire Theatre, Wexford for 3 nights only – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 29, 30 November, 1 December.

Tickets cost €10 for students and O.A.Ps., €15 for adults and are now on sale through both schools.

This is a major event on the school calendar and we hope that it will be well-supported by all families.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss any matter arising from the above.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

Number 3
Wednesday, 5 October 2011

Dear parents/guardians,

I write to bring the following matters to your attention:

- 1. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Parents' Association will be held in the school's Concert Hall at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 10 October. It is hoped that every family would be represented at this meeting.

Agenda

» Minutes of last AGM
» Treasurer's Report
» Election of new council (max. 18 members)
» Any other business
» Principal's Address

- 2. Parents who have kindly indicated their willingness to assist the school as voluntary adult supervisors are asked to attend an information meeting in the school's new lunch room at 6.45 p.m. (please note change of time) on Monday, 10 October.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

Number 2
Monday, 5 September 2011

Dear parents/guardians,

As we settle back into the routine of school life for another year, I write to provide you with important information as follows:

Staff changes

This summer saw the retirement of six teachers who have each given outstanding service to the school over a long period of time – Ms. Bolger, Ms. Brennan, Ms. Campbell, Ms. Storey, Ms. K. Larkin and Ms. C. Larkin. As a school community, we wish all of these teachers a long and happy retirement.

We also said goodbye in recent weeks to Ms. Kennington who has taken up a new position in

New Ross. We thank her for her major contribution last year and wish her well in her teaching career.

The following teachers have been appointed to permanent positions in the school – Mr. Kavanagh, Ms. L. Jordan, Ms. Curran, Ms. Byrne, Ms. Johns and Ms. de Róiste. New to the staff also are Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Murphy. We hope that all of these teachers will have a successful career in Loreto as they seek to maintain and build upon the high standards set by those who went before them.

Joining us also is Ms. Kelly who will be a replacement for Ms. Kinsella for the duration of her maternity leave.

Summer works

During the summer months a considerable amount of work was done to improve the school buildings:

1. The upgrading of the fire safety measures in the school continued with the installation of fire doors and windows throughout all buildings as well as new ceilings in the St. Joseph's block of classrooms
2. All roof spaces were insulated
3. Both central heating boilers were replaced, the result of which will be a more efficient and economical heating system throughout the school
4. Ongoing painting of classrooms and corridors
5. The enhancement of the front of the building by the erection of a mosaic and flagpoles
6. The upgrading of the toilet facilities in St. Joseph's
7. The equipping of the kitchen area so as to provide snacks and hot meals for students throughout the day and our registering with the Environmental Health Service as a Food Business Establishment

This work was funded by Department grants in respect of the fire safety and heating works and by the Board of Management in all other areas.

State Examination results

There was great celebration in the school on 17 August last when 130 students received their Leaving Certificate results. Once again, results were considerably above national averages and, for this, I thank all students, teachers and parents for their hard work, commitment and support in so many different ways. Results will be analysed in more detail within all subject departments and by the Board of Management over the coming weeks.

Our fingers are crossed for the 119 students who will receive their Junior Certificate results on Wednesday, 14 September. We hope that they, too, will have their day in the sun!

Family voluntary contribution

The school is obliged to seek the support of families for this year's Voluntary Contribution Scheme. Without this scheme, the Board of Management would not be able to balance its budget in light of escalating costs e.g. water charges, refuse collection, E.S.B. charges and the huge costs associated with the upkeep and maintenance of old buildings.

The request for 2011/2012 is as follows:

€150 per family

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.

Parents' meetings

The first meeting of the Parents' Council will be held in the school at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 12 September. Notice will be given thereafter of the Parents' Association Annual General Meeting.

School website

I draw your attention to the school website – www.loretowexford.com

This website is updated weekly and is used by the school to communicate with all members of the school community on topics of general interest. Information from previous years is also archived in different sections. The website means that general letters and notices will no longer be posted by the school to all families. However, families without internet access may collect paper copies of such letters and notices by contacting Betty at Reception.

E-portal

Every family has been provided with its unique username and password to access the school's E-portal facility from the homepage on the school website. E-portal is now used by the school to record student attendance, personal details, timetables and academic reports. If you lose your

username or password please phone Betty at reception – 053-9142783.

Text alerts

Sr. Carmel will send text alerts each morning to parents/guardians whose daughters fail to register their attendance in school.

The school will also send text alerts to remind parents/guardians of particular events e.g. meetings and to inform you of the posting of a general letter on the school website. Text alerts will also be used in exceptional circumstances e.g. unexpected school closure.

School mass

The start-of-year school mass will take place in Rowe Street church on Tuesday, 27 September. All students will be escorted to the church by class teachers and will return to school before 3.33 p.m.

School car park

For health and safety reasons the school car park is reserved for staff, students (limited), disability access, deliveries and visitor use only. Parents dropping/collecting students at/from school may not park in this area.

Calendar

The school calendar for 2011/2012 has been posted on www.loretoxford.com and is also available in the Student Diary.

I hope the year goes well for all members of our school community. Please feel free to contact me or Sr. Carmel (Deputy Principal) if we can be of any assistance to you.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

Number 1

Thursday, 18 August 2011

Dear parents/guardians,

As the new school year is close at hand I wish to refer to the following points:

Commencement details, 2011/2012

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

Monday, 29 August 2011

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, 30 August 2011

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, 31 August 2011, 8.50 a.m. to 3.33 p.m.

School calendar, 2011/2012

You are advised that the full school calendar for the year has been posted on the school website – www.loretoxford.com – and is also contained in the Student Diary that will be provided to all students during the first week back.

A paper copy of this letter is available on request from Betty at Reception.

I shall write to you again in early September with more detailed news.

Please contact me if you need any clarification in relation to the above matters.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.