

Letters to Families, 2012/13

Number 5

Monday, 20 May 2013

Dear parents/guardians,

This time of year is particularly busy in school as we begin to wind down the current year and continue our planning for the new academic year.

For your information, I now 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 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.

3rd year students

I wish to advise you that timetabled classes for 3rd year students will finish at 3.33 p.m. on Tuesday, 28 May 2013. This gives students the opportunity to study privately at home in the run-up to their Junior Certificate examinations that begin on Wednesday, 5 June 2013.

School examinations

Students in years other than 3rd and 6th will be involved in school examinations this week and next. I express the hope that these students will finish the year successfully and be suitably rewarded for the work done throughout the year. Results will be on E-portal from the end of May and early June.

New school

You will have heard by now of the great news that Loreto, Wexford has been included in a bundle of schools that will be built under the Public Private Partnership model. We have been informed that the target date for completion is 2016, the year in which we will be celebrating our 150th anniversary.

The site for the new school is at Pembroke Hill and planning meetings to achieve the 2016 target date have already commenced.

Whole School Evaluation – Management, Leadership, Learning (WSE-MLL)

The school has just completed a 4 day Department of Education and Skills (DES) inspection in the course of which up to three inspectors visited 34 classes and held meetings with school management, Parents' Council representatives and focus groups of both students and teachers. In addition, questionnaires were issued to students in 2nd and 5th years, as well as their parents. The inspectors were also able to draw on statistical analysis provided by the State Examinations Commission.

The inspectors presented their oral feedback at meetings with school management, teachers and parent representatives on Thursday, 16 May. They outlined many positive findings and offered considerable affirmation in respect of the management of the school, the quality of teaching and learning and the general level of care for students. In a most helpful manner, they also pointed to areas for further development e.g. increased use of assessment for learning techniques and the formulation of a whole-school assessment policy to include details of the tracking of individual students.

A detailed written report will be issued in the Autumn and will be published on the DES website.

The school found the WSE-MLL process to be both thorough and probing. Thankfully, the outcome has been most positive and we look forward to using the written report as a basis for ongoing school improvement later in the year.

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 2013/2014 will be posted on our website within a fortnight. 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.

Road safety

In the interests of safety, I must ask parents not to park on the double yellow lines when collecting daughters from school. Such illegal parking is very dangerous as it seriously restricts the view of drivers as they exit the school grounds. There have been some near accidents in recent weeks that we clearly wish to eliminate for the future.

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, 21 June.

Summer holidays

The school offices will close for the summer holidays at 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 21 June and will re-open at 9.00 a.m. on Monday, 12 August. Please ensure that any Social Welfare forms are submitted for signing before 21 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, 2013/2014

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

Tuesday, 27 August 2013

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.

Wednesday, 28 August 2013

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 Thursday, 29 August 2013, 8.50 a.m. to 3.33 p.m.

2013/2014 Timetable

Details of students' timetables will be available on e-portal from about Monday, 19 August 2013. 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.

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.

Number 4

Monday, 15 April 2013

Dear families,

I write at this time to update you on a number of various points, as follows:

Oral and practical exams

This is the time of year when we extend our very best wishes to our 230 Junior and Leaving Certificate students who will be taking oral and practical

examinations over the next two weeks. This is a stressful time for all involved, both students and their teachers.....not to mention families at home!

I hope all goes well and that the students will be well-rewarded for their work.

School Improvement Plan

The Board of Management is pleased to announce that, at its meeting last week, it formally approved the School Improvement Plan for the period 2013 – 2016. The full plan is to be found in the self-evaluation section of the School Plan on www.loretowexford.com

The plan identifies a number of steps to be taken to address certain aspects of school life that require attention. Areas for improvement are:

1. Teaching of study skills: learning to learn.
2. Literacy skills: current affairs/ reading for enjoyment/ tablet skills.
3. Extent of career guidance provision.
4. Amount of homework at senior cycle.
5. The issue of grinds, particularly at senior cycle.
6. Student support- services: perceived badly by some students.
7. Methods of test correction/ written work correction.
8. Teacher well-being.

This plan will be at the core of decision-making over the next few years so that we can bring about measurable improvement in all areas.

I urge you to read this plan at your earliest convenience.

School inspection

The school underwent its first Incidental Inspection on Wednesday, 13 March 2013 when a Department of Education and Skills (DES) inspector arrived unannounced in the school and proceeded to evaluate the teaching and learning in five classes throughout the day. Oral feedback from the inspector was very positive. He underlined the value of assessment for learning and the importance of students being active participants in their own learning, two themes that are, by now, very familiar to our teachers.

We also received word last week that the school is to undergo another form of inspection called "Whole- School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning" (WSE – MLL) within the next few weeks. This will consist of inspectors spending four days in the school talking to a wide range of stakeholders – students, teachers, parents, Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, non-teaching staff – in order to assess the overall running of the school and the quality of teaching and learning therein. Part of the process involves the completion of surveys by a cohort of students and their parents. The inspectors will then re-visit the school to present their draft findings.

The WSE – MLL will take place in the week beginning Tuesday, 7 May 2013 with a pre-evaluation day taking place during the previous week.

I shall keep your daughters fully informed of this process by means of assembly and intercom announcements. You might be interested in the "Guide to WSE – MLL" published by the Inspectorate and available on the DES website – www.education.ie

The school looks forward to engaging with the inspectorate in this worthwhile process as we all seek to provide the best possible environment for teaching and learning in Loreto, Wexford.

New school

Talks are continuing between the Loreto trustees and the Department of Education and Skills regarding the site for the new school at Pembroke Hill. It is hoped that these talks and all associated legal matters will be finalised soon and that the process of appointing a design team will then commence. We are on the DES list to commence building in 2015.

Student absences

You are reminded that every student absence from school must be properly explained. This is done by completing the absence form to be found in the school journal and then delivering it to Sr. Carmel's office.

Family voluntary contribution

We are very grateful to the many families who have already supported this year's voluntary contribution scheme.

For the benefit of those who are in a position to support but who may not have done so, I issue this polite reminder:

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 2012/2013 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. This payment may also be made by using our new online facility by clicking the Easy Payments Plus icon on the school website – www.loretowexford.com

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.

Planning for 2013/2014

It is expected that details of booklists, the Free Books Scheme and the school calendar will all be finalised in the next few weeks and placed on the school website before the end of May.

School car park

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

And finally, please do not hesitate to contact me or Sr. Carmel if we can help with any matter in the busy weeks that lie ahead.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

Number 3

Tuesday, 11 December 2012

Dear families,

I write at this time to update you on a number of various points, as follows:

New school

Talks are at an advanced stage between the Loreto trustees and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) regarding the site for the new school at Pembroke Hill. It is hoped that these talks and all associated legal matters will be finalised soon and that the process of appointing a design team will then commence. We are on the DES list to commence building in 2015.

Subject inspection

An inspection of the teaching and learning of business subjects in the school was held on 6 and 7 November last. Oral feedback given by the inspector was very positive and it is hoped that this will carry through to the final written report that will be published on the DES website in due course.

Personal accident insurance

Families are reminded that that the board of management has provided 24 hour personal accident insurance cover for all students as part of the administration charge paid by parents last August/September. Claim forms are available from Mr. O' Shea.

Christmas reports

By the end of this week all Christmas reports will have been posted on e-portal. You are asked to print a copy of this report for your future reference as e-portal records do not transfer from one year to the next. Any family seeking a paper copy of this report is invited to contact the school receptionist or secretary (9142783) and we will be only too happy to post it home.

Student absences

You are reminded that every student absence from school must be properly explained. This is done by completing the absence form to be found in the school

journal and then delivering it to Sr. Carmel's office.

Sr. Carmel will pursue any remaining unexplained absences immediately after Christmas.

School self-evaluation (SSE)

SSE is now an established priority in this school in accordance with the requirements laid down by the DES. To date, we have surveyed the views of parents, students and teachers on a range of issues concentrating on teaching, learning, literacy, numeracy and support services for students. We have published school evaluation reports from page 163 onwards of our school plan on www.loretowexford.com

Our next task is to develop and publish an improvement plan based on these reports. We expect to do this before the end of January 2013.

Family voluntary contribution

We are very grateful to the many families who have already supported this year's voluntary contribution scheme.

For the benefit of those who are in a position to support but who may not have done so, I issue this polite reminder:

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 2012/2013 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. This payment may also be made by using our new online facility by clicking the Easy Payments Plus icon on the school website – www.loretowexford.com

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.

Leinster "A" senior football champions

The school delights in the success of our senior footballers who overcame Coláiste Iosagáin, Dublin in last week's final to be crowned Leinster "A" champions for 2012/2013. This feat was last achieved in 1997. The squad will now begin to prepare for the All-Ireland semi-final, probably in February, against the Connacht champions. We thank all teachers who help with football in the school, particularly the current "bainisteoir", Mr. Paudge Brennan.

School website

Once again I wish to draw your attention to the school website www.loretoxford.com

Updated weekly, this website contains a vast amount of information about our school's plans, policies, calendar, booklists and current news. In addition, our very active board of management, parents' and students' councils use the website to detail their many and varied activities.

Our website is a very fast, efficient and environmentally-friendly way of telling a wide audience about our school. Please visit it, ideally on a weekly basis, so that you are well-informed about what is happening in our school.

Student support

We all know that there are many pressures on our young people in today's world. For this reason it is very important that the channels of communication between students, parents and school are as user-friendly and as open as possible.

Accordingly, should there be any school-related issue that is causing concern, you are invited to make contact with the school. The class teacher is in a good position to know how best to help or whether to refer to others in the school e.g. counsellors, deputy principal, principal. Where necessary, outside referral can be organised by the school. The key point I wish to make is not to leave any problem unresolved. Please make contact with us as a first step on the road to resolving any issue that is affecting your daughter.

Christmas week in Loreto

I wish to thank all teachers and students who are working hard on the preparations for Christmas celebrations in the school.

The annual transition year trade fair takes place on Tuesday to be followed on Wednesday by the 6th year Christmas show in aid of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. We all travel to Rowe Street church after an early lunch on Thursday for what many see as the highlight of the week – the annual carol service, at the end of which students are free to leave for home without going back to the school. Mr. Murphy's traditional monster quiz rounds off the week on Friday before we head home at 12.00 p.m. to begin the holiday.

School re-opens on Monday, 7 January 2013.

Christmas and New Year greetings

On behalf of the board of management and the staff of Loreto, I wish all families the happiness and peace of Christmas and every blessing throughout 2013.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.

Number 2

Monday, 10 September 2012

Dear families,

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

We welcome the following new teachers to our school this year:

Ms. Catriona Foley has been appointed as our new Guidance Counsellor to replace Ms. Maura Fallon who has taken up a position in Dublin.

Ms. Georgina Hearn joins us this year to teach Irish.

We also welcome Mr. Darren Murphy as a replacement teacher for the remainder of Ms. Keegan's maternity leave.

State Examination results

There was great celebration in the school on 15 August last when 110 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. Of particular interest this year is the effect of the 25 bonus points given to all students who received a grade D3 or above it on the higher level Maths paper. This, too, will be closely examined by the school in the next few months.

Our fingers are crossed for the 120 students who will receive their Junior Certificate results on Wednesday, 12 September. We hope that they, too, will have their day in the sun!

New school

Plans for our new school building took a further step forward over the summer when the Department of Education and Skills completed its capital appraisal of the options available and found in favour of the 10 acre greenfield site at Pembroke Hill. Planning work is now underway to secure this site and we will keep you informed of developments throughout the year.

School Planning Group

The School Planning Group (SPG) has begun its work for the year and has a full agenda including ongoing school self-evaluation, literacy and numeracy policy, Junior Cycle reform and the review of existing policies.

The group meets at 1.30 p.m. every Friday and is made up of staff, student and parent representatives. There is an open invitation to all members of the school community to join the group at any stage in the year to make an input on points under discussion.

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 2012/2013 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. This payment may also be made by using our new online facility by clicking the Easy Payments Plus icon on the school website – www.loretowexford.com

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.

A separate letter about this and other financial matters will be issued in two weeks.

Parents' meetings

The first meeting of the Parents' Council will be held in the school at 7.15 p.m. on Monday, 17 September 2012.

The Parents' Association Annual General Meeting will be held in the school on Monday, 8 October 2012 beginning at 7.30 p.m.

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 Wednesday, 3 October 2012. 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 2012/2013 has been posted on www.loretowexford.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

Monday, 20 August 2012

Dear parents/guardians,

I wish to refer to the following points:

1. 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 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.

2. 2012/2013 Timetable

Details of students' timetables will be available on e-portal from about Wednesday, 22 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.

3. Leaving Certificate results and college places

The school extends sincere congratulations to the 110 students who received Leaving Certificate results last Wednesday. We hope that offers of college places will add to the sense of joy that was reflected in the faces of so many students, teachers and parents last week.

The school's Guidance Counsellor, Ms. Maura Fallon, has left Loreto to take up a position in St. Patrick's College, Dublin. We wish her well in this new role. Her replacement is Ms. Catriona Foley who will be very happy to deal with students' enquiries with immediate effect.

4. Financial Information

A.

For the 2012/2013 school year there will be an **Administration Charge** of €60 per student.

This will cover the cost of all photocopying, consumable classroom materials, printing, postage, handouts, student diary, locker and 24 hour personal accident insurance. This amount will be collected in school as follows:

Date	Time	Year Group	Venue
Wednesday, 29 August	8.15 a.m to 8.50 a.m.	1 st year	Secretary's office
Wednesday, 29 August	8.15 a.m to 8.50 a.m.	2 nd year	Principal's office
Thursday, 30 August	8.15 a.m to 8.50 a.m.	3 rd year	Secretary's office
Thursday, 30 August	8.15 a.m to 8.50 a.m.	4 th year	Principal's office
Friday, 31 August	8.15 a.m to	5 th year	Secretary's

	8.50 a.m.		office
Friday, 31 August	8.15 a.m. to 8.50 a.m.	6 th year	Principal's office

Cheques should be made payable to Loreto Secondary School.

Alternatively, it can be paid prior to these dates by means of the Easy Payment online facility that can be accessed from the school's home page on www.loretowexford.com

B.

The following **examination costs** will arise for 3rd and 6th year families:

Mock examinations (3rd and 6th years)

€105 per student payable in January 2013

Junior Certificate

Entry fee €109 (2012 figure) payable in March 2013*

Leaving Certificate

Entry fee €116 (2012 figure) payable in March 2013*

Entry fee for repeat students €301 (2012 figure) payable in March 2013*

* waiver applies for medical card holders

C.

The Board of Management will request the support of families for a **Voluntary Contribution** of €150 per family in 2012/2013. Further details will follow in September 2012.

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.

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

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

I hope that the new academic year will go well for all members of our Loreto school community.

Yours faithfully,

Billy O' Shea,
Principal.