



Parents'/Guardian's Newsletter – October 2013

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2013/2014. As usual, much has been happening this term in St. Mary's. Students and staff alike have been very busy fundraising for worthy causes and engaging in many exciting and interesting trips and activities. Below is a summary of some of what has been happening. Finally, the management and staff would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a peaceful and enjoyable Halloween break.

Junior Certificate Results

Congratulations to all our Transition and Fifth Year students who received their outstanding Junior Certificate results on September 11th. Well done to each of you, you did us proud!

Midterm Assessments

Each of our students had their midterm assessments during the week beginning Monday, October 7th. These assessments allow our students, teachers and parents an opportunity to assess each girl's progress, to get feedback and to set realistic and achievable goals.

Christmas Tests

Christmas tests start on Monday, December 16th for one week. This is just seven weeks after the midterm break and it is important that all students prepare to the very best of their ability.

Preparation for Leaving Certificate French Oral Examinations

Ms. Holmes and Ms. O'Donnell are giving 5th and 6th year students a chance to improve their oral French, in preparation for the Leaving Cert French oral, on Wednesdays after school. Students interested are asked to meet on Wednesdays from 3.45 to 4.15 in Room 11 for the chance to play games and take part in activities that encourage French conversation and vocabulary practice. All are welcome.

Rainbows

It is planned that the Rainbows programme in St. Mary's will be available for 1st years from mid-November. This is a peer group for teenagers who have experienced death, separation or another painful change in their families. If any 1st years wish to take part, they should speak to their tutor or year head. Please ask your tutor for more information or check www.rainbowsireland.com for more information.

Open Night

This year's Open Night took place on October 1st and was a fantastic success. The school was buzzing with activity and staff were delighted with the level of public interest in our school. We had prospective students coming from a wide range of local Primary schools, all very interested to see what our school has to offer. There were performances by music and drama students, as well as lots of student activity in the lab, kitchen, P.E. hall and various classrooms. Well done to all the senior students who acted as "student guides". They were given wonderful compliments by the families that they showed around. Also a special congrats to our head girl, Gemma Lambe, who made an excellent presentation to prospective parents during the Principal's address. All in all, it was a great success.

Goal Jersey Day 2013

Congratulations to all of our staff and students who took part in the Goal Jersey day this term. €490 was raised for this very worthwhile cause. Well done everyone!

Supervised Study

Supervised study is now up and running and there is a good response so far to it from students. It takes place from 3.45 to 5.45 pm from Monday to Thursday. It is working well and students really benefit from it. It is of special benefit to those sitting state exams this year but it is open to all. If more students wish to join then they just need to contact Mr. Joyce (Sixth Year Head) who is based in Room 19 (top corridor).

Homework Club

We run a homework club for all First and Second Year students from 3.45 to 4.45 pm from Monday to Thursday. There is no cost for this facility.

St. Mary's Debating Society

The Debating Society began the year with a very lively topic. The motion proposed was "Voting should be compulsory". Both proposition and opposition put forward some strong views. The Debating Society meets on Mondays in the library from 3.45 p.m. to 4.45 p.m. New members are welcome to join.

Chaplain's News

We extend a very warm welcome to our school's new Chaplain, Fr. William J. Stuart. Father William has been very busy meeting with all of our students and is planning meet with our First Year students on a group basis. This forms part of our very successful induction programme that enables us to monitor how our students are making the transition from primary to secondary school.

LCVP Fundraiser for Charity

The Sixth Year LCVP students held a Talent Show on Thursday 24th October, as part of their enterprise project for the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. All money raised will be donated to the 'Schools for Syria' charity which was set up by Fr William Stuart, our school Chaplain. This charity specifically targets the educational needs of the displaced Syrian children who have been forced into neighbouring Lebanon. Money raised pays for the rent of a school building and the hiring of teachers to provide an educational service to these children. The LCVP girls have been hard at work looking for talented girls to perform on stage and selling tickets for the show. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed so far.

Sports

The Extra-curricular timetable is now in full swing. New members are always welcome every week. We have had some teams participating in competitions already this year with some mixed results. Our Junior Gaelic football team have played 2 matches so far. Our U-16 and U-19 basketball teams have begun their matches with mixed results also. Our U-16's were very unlucky to lose their first match and our U-19's won their first match. 16 students from 1st, 2nd and 3rd year attended a camogie blitz in St. Brigid's GAA club. Again we had mixed results, with some matches won, lost and drawn. The first year sports hour after school has been a huge success over the past number of weeks. Well done to all students who have represented the school in competitions so far this year. Training will continue as normal for all students after mid-term. The athletics/running club has also now begun on a Thursday after school.

"Cycle Against Suicide"

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary school is an ambassador school for the Cycle Against Suicide, a campaign which seeks to raise awareness about positive mental health. The Cycle Against Suicide was established in 2012 by social and serial entrepreneur Jim Breen who visited the school in January. Since its foundation, St. Mary's has taken a leadership role with teachers and students both participating in a variety of ways. Our school has been part of the organising committee; they have cycled, composed songs and helped at various events. Earlier this month, students from 5th year along with their teachers took part in the launch of Cycle Against Suicide 2014. This involved cycling across the city to attend the launch which started at the RTE studios. We then joined a larger group of cyclists and cycled to Ballsbridge for the official launch. Well done to all our girls who got on their bikes, wearing their official jerseys to let people know that *'it's ok not to feel ok and it's more than ok to ask for help'*.

Paris Trip

A large group of TY students also enjoyed world famous art treasures on the recent cultural trip to Paris. Fifty-one of our T.Y. and 5th Year students made the exciting trip to France a couple of weeks ago. Everyone agreed that it was an enormous success and well done to all students for their exceptional behaviour. Particular thanks are also due to Ms. Ryan who put a huge amount of work into organising the trip and also to the teachers and SNAs who travelled with the group.

6th Year Mentor Programme

The 2013 mentoring programme for 6th year students has commenced this term. This initiative involves teachers being paired up with a number of 6th year students to mentor them. This allows students to receive support and help with study skills and revision programmes. This programme has proved to be of great help to our 6th years and thanks are due to Mr. Joyce for organising this year's programme and to all the teachers involved.

"Poetry Aloud" Competition

This year Fifth and Sixth Year English students were given an opportunity to enter the "Poetry Aloud" Competition in The National Library. This competition involves students reciting a poem by Irish poet W.B. Yeats and also a poem of their own choice. There were 1200 students nationwide participating in this programme and we are thrilled to announce that Joanna Siewierska (6th year) has made it through to the National Finals, in the Senior Category, which will be held in November. Well done Joanna and we all wish you the best of luck in the competition finals!

5th Year Careers Event

On October 17th, our 5th year students headed up to Parnell's GAA club for a careers event. The event was designed to give local students information on 3rd Level options. Students agreed it was a very worthwhile trip. (Carla Hickey-5th Year)

Examination classes

A reminder to all parents/guardians of 3rd and 6th year students that examination fees for the Junior and Leaving Certificate classes will be due in the New Year. Last year's fees were €105 (JC) and €110 (LC) approximately so it is advisable to plan for this payment. Candidates with a current medical card are exempt from this payment – please ensure that your medical card is in date.

Website

We invite you to look at our website www.holyfaith.ie where we showcase the school's achievements and provide information to you the parents and the general public about our activities. At no time will the names of girls be used nor will individual photographs be posted. Please contact the school if you do not want your daughter to appear in a group photograph on our website.

Parents' Association News

The AGM our Parents' Association was held on Tuesday, September 10th. The following are the current officers for the 2013/2014 academic year:

Chairperson: Ms. Gillian Wray; Secretary: Ms. Ita Hulton; Treasurer: Ms. Martina Burnett.

Mobile Phones

Following consultation with the Parents' Association, Board of Management and Teaching staff in 2011, a new policy on mobile phones was agreed. Girls are now allowed to bring mobile phones to school in the interest of personal safety but phones must be kept switched off for the duration of the day and not turned on again until the girls leave the school grounds.

First Year Parents' Coffee Morning

We recently hosted a coffee morning for the parents of our First Year students. Parents had an opportunity to meet with the First Year Care Team and to also meet other parents.

T.Y. News

- **Glendalough Trip**
The Transition Year students had a very busy and active first term. In September, the annual bonding trip to Glendalough was a huge success with everyone involved having a positive experience. Many students will use the long two day hike in Glendalough as part of their An Gaisce Presidents award.
- **Art Trip**
Students experienced interesting and unusual art works on a very pleasant trip to the Botanical Gardens in early September.
- **Science Trip**
On October 22nd, all Transition years travelled north to the Belfast Science Museum (W5) with Mr. Kavanagh, Ms. Pratt and Ms. Conway. Students travelled by coach and although it was a long journey, a brilliant day was had by all and students really enjoyed the interactive nature of the trip. (Shannon Heary-T.Y.)
- **Work Experience**
Each Friday every TY student is involved in work experience in local shops, schools and offices. This taste of the world of work will, we hope prove invaluable to students as they make career choices in the future.
- **History Trips**
On October 7th, the T.Y. classes visited St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. There they had a tour and got a chance to do a variety of activities, including etching. Students really enjoyed this trip. Also, on October 9th, classes visited Glasnevin Cemetery where they were taken to see the graves of some of the famous figures in Irish history such as Michael Collins, Eamonn De Valera and Roger Casement. Students learned a lot from this trip and agreed that it was a really good experience. (Molly Brennan-T.Y.)

Career Guidance Department

Any student who wishes to talk about issues regarding school, career or concerns of a personal nature can make an appointment with Ms. Fagan, our Guidance Counsellor.

Child Protection

We recently sent home to all parents a copy of a Parent's Guide to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Our school's Designated Liaison Person for reporting child protection concerns is Ms Ada Broderick (Principal). The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Ms Evelyn McLoughlin (Deputy Principal).

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Wishing all of our girls and their families a restful Mid-Term Break.

Ms. Ada Broderick
Principal

Ms. Evelyn McLoughlin
Deputy Principal