



# Newsletter

## A Warm Welcome...

Welcome to the first newsletter of the academic year 2013/14. As a school we have undergone considerable change in staffing across the summer and at this point I want to wish our retired staff the very best in their future lives beyond the classroom – Ms. Cashman, Ms. Dowling and Ms. McGillicuddy, as Principal, have made vast contributions to education and will be missed hugely in the Comp. However life goes on and so too must we. I wish to congratulate Ms. Leila Moloney on her appointment as Deputy Principal. The school is in safe hands. We also have new staff members whom I want to welcome and no doubt you will get to know in the coming weeks and months.

On a personal note I want to thank so many of you for your words of congratulations, praise, prayers and support in the past few months since my own appointment. I will work hard to ensure that the success and reputation of our wonderful school, developed by my predecessors is maintained and hopefully raised even more in the years ahead.

Our first few weeks here in the Comprehensive have simply flown by and it is my hope that for the most part things have gone smoothly for you and that the First Years in particular have coped with the big change successfully.

Naturally from time to time there will be teething problems at home or school, therefore it is vital that we are let know if there are any concerns or difficulties; no matter how small they may appear. Small problems have a tendency to grow to larger ones if they are left unattended. So if you have any concerns at all then you should contact your child's Year Head in the first instance.

*Richard Prendiville - Principal*

**September 2013 Issue 01**

## Year Heads & Co-ordinators 2013 - 2014

### The Year Heads for the academic year 2013/14

<b>1st Years</b>	<b>Ms. R. O'Donoghue</b>
<b>2nd Years</b>	<b>Ms. B. Neligan</b>
<b>3rd Years</b>	<b>Mr. K. O'Keeffe</b>
<b>LC1</b>	<b>Ms. C. O'Connor</b>
<b>LC2</b>	<b>Mr. T. Culhane</b>
<b>LCA Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Ms. L. Moloney</b>
<b>TY Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Ms. M. Hogan</b>
<b>LCVP Co-ordinator</b>	<b>Mr. P. McElligott</b>



You may contact any of the above by telephoning the school in the first instance. Naturally all staff have formal timetabled classes and so may not be in a position to speak to you instantly but they will get back to you at their earliest convenience. Equally the Guidance Counsellor (Ms. Griffin), School Chaplain (Sr. F. Day), Deputy Principal and Principal may be contacted

It is important for parents to note that Sr. Frances is a fully qualified Counsellor and is accredited to IAHP. Please also note that it is vital appointments are made through the office should you wish to meet any of the above in person. Unfortunately arriving at school without a pre planned appointment in the hope of meeting a staff member cannot be accommodated.

## Study Skills

On Monday 23rd of September Leaving Certs, received advice on study skills and techniques by Student Enrichment Services. An equivalent day will be held for Junior Certs. on Thursday October 17th. This is a very beneficial exercise in preparing students for their future exams.

## School Website

The school has re-launched its new web page. Please visit [www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie](http://www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie) for up to date information on school news and events. Other useful information such as the school calendar and educational links can be found there.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank Mr. Tom Moore of Janus Design, a parent of the school, for donating his time free of charge to design the page. I encourage you all to look at it in the coming days.



## School Uniform

Some pupils may be careless with school jumpers, ties, jackets/tops by losing them or misplacing them. Equally parts of the uniform often get mixed up in PE classes.

Can I encourage students / parents to label parts of the uniform wherever possible as this will reduce the significant cost in replacing such items.

Parents are also reminded that the school crested polo shirt is a compulsory component of our school uniform for PE classes.

## School Calendar/Parent Teacher Meetings

The school calendar 13/14 is available to view on the school website. The calendar includes holidays, other school closures and important dates to remember.

My advice is to print it off and keep it nearby. The following however are dates for Parent Teacher Meetings.

All meetings run from **4.15pm** to **6.45 pm**. Parents are asked to arrive no later than **5.45pm** so as to be assured in meeting your child's teachers.

LC2/LCA2  
Tuesday 15th October 2013

3rd Year  
Thursday 7th November 2013

2nd Year  
Monday 9th December 2013

LC1/LCA1/TY  
Tuesday 14th January 2014

1st Year  
Thursday 23rd January 2014

Meeting Dates 2013/14

## Texting Service...

As you are aware the school operates a mobile phone texting service to parents/guardians of students in order to convey important messages or reminders. If it is a case that you change your mobile number or feel you are not receiving such messages then please contact the school office and we will rectify the problem.



## Parental Procedures...

Parents are reminded that should they wish to collect their son/daughter from the school they must do so in person from the main office and sign them out. This policy is equally true for parents of students from Tarbert village. This procedure is designed as part of our Child Protection Policy and though a little effort is required, it is in everyone's best interest to ensure the policy is complied with.

Parents are also reminded that it is school policy for students to turn off their mobile phones completely on entering the school grounds. Phones must remain off (not silent) all day until leaving the school. Theft of mobile phones occurs rarely but when it does happen we make every effort to locate them. However, ultimately, we cannot accept any responsibility for mobiles lost or stolen during the course of the school day. In fact your child is simply better off leaving the phone at home entirely. The policy can be viewed in full in your child's journal.

Under no circumstances should students contact parents or vice versa by mobile phone. If necessary all critical messages can be routed through the secretary's office. It is equally unacceptable for students to text parents if they are ill. The school has procedures for dealing with illness that your son/daughter is aware of and this should be reinforced to them. Your cooperation is therefore vital in this regard.

## 1st Year Parents Meeting

**All parents of 1st Year students are invited to attend a meeting in the school on Monday October 7th at 7pm.**

The meeting is designed to give parents guidance on option choices following sampling for 1st Years, explain pastoral school structures in place to assist 1st Years. Your attendance is advised.

# Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life is the national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy standards among children and young people in the Irish education system. This strategy seeks to address significant concerns about how well our young people are developing the Literacy and Numeracy (L&N) skills that they will need for the rest of their lives.

Traditionally we have thought about **literacy** as the skills of reading and writing; but today our understanding of literacy encompasses much more than that. **Literacy includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media.**

**Numeracy** is not limited to the ability to use numbers, to add, subtract, multiply and divide. **Numeracy encompasses the ability to use mathematical understanding and skills to solve problems and meet the demands of day-to-day living.** To have this ability, a young person needs to be able to think and communicate quantitatively, to make sense of data, to have a spatial awareness, to understand patterns and sequences, and to recognise situations where mathematical reasoning can be applied to solve problems.

L&N skills development are not limited to the classroom. Parents as the primary educators have the greatest role. Parents should be encouraged to remain active in encouraging reading in their children – even in the late teenage years - be it books, magazines or newspapers for example. Just 15 minutes reading a day (extra to school work!) can contribute to significant improvement to your child's literacy rates.

Tarbert Comprehensive School is currently working on a variety of strategies to encourage L&N skills. The school library, classroom strategies in English and Maths classes – as well as subjects across the curriculum aim to improve L&N skills.

## Strategy 1 – Shared Reading

'Shared Reading' is one of the most valuable resources at your child's disposal. Research indicates that shared reading is a critically important factor in your child's reading development. Shared reading between students and parents in a home setting is particularly effective as it provides a safe learning environment for students to practice reading with the support of the parent.

Asking your child to read aloud for you will:

- Allow you identify areas where they are having difficulty
- Allow you to model the skill of reading for your child
- Increase their confidence
- Improve their vocabulary

Overall Shared Reading methods are proven to be very effective in improving your child's overall performance.



## Strategy 2 – RCR-CCR

Some students can indicate that they spend considerable amounts of time preparing for exams yet perform poorly in them. Why is this happening? It may be because the considerable time he/she spent studying may not be as effective as they needed it to be. Staring at a notes copy or a text book for hours on end may not be an effective way to learn. As a result, for the coming year in Tarbert Comprehensive School we have devised a revision strategy to help our students use their study time more effectively and so gain better results.

### RCR-CCR

#### READ COVER RECALL- CHECK CORRECT REVISE

First Year students in particular will have this strategy explained to them and will be encouraged to use it as an aid to learning across their subject range. Yet it is open to students from all year groups to embrace it also. As part of the Literacy and Numeracy strategy within the school we have decided to look at new teaching methodologies that will aid learning and teaching. On September 24th staff took a training day in order to develop strategies that aid L&N skills. It should also be noted that the school reopened a day earlier so as to facilitate this training and there is no loss of tuition time to your son/daughter.

## Use of the School Journal

The school journal is one of the main methods of communication between school and home. It is therefore vital that parents view it regularly. Journals are collected weekly at Junior Cycle by class teachers and monitored by core subject teachers at senior cycle. All notes should be signed by a parent/guardian. These signatures should be made in full (not initialled – this lessens the tendency of forgery) There should be no tippex appearing on notes and pages in the journal are numbered, gaps in page numbers may indicate a page has been removed. As the journal is crucial in Home/School communication it is of paramount importance that parents of ALL year groups monitor its contents on a regular basis.

## Money Matters & Book Grant

I am extremely aware that from time to time families can experience financial hardships, especially in the current climate. It is never our intention to add to those hardships. However by their nature schools will always have costs associated with them e.g. supervised study, book rental, pre exam fees, TY fees, school outings or field trips. However at Tarbert Comprehensive we try as much as possible to keep these fees as low as we can and we compare very favourably with other second level schools.

I would never want a situation to arise where by a student is deprived an opportunity to participate in any activity or is embarrassed because of an inability to pay. So if this arises for you during the year please contact Sr. Frances, Ms. Moloney or myself and the matter will be dealt with sensitively and in total confidence. The Book Grant is used to help those who experience financial difficulties with back to school costs. The money is distributed as equitably as possible. It is used primarily to support LC1 students and book grant forms were distributed to each LC1 student.

The grant is then used to pay for the Pre Examination fees for those families who hold medical cards. Any money then left remaining in the fund is used for families of 1st Year students who may be experiencing financial difficulties.

The yearly contribution of €60 which we ask from parents is used as follows: student insurance providing 24hour cover all year round, Study Skills for Leaving and Junior Certs, school retreats, buses for matches and extracurricular outings, photocopies and upkeep of the library. As you can see the money is put to very good use and allows us offer opportunities to our students in a wide spectrum of areas.

## Supervised Evening Study

After school study will resume on Monday 23rd of September. Study sessions run three evenings a week – Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays from 4pm to 6pm. The cost of the service will be €10 per week and will be collected in monthly sessions starting Monday 16th September (€40), Monday 21st October (€30) and Monday 18th November (€30). Students can avail of one or more of these monthly sessions. The service is open to students in all year groups but may be of greater benefit to students in exam classes. A code of conduct will be put in place and strictly adhered to. Anyone interested in attending should collect the application form from Mr. Trench before Monday 16th September and return it along with the appropriate fee. The application form will also include the code of conduct that parents and students should read and sign before availing of the service. Parents/Guardians should note that there is no bus service available at 6p.m.

## Student Insurance

Parents should be aware that we pay accident insurance for all our students. We pay this from the voluntary contribution that we receive each year from parents. Students have 24 hour cover 365 days a year. This means that in the event of even a minor accident at school or at home, even during holiday times, that incurs any medical expense, then the money can be claimed through Allianz Insurance Policy. Claim forms are available from the School Office or direct from Allianz at: Burlington House, Burlington Road, Dublin 4.

## Leaving Certificate Results

We were extremely pleased again this year with the performance of our Leaving Cert. students in the State Exams. Statistically we are above the national averages in the points race. 16% of our students achieved over 500 points compared to 9% nationally, similarly 33% of our students achieved over 450 points compared to 20% nationally while 52% of our students achieved over 400 points in their best six subjects – this compares with 33% nationally. Just as importantly very few of our students fail any subject. Those that do fail often do so because they go against school advice and sit the exam at an inappropriate level.

These statistics are a remarkable achievement and are a testament to the comprehensive, mixed ability, co-educational ethos that permeates the school. I wish to congratulate the students and teachers on the quality of these results.

For our current students I wish to emphasise that Examination success can often be put down to the following key factors:

- Student self motivation and commitment
- Maintaining a positive attitude towards education as well as a sensible social life outside of school – senior students who socialise to excess on weekend nights are exhausting themselves and find concentration more difficult midweek. Equally those students who overly involve themselves in sports find a similar problem. Try and find a healthy balance.
- High rates of school attendance
- Completion of homework to a high standard
- Taking advice from teachers (many of whom are State Examination correctors) on board. On many occasions this may revolve around dropping to Ordinary level for exams. Why take the risk failing a paper? After all it is worth remembering that an A1 grade at Ordinary level is equivalent in points to a C3 on a Higher paper.

## The Parents Association

The Parents Association has a long history of activity within the school. The hard work and volunteer spirit of the group goes above and beyond the call of duty. Year after year the Association gets involved in fundraising activities for the schools benefit. This money is then re-circulated back into the school for the benefit of all its students.

The Parents Association AGM will be held on **Thursday October 10th at 7.30pm** (a text message will be sent as a reminder). Seamus Whitty of Kerry life Skills will give a talk in the first hour entitled "Teenagers – why they do what they do? What we as parents can do to support them and ourselves". The AGM will directly follow the talk. It's my hope that as many new faces as possible become involved this year. The more active members we have the better - so I urge as many of you as possible to attend.



## Adult Night Classes



The Adult Education Department offers a series of classes this term which will be of interest to the Community. It is proposed to commence the classes in the week beginning on Monday, September 30th should sufficient interest be manifested by the public.

Accountant, Mr John O'Sullivan, offers a Corporate Strategic Planning Course targeting business owners, managers and business students. It is scheduled to run for six weeks on a Tuesday or Thursday evening from 7.30 to 9.00 pm. The fee of €80.00 is payable in two installments.

Teacher, Alan Langan, offers a series of six practical classes on different Art Forms to facilitate the interest of the participants. The fee is €60.00 payable in two installments. The proposed classes will be held on a Tuesday or Thursday evening from 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

Solicitor, Anne Cotter, offers a six week course on Legal Issues for the Layperson dealing with topics ranging from the legal aspects of purchasing a property to legal issues in the workplace. The fee is €60.00 payable in two installments. The classes are scheduled for a Tuesday or Thursday evening from 7.30 to 9.00pm.

Photographer, Kevin Langan, offers a six week course on Photography dealing with taking shots to manipulating images using your computer. The proposed classes will take place on a Tuesday or Thursday evening from 7.30pm to 9.00pm. The fee is €60.00 payable in two installments.

Chef Frank Moynihan offers his very popular Demonstration Cookery Course followed by a Festive Cookery Demonstration Evening later in the term. Please contact the school for further details and refer to Posters/Flyers/Church Newsletters/Local Notes which will be circulated at a later date.

Further classes may be added during the year- if any person has a suggestion for a course or who would be interested in offering a course please feel at liberty to contact N. Keenan, Adult Education Director.

## The Parents Association

### GUIDANCE PROVISION

The budget cut to Guidance hours means that there is provision for each Leaving Cert student to receive one individual Guidance session but it is very important that students realise the value of this session and make full use of it. Highlighted on the next page are some very useful websites to assist students and parents with research and the school will host an open evening for parents on the CAO application process later in the term. Students and parents should also consult the "Guidance" section of the new school website.

## Important Dates

EVENT	DATE	VENUE
UCC Open Day	12th Oct.	UCC Cork
Limerick Colleges Open Day	17th, 18th Oct.	U.L., Mary I. & L.I.T.
Tralee Parent Information Evening	22nd Oct.	UCC Cork
Tralee I.T. Open Day	15th Nov.	Tralee Institute of Technology
Kerry Careers Fair	20th Nov.	The Brandon Hotel, Tralee

## Important Closing Dates

NAME	DATE	DEADLINE
UCAS	15th Oct. 2013	Some Courses Close
	15th Jan. 2014	All Courses Close
CAO Application Deadline	20th Jan. 2014	Early Application Online Discount €25
	1st Feb. 2014	Normal Application Online/Paper €40
HEAR & DARE Schemes Higher Education Access Route ("HEAR") and Disability Access Route to Education ("DARE")	1st Feb. 2014	Apply ONLINE as part of your CAO application
	1st Apr. 2014	HEAR & DARE Supporting Documents
POST LEAVING CERT COURSES	Apply Mid Feb. to August 2014	

*Best of Luck for the year ahead!*

## Important Websites

[www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)

[www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

[www.accesscollege.ie](http://www.accesscollege.ie) (Hear & Dare Schemes)

[www.careersportal.ie](http://www.careersportal.ie)

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com) (Study in England)

[www.studentfinance.ie](http://www.studentfinance.ie) (SUSI Grant Information)

All College Websites for Ireland - [www.name.ie](http://www.name.ie)  
e.g. [www.ucc.ie](http://www.ucc.ie), [www.ul.ie](http://www.ul.ie), [www.dcu.ie](http://www.dcu.ie)

