



Newsletter

A Warm Welcome...

December 2015 Volume 3 - Issue 02

Dear Parents/Guardians, welcome to the final newsletter of 2015. Late August only seems like yesterday and it's still hard to imagine that we are well and truly into the last few weeks before the Christmas break and the close of 2015. School life since mid-term has continued to be extremely busy, active and productive. As 2015 draws to a close I feel it's important that we keep you up to date with developments within the school since the last newsletter. May I also take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you the very best for the Christmas break and sincerely thank you for your ongoing support and encouragement throughout 2015. We look forward to seeing you all in the new year.

Richard Prendiville - Principal

Drop Off & School Collection

The front gate has become a dangerous area for students and staff in recent times. Cars are repeatedly turning in an already extremely busy area. Can I remind parents that the front gate of the school is not an appropriate area to turn in the mornings and evenings. Instead it is advised to use the upper bus gate to turn. Students can then be dropped at the bottom of the steps. **The main gate needs to be kept free as an entrance and exit point – the risk of an accident is greatly reduced by using the upper gate to turn.**

Autumn/Christmas Exams

Christmas/Autumn Exams ran from Tuesday November 24th to Friday November 27th. Exam results will be posted home before the Christmas break. Students were reminded about the importance of these exams as a stepping stone in their State Exams preparation and as an indicator on their progress in school to date. If exam results do not arrive before the Christmas break – please inform the school.

Year Heads & Co-ordinators 2015/16 The Year Heads for the academic year 2015/16

- 1st Years** Ms. E. Fitzgerald
- 2nd Years** Ms. S. Fitzgerald
- 3rd Years** Ms. R. O'Donoghue
- LC1** Ms. G. O'Callaghan
- LC2** Mr. K. O'Keeffe
- LCA Co-ordinator** Ms. M. Hogan
- TY Co-ordinator** Ms. M. Hogan
- LCVP Co-ordinator** Mr. P. McElligott



Open Night 2015

Tarbert Comprehensive Open Night was held on Thursday 5th of November last. Large crowds attended the event offering primary school pupils from far and wide the opportunity to view the school facilities and mingle with the school staff. Presentations at the end of the night from Mr. Prendiville, Sr. Frances, Leaving Cert. Mentors, Mr. McNamara, and Mrs. Griffin highlighted the uniqueness of the Comprehensive School ethos, pastoral care structures as well as the Curriculum on offer in the school. (Above image: The school choir performing to parents on Open Night)

Healthy Eating

We aim every day to live up to our school motto - 'Mens Sana in Corpore Sano' (a healthy mind and a healthy body). We promote healthy eating for all in the school. As many studies have shown healthy eating is beneficial not only to our physical health but also our mental health. It is with this in mind that we encourage students to bring healthy lunches to school. We ask parents, especially of those new students in the school, for their co operation in ensuring that students do not include Coca Cola, crisps and chocolate as part of their child's lunch.

Sickness

We are approaching that time of year when illness, bugs and flues become common and I want parents to be aware of a few points.

When a child indicates to a teacher that they are unwell, they are sent to the office area. In many cases the illness is minor and the student can resume classes later. On occasion students will be allowed to ring home (usually from a school mobile number) where they may have to be collected by a parent/guardian and taken home. Students are under **NO CIRCUMSTANCES** allowed use their own phones to ring or text about being collected by a parent/guardian.

Can I ask parents of students who feel unwell at home before school, not to send them in to school at all. These students usually get much sicker during the day and often can become distressed if they cannot be collected by a parent/guardian. If you are collecting your child, for any reason, you must sign them out on the 'Departures Book' at the school reception area.

Board of Management

The members of the school Board of management are:

Ms. Mary McGillicuddy – Chairperson
Ms. Ann O'Dwyer – Kerry ETB Nominee
Cllr. Jim Finucane – Kerry ETB Nominee
Ms. Ann Flavin – Bishop's Nominee
Ms. Ciara O'Connor – Staff Nominee
Mr. Noel Keenan – Staff Nominee
Ms. Ann Woods – Parents Nominee
Mr. Ted O'Connor – Parents Nominee
Mr. Richard Prendiville – Secretary

Should you wish to communicate with the Board of Management you may do so by writing to the Secretary of the Board at the school address, or contacting either of the parent's nominees, again using the school address. All correspondence addressed to members of the Board is treated as private and confidential and is not opened in the school.

SEVERE WEATHER, SCHOOL TRANSPORT AND SCHOOL CLOSURE

RED MEANS STOP (IN AFFECTED AREAS)

Any decision, by the Board of Management, to close the school is not taken lightly. In recent years this has mainly occurred as a consequence of severe weather conditions or power loss. All potential hazardous scenarios are weighed up carefully, by the school authorities, in light of the available information at the time and through continuous communication with the bus operators and school staff.

The school tries to strike a balance between, on the one hand, ensuring the health, safety and well being of both students and staff to the best of its ability while on the other hand, preventing the unnecessary disruption to teaching and learning of its students. This winter, Bus Éireann has indicated a change to previous protocols around school transport. Bus Éireann has decided as a precaution against severe weather and in the interest of child safety, to introduce a policy applicable to all school transport services that it provides under the Department of Education and Skills School Transport Schemes - for **ALL** Met Éireann Status Red weather events.

This means that when a Red alert is issued by Met Éireann for the area in which you live – or an area to which your child/ren are travelling to on a school bus – the services will not operate. This policy is available on www.buseireann.ie/statusred.

All parents should be aware that:

- Bus Éireann has sole responsibility for school transport and NOT school personnel
- A Status Red weather warning automatically means all school transport services provided by Bus Éireann under the School Transport Schemes are cancelled – in the affected areas – while the warning is in effect.
- Weather warnings are carried on all national and local news bulletins.
- Those families using private bus operators should contact their bus operators directly for up to date information about transport availability
- While Bus Éireann may not be providing school transport services because of this new policy, it understands that when any severe weather is forecast, it remains for each individual school to decide whether that school should close or not. Therefore the school may open as normal, if it so decides.
- In the event that the school authorities decide to officially close the school for poor weather or indeed for any reason – a text message will be sent to all parents regarding the closure – every attempt will be made to do this as early as possible, keeping in mind that as Principal, I often rely on many others for information/recommendations before a decision is made and conditions can change rapidly in the early mornings.
- Parents should only accept text messages with the 'TarbertCS' username.

Attending a Parent Teacher meeting

Parent teacher meetings continue to be a very valuable method of communication between home and school. By now both the LC2 and JC3 parent teacher meetings have been completed. However I want to remind parents those teachers are still contactable either through the journal or by telephone should you have any concerns or queries regarding your child's academic progress. Teachers will get back to you as soon as possible.

Ideally separated parents are asked to come to an agreement on which one of them attends a parent teacher meeting. Where both parents may wish to attend then we would ask that they would do so together or divide the teachers/subjects amongst themselves. Unfortunately it is not possible to accommodate both parents attending separately as it duplicates work and time at parent teacher meetings is already limited.

The remaining Parent teacher meetings this school year are:

- **2nd Year P/T Meeting**
Thursday 10th December 2015
- **1st Year & *TY PT Meeting**
Tuesday 12th January 2016
- **LC1 & LCA1 PT Meeting**
Thursday 28th January 2016

Fashion Show

Congratulations to the Parents Association who organised a wonderful Autumn Fashion Show on Friday October 23rd last. The show had well over 400 attendees and was a very enjoyable evening. The night was hosted by Ms. Siobhan Fitzgerald and Mr. Denis O'Shea in the school gym that was transformed for the occasion. Thanks also to all the participants, parents, students, staff, families and friends who added to a truly memorable occasion. All proceeds from the evening will be reinvested back into the school for the benefit of all the students.



(Above image: The school gym at the recent fashion show)

Update on School Extension & Fitness Suite

Work on both our school building projects continues apace. The projected completion date for the new extension is mid/late January 2016. The extension will provide replacement to our prefabs and will contain 3 new classrooms as well as bathroom facilities. One of the classrooms will act as a special educational needs resource classroom and the remaining two will be general subject rooms.

The school fitness suite is expected to be built by late February 2016. However substantial investment and planning will be required to equip the area with the necessary infrastructure to benefit all the students of the school. It's hoped the area will act as an alternative exercise and recreational area to the main sports hall. The Parents Association have kindly indicated their willingness to get involved in a fundraising drive for the facility in the near future..



Operation Christmas Child

Many thanks to the students, parents and teachers who contributed to the "shoe-box" appeal. One hundred boxes were donated from our school.

(Left image: Megan Barry, Anton O'Connor and Ms. Carroll during the Shoe box appeal.)

Concern

Tarbert Comprehensive School has raised €193,633 for Concern worldwide since 1986.

This year the church gate collections in Moyvane, Ballylongford, Asdee, Tarbert and Listowel, took place on Saturday November 28th and Sunday 29th. The amount raised was €2911.36 Thanks to all who contributed so generously.

The dates for the Limerick parishes are December 19th and 20th. Students will be taking part in various activities, including Christmas fast, sponsored silence, screen free day and the Church gate collections.



(Above image: Concern Volunteers)

I am very pleased to announce that just prior to print Ms. Carroll was informed by Concern that our school was nominated for the 2015 Concern Volunteer Awards and I am delighted to tell you that Tarbert Comprehensive School have been selected by the judging panel as the **Winner of School of the Year**.

These awards are relatively new and they are intended to honour and celebrate the enormous contribution that volunteers in Ireland make to Concern. We know that there are hundreds of excellent and very worthy volunteers but this year we have been chosen as one of the outstanding groups. Concern announced Tarbert Comprehensive School as the winner on their website and social media on Friday 4th December /Saturday 5th December as they mark International Volunteer Day on December 5th 2015.

Tarbert launches free Digital Textbooks for Junior Cycle Pupils

In a newly launched initiative, all Junior Cycle Pupils can now access FREE Digital Versions of their Textbooks On-Line and at home on PC, Mobile or Tablet by using their School Gmail Account and selecting the email from "Text Books".

It is hoped that through this initiative the weight of our Pupils School Bags will be reduced as now heavy TextBooks can be stored in School whilst Digital Versions are accessed at Home for Study and Homework. New Texts are continually being added so please check in.

Any queries email "textbooks@tarbertcs.ie"



Guidance Department

LC2 Students should apply to the CAO in the next few weeks. They should fully research all their options (check entry requirements, course content, possible careers etc) and always ensure they have a "Plan B". Students can avail of the "change of mind" facility at a later stage so the only courses that have to be applied for before February 1st are the "RESTRICTED" courses.

PLC applications open from February onwards and the SUSI Maintenance Grant may be applied for in April 2016. Highlighted are key dates and very useful websites to assist students and parents. Happy Christmas and best of luck. Jeanelle Griffin.

Health Promoting School (H.P.S)

Tarbert Comprehensive School has registered as a Health Promoting School this year. "A Health promoting school can be characterized as a school that is consistently strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living learning and working." (World Health Organization).

A Health Promoting School aims to:

- Foster the healthy development of the whole school community.
- Provide a framework for developing health promotion initiatives in a way that supports and enhances the implementation of the curriculum.
- Support the planning, implementation and evaluation of health related activities under school self-evaluation, school development planning processes.
- Enhance the links between schools and their communities.

As part of our school initiative we are in the process of developing an action plan based on identified priorities across the four key HPS areas:

- Physical and Social environment.
- Curriculum and Learning.
- Policies and planning.
- Partnerships.

We have committed to the HPS for a minimum of 2 to 3 years. Having successfully identified and implemented our action plan we will hopefully receive our Health Promoting School Flag.

More updates in the New Year.

Basketball

Congratulation to our two students - Niamh Cullen & Grace Leahy who recently played with the South West team in the Inter Regional Basketball competition.



(Above image: Niamh Cullen & Grace Leahy)

Fun With Numbers: Sudoku

		1				9	4	
4		7	8	3		2	1	
9		6	5			8		3
8			6					
				2		1	3	
					3	5		
5	7				2	4	8	
1	6			9			5	
			4	1				7

Answers can be found on our school website!

FUTSAL

Congratulations to the Tarbert Comprehensive 1st Year Futsal team who finished runners up in the Kerry schools Futsal championship. The team went through their group unbeaten before dispatching of the hosts Killorglin 3-0 in the semi finals. With a number of injuries going into the final against Mercy Mounthawk, the Tarbert boys were unable to gain the final victory their efforts deserved.

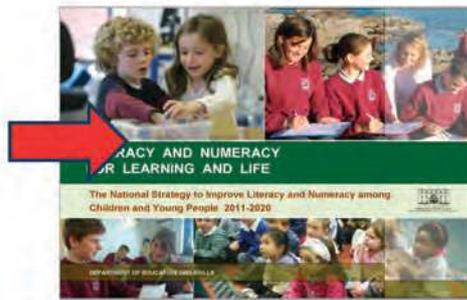
The Tarbert players were commended and praised for the way they played and conducted themselves by the FAI officials present. It was the schools first time partaking in this event and it is hoped next year they will go one better. Special thanks to Brendan Horgan, a parent of the school for all his time and commitment with the team.



The TCS 1st Year Futsal team with Brendan Horgan, trainer and Mr. Shane Healy.

Where can we find information on Literacy & Numeracy?

1. The National Strategy on Literacy and Numeracy can be accessed online:

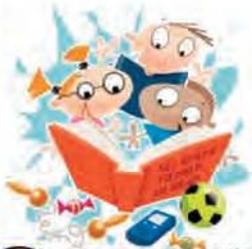


More information can be found online at www.education.ie/en/Publications/PolicyReports/lit_num_strategy_full.pdf or by visiting our school website at www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie/

You can download a pdf guide by going to the education.ie website listed above.

2. Information can be found on the school website:





HOW CAN PARENTS PROMOTE LITERACY AND NUMERACY AT HOME?



Promote reading at home by joining the local library, encouraging your child to borrow books from the school library, by reading along with school book club choices, or by providing a range of reading materials in the home.



Foster different types of literacy – talk to your child about what's happening in school to support their oral literacy; encourage safe digital literacy by speaking to them about what blogs and sites they access for educational purposes



Remember that Literacy and Numeracy are not about English and Maths. Make it fun, play board games, card games, computer games and quizzes with your child. Even encourage your child to think about the numeracy elements in their favourite sports

Drop Everything and Read

First Year Sustained Reading

Junior Library Club

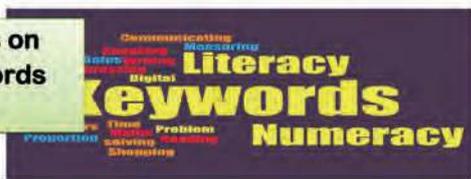
Senior Book Club

SCHOOL LIBRARY

- Aims to encourage and promote reading
- Stocks a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books, catering for all interests
- Reading materials include Manga comics, graphic novels, magazines and local and national newspapers
- Texts prescribed for JC and LC also available
- Computer access
- Work/Reading areas

WHAT ARE OUR LITERACY & NUMERACY ACTIONS?

Focus on Keywords



2. Revising Key Ideas



3. Whole School Approach to Converting Test Results from Fractions to Percentages

Step 1: WRITE out the sum Your Fraction $\times \frac{100}{1}$	Example: $\frac{17}{30} \times \frac{100}{1}$
2. MULTIPLY the tops MULTIPLY the bottoms.	$\frac{17}{30} \times \frac{100}{1}$ $= \frac{1700}{30}$
Step 3: CALCULATE the percentage 1700 \div 30 Round your answer up or down	$1700 \div 30$ $= 56.6667$ $= 57\%$

Important Closing Dates

NAME	DATE	DEADLINE
UCAS	15th Jan. 2016	All Courses Close
CAO Application Deadline	20th Jan. 2016	Early Application Online Discount €25
	1st Feb. 2016	Normal Application Online/Paper €40
		Change of Mind facility opens 5th May 2016
		Change of Mind facility closes 1st July 2016
HEAR & DARE Schemes	1st Feb. 2016	Apply ONLINE as part of your CAO application
Higher Education Access Route ("HEAR") and Disability Access Route to Education ("DARE")		
	1st Apr. 2016	HEAR & DARE Supporting Documents
Post Leaving Cert Courses		Apply Mid Feb. to August 2016
SUSI Maintenance Grant		Apply April - July 2016

Important Websites

www.qualifax.ie
(Essential Course Search Engine)

www.cao.ie
(CAO information and Application)

www.accesscollege.ie
("Hear" & "Dare" Schemes)

www.careersportal.ie
(Essential Course and Career website)

www.ucas.com
(Study in England)

www.studentfinance.ie
(SUSI Grant Information)

www.susi.ie
(Grant Application)

All College Websites for Ireland - www.name.ie
e.g. www.ucc.ie, www.ul.ie, www.dcu.ie



Best of Luck for the year ahead!

HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

On behalf of all the staff & management, I would like to wish all our students and their families a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

We look forward to working together with you all in the New Year.

Enjoy the holidays!

Best Wishes
Richard Prendiville