



Tarbert Comprehensive School

Welcome

Dear Parents/Guardians, welcome to the first newsletter of 2021. It's hard to believe we are the cusp of the Easter break already. School life since Christmas has seen a combination of both on site and remote teaching and learning – it has been hugely busy, active and productive. This newsletter will be a brief snapshot of where we are currently so as to keep you up to date with developments within the school.

Newsletter

MARCH 2021

NEW BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The nomination and election process to the New Board of Management is now complete and I am delighted to inform you that the members are:

Mrs Mary McGillicuddy (Chairperson),
Mrs Ann Flavin,
Ms Maria O’Gorman, Kerry ETB,
Mr Stephen Goulding, Kerry RTB,
Mrs Niamh Wall,
Professor Michael Walsh,
Mr Kevin O’Keeffe,
Mr Andrew McNamara,
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.

Return Date

The DES have indicated that all students will return to School on the Monday after the Easter break – if public health advice allows – namely April 12th 2021. I want to congratulate and commend both LC2 and LC1 students who have made a very successful return to school. It is wonderful to have the school so vibrant again with the energy and optimism of youth – long may it continue.

Return to School Form

Students can only return to school once they submit a signed HSE Return to School form. The Form is available via the School app. It must be presented on day one of arrival. No student will be allowed access to school until this form is returned.

Accredited Grades 2021

Students are reminded the only contingency arrangement available to them who, for any reason, cannot sit Leaving Certificate examinations in 2021 - or indeed if they are cancelled - is SEC Accredited Grades. On this basis all students are strongly encouraged to accept an SEC Accredited Grade in all subjects for examinations where available. I also advise you to sit the June exams in ALL subjects - maximising your chances of getting the best possible grade. Detailed correspondence and guidance from the School on the entire Accredited Grades process is available to parents via the school website at www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie

Assessment of the Junior Cert 2021

Alternative arrangements are required for assessment and reporting on the learning achievements of 3rd Year students concluding Junior Cycle this year. The normal use of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) is not considered appropriate by the State Examinations Commission as a reporting and certification mechanism in 2021.

Therefore Junior Cycle students' progress and learning achievements will be recognised through a dual form of certification: (A State Certificate + a school report) – this year. This involves Tarbert CS adopting a whole-school approach to the assessment and reporting on student achievement following consultation with teachers of 3rd Year students. From this consultation process the following method has been identified as the best route forward, allowing students demonstrate their learning and be rewarded for their endeavours;

Marks will be allocated as follows:

- 30% of the grade will go to an average taken from the 4 previous in house exams of 3rd Year students, namely;
- Christmas and summer of JC1,
- Christmas of JC2,
- Christmas of JC3.

If a student missed one or more of these exams then the average of the available exams will be used. Subject departments may also agree on a mini in-class assessment in April (if desired). This will be communicated to students in advance.

- 70% of the grade will go to an end of term sit down in house exam. Each subject teacher within each subject Department will issue the same 2 hour theory paper that will be administered over 7 school days from May 17th to 25th inclusive. Full student attendance for the full duration of each day is a requirement – no student will be allowed in late or depart early. Students not sitting exam(s) at a particular time must remain at school and bring sufficient study material as appropriate
- These exams will be held in base rooms along a pre published timetable (to be issued at a later date). Students will sit no more than 2 exams per day.
- Within this 70% weighting – practical subject departments have the flexibility to assign further weighting breakdowns, in line with course specifications, based on previous or current task/project work. Details of this will be given by subject teachers to their students in the coming weeks.
- Art does not have a written paper at JC and is based on a portfolio grade using a predictive grading system - this will be maintained. Mr Langan will communicate with his students.

The combination of these final marks along with their CBA descriptors will be issued to parents around the same time as the summer exam reports (mid-late June). Certs and print offs will not issue until autumn 2021.

Reporting of the Junior Cert 2021

In 2021, the Junior Cycle learning achievement of students will be recognised through a specific form of certification designed to meet the current, exceptional circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. For each student, certification will involve two elements:

1. A State Certificate of completion of Junior Cycle from the Department of Education and Skills. Students should receive a State Certification that they have completed three years of Junior Cycle education in a number of subjects. This certification will be provided by the Department of Education and Skills.
2. A School Report setting out the learning achievements of students in Junior Cycle. Students will receive a written report on the broad range of learning that they have achieved in each subject at the end of Junior Cycle. This assessment of their learning will be provided by their teachers in the format described above.

The above procedures are now being communicated to parents and students via this newsletter, student email, student assembly and school app/website.

I want to sincerely thank the 3rd Year students and their parents for the continued support and engagement with online learning to date. Currently it is planned that all 3rd years will return to school following the Easter break.

I therefore request all 3rd Year students to make one final push and engage with your teachers for these final few weeks so as to allow you to do these important exams to the best of your ability. Finally I want to sincerely thank the staff for all their efforts to date in maintaining teaching and learning in very difficult times – I am indebted to them.

FACE MASK

The School prepared a student PPE welcome kit last August consisting of hand sanitiser, face masks, gloves (for some) and visor.

I am asking parents to ensure students have a sufficient amount of their own reusable face masks for the duration of the school week (at least 3 a day).

Health & Illness

Parents are asked to keep their children at home if feeling unwell - those who have Covid symptoms or suspect they have the virus must stay out of school. This is an absolute must so as to reduce the threat of the spread of the virus. Any child that becomes unwell will be isolated near the office area and parents will be requested to collect them immediately.

It should also be noted:

- Symptoms of Covid-19 include: high temperature, cough, shortness of breath or breathing difficulties, loss of smell, of taste or distortion of taste. Any student that has Covid symptoms must not attend school – instead they are to phone their doctor and to follow HSE guidance on self-isolation;
- A parent or student is not to attend school if they have been identified by the HSE as contact for a person with COVID-19 and to follow the HSE advice on restriction of movement;
- A student that develops COVID symptoms at school are to bring this to the attention of one of the teaching staff who will send them to the office area where office staff will contact home. Under no circumstances are students to text home. No visitors are allowed to the school without a prior appointment or invitation from the school;
- All students who leave school with suspected Covid symptoms must immediately contact their GP and have a Covid test. Students can only return to School following a negative Covid test result.
- The School should be contacted immediately if a student is diagnosed with Covid-19.
- All visitors to the school during the day will arrive by prior arrangement with the Principal and will be received at the main office area;
- Students are not to congregate close to each other or in large groups so as to decrease interaction. Physical distancing between students and students, staff and staff as well as staff and students will also be observed. Social physical contacts such as hugs and handshakes are not allowed;
- Students should avoid sharing personal items. Where teaching and learning involves use of keyboards or tablets, the contact surface of the device will be cleaned at the end of each class and hand hygiene encouraged;

Uniform Reminder for September 2021

As you are aware the uniform jumper was updated and the new school jumper introduced on a phased basis two years ago so as to allow for minimum financial impact on parents.

The phased basis worked as follows - new jumpers compulsory for:

- All new 1st years in September 2019
- All new 1st years in September 2020 and
- All students in September 2021

I therefore wish to remind parents and students that from September 2021 – the new uniform jumper will be compulsory for ALL students in all year groups. The Board of Management have also instructed all future uniforms stocked in shops to be of a single high quality jumper type (70%/30% - acrylic/wool combination) so as to ensure they are long lasting.



Guidance Department

Covid-19 has not taken away Leaving Cert dreams, career ambitions or potential. This year's students have once again demonstrated extraordinary resilience as they engaged in online learning and maximised their tuition time. The unique option to sit the Exam AND receive Accredited Grades ensures students get a fair opportunity to perform to the very best of their ability. Students must continue to work positively with teachers in the final few weeks and they should take time to fully research all their options; College, Apprenticeships, Traineeships, PLC, Teagasc courses etc. Students must check entry requirements, course content, possible careers and always ensure they have a back-up "Plan B".

A few final items for the "to do" list; - secure accommodation, apply for the SUSI Maintenance Grant in April www.susi.ie and take note of the CAO "Change of Mind" facility that opens on May 5th and closes on July 1st.

I am available to support and encourage each student and I look forward to witnessing and sharing their success.

Best of Luck in the final term!

Jeanette Griffin.



IMPORTANT WEBSITES:

www.qualifax.ie

www.cao.ie

www.careersportal.ie

www.susi.ie

(Essential Course Search Engine)

(CAO information and Application)

(Essential Course and Career website)

(Maintenance Grant Application)

IMPORTANT DATES:

Change of Mind facility Opens

(free) 5th May 2021

Change of Mind facility Closes

1st July 2021

Post Leaving Cert Courses.....

Apply February 2021 – August 2021

SUSI Maintenance Grant.....

Apply April 2021 – July 2021

