



Parents' Mid-Term Newsletter

School Ethos

St. Mary's Holy Faith Secondary School is a Catholic All Girls' Secondary School under the management of the Le Chéile Trust, a Trust made up of several congregations throughout Ireland including the Sisters of the Holy Faith. The underlying motivation for all activities in the school originates from the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The management and staff aim to promote the values of the Gospel in their individual and collective roles as educators of the students under their care. The Code of Behaviour seeks to develop in our students, values of respect for themselves, others and the school environment together with a positive attitude to learning and the possibility of realising their full potential as young people. All teachers seek to develop self-reliant young people who are well-balanced and able to cope with the pressures of life and work into the future.

Pastoral Care

The Pastoral Care Programme followed in the school aims to support students with difficulties that are either related to their personal lives or to their academic performance. Due care is taken to ensure that all students are treated fairly and with respect. We aim to create an environment where all students get a chance to achieve to a level appropriate to their abilities. Every effort is made to ensure that students learn from their mistakes and then start anew as they continue in school. The cooperation of parents and guardians in this process is vital towards producing an outcome that satisfies all and brings contentment to students as members of the school community.

Junior Certificate Results

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

Midterm Assessments

As a new initiative, all our students had a midterm test in all her subjects during the week beginning Monday, October 22nd. This is important as it allows students, teachers and parents an opportunity to assess each girl's progress, to get feedback and to set realistic and achievable goals. A record of your daughter's results will be posted home during the week of Monday, November the 12th.

Open Night

An Open Night for prospective students and their parents was held at the school on September 11th. The event was very well attended and we thank all the girls who helped on the night. If any parent wishes to enrol a younger daughter for a place in St. Mary's Holy Faith, Killester, application forms are currently available from the school office.

E-Portal

A new attendance system using an online database called e-Portal, which records and monitors attendance and punctuality was introduced in 2011. Each class tutor now records absences at 8.55am using a computer in each classroom. It is vital that students are on time for their tutorial class at 8.55am to ensure that they are registered for the day. **It is a fact that students who attend school regularly are more successful in school and in their exams than students who do not** so we appreciate your ongoing cooperation. We will soon be opening up access to e-Portal to all of our parent body. Details will follow after the Mid-Term break.

Christmas Tests

Christmas tests start on Monday, **December 3rd** for one week. This is just four weeks after the midterm break and it is important that all students prepare to the very best of their ability.

Student Council

The Students' Council has been meeting regularly with Ms. Noone and Ms. Broderick to discuss issues that they would like to have addressed in the school.

Chaplain's News

Sr. Pat has been very busy meeting with our First Year students on a one-to-one 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. Sr. Pat is currently in the process of organizing a retreat programme for our First Year girls.

London Art Trip

The Art Department is very excited about their forthcoming Art Trip to London on Friday, November 16th to Saturday the 17th. Our thanks extend to Ms. Ryan, Ms. McCormack and Ms. Dreeeling for organising the trip for our senior Art students.

Literacy Strategy

St. Mary's Holy Faith, is very happy to have been selected as a pilot school for the new National Literacy Strategy. Ms Gallagher is the school's link teacher and is leading a committee of teachers on developing a whole school approach to developing the literacy levels of all students. We will also require the views of parents – watch this space!

Maths' Week

A most successful and enjoyable *Math's Week* took place in the school from October 15th-19th. Students participated in a range of Math's related activities:

-  A trip to Trinity College Dublin was organised for Higher Level Leaving Certificate students.
-  All senior students took part in the Prism Competition.
-  A Mathematical Treasure Hunt was organised for our Transition Year students.
-  First Years took part in 'Maths Bingo' and there was a 'Maths Poster' competition.
-  Second Years took part in races and calculated Speed/ Distance and Time.

Healthy Eating

St. Mary's Holy Faith operates a Healthy Eating Policy. Good nutrition is critical to optimizing each child's potential for success in school and research tells us that poor nutrition impacts on pupil's behaviour, performance and ability to concentrate on learning tasks. To support your daughter, unhealthy lunch options such as fizzy drinks and crisps are not permitted at St. Mary's Holy Faith. We would ask you to support us in implementing this policy by ensuring that your daughter brings healthy food options to school each day.

Assemblies

As a new initiative, each Year Group in the school has a weekly assembly facilitated by the Year Head and Tutor team. The assemblies focus on supporting students to be the best students that they can possibly be so that they can reach their full potential in school.

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.

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 years 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.

Voluntary Contribution

Parents are reminded that voluntary contributions can be made to the school office in full payment or in installments.

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.

PE Department / Extra Curricular Activities

The school's sports leagues are just beginning and will be in full swing after the half-term. This year we have entered 5 teams in basketball, 3 teams in soccer and 2 teams in Gaelic Football. The up-graded fitness suite is proving popular with many students using this facility after-school which is great to see. We now have a weights' room for the students to avail of after the half-term and new changing facilities. It is important that all students bring their correct PE uniform to lessons as students will not be allowed to do PE after the half-term if they do not have the correct gear.

The following are the activities on offer after school:

Mondays: Basketball: all years **Tuesdays:** GAA **Fridays:** Football

The gym is open everyday after school until 5pm. Students may join after the half-term break when additional fitness classes for senior students will also be provided.

Career Guidance News

- ✚ Any student who wishes to talk about issues regarding school, career or concerns of a personal nature can make an appointment with Ms. Kealy, our Guidance Counselor.
- ✚ We are very proud of our Transition and Fifth Year students who have begun a new interactive Career and College Preparation Programme called 'REACH produced by Careers Portal. Parents can find more information on www.careersportal.ie

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) News

On Friday, October 26th, our Sixth Year LCVP students organised a very successful Talent Show Competition attended by our First and Second Year students. All funds raised will go to the 'Laura Lynn' Foundation. Our L.C.V.P. are currently planning a fashion show for our senior students.

Transition Year News

- ✚ The students were welcomed back on the 30th of August with an orientation day and a picnic in St. Anne's park.
- ✚ Our students enjoyed an educational trip to Glendalough on the 27th and 28th of September. Our students stayed in the An Oige Youth Hostel and did a 25km hike over the two days, which forms part of their part of their An Gaisce Award.
- ✚ Ranganna Osbourne and Leech have taken part in a 'TV Production Skills' module with Kairos. Rang Orpen are looking forward to an equally successful experience in early November.
- ✚ Various speakers have addressed the Transition group over the first half of this academic term. Aodhán O' Riordán (T.D.) hosted a lively discussion on constitutional reforms. We hope to follow this up with a further look at Irish politics and a trip to the Dail. A host of speakers have been invited in as part of the YSI (Young Social Innovators) programme.
- ✚ Students have been involved in many fundraising activities including bag-packing for St. Vincent de Paul, a fun run for the Simon community and a relay for Arc.

Parents' Association News

The AGM our Parents' Association was held on Tuesday, October 16th. The new Chairperson is Ms. Jacqueline Wheelan. Our thanks extend to Ms. Angela King, Ms. June Rowe, Ms. Mary McEvoy, Ms. Susan Boyle, Ms. Sonia Doherty, Ms Evelyn Toner and Ms. Angela King to their dedication and loyalty to both our school and the Parents' Association over the years. The following are the current officers for the 2012/2013 academic year:

Chairperson: *Ms. Jacqueline Wheelan*
Secretary: *Ms. Ita Hulton*
Treasurer: *Ms. Martina Burnett*

Assistant Chairperson: *Ms. Avril Kelly*
Assistant Secretary: *Ms. Helen Rosaldo*

Upcoming Dates

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| ✚ Monday November 5 th | School re-opens after Midterm Break |
| ✚ Thursday November 8 th | Sixth Year Parent Teacher Meeting (4.15 – 6.45pm) |
| ✚ Tuesday November 13 th | CAO/FE Information Evening for Sixth Year Parents |
| ✚ Monday December 3 rd – Friday 7 th | House Examinations |
| ✚ Monday December 3 rd | Transition Year Parent Teacher Meeting (4.15 - 6.45pm) |
| ✚ Thursday December 20 th | Christmas Carol Service |
| ✚ Friday December 21 st | School Closes for Christmas Break |

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

Ms. Ada Broderick
Principal

Ms. Evelyn McLoughlin
Deputy Principal

