



Welcome

Hello and welcome to the first newsletter of the 2021-22 school year. I especially want to welcome parents and guardians who are new to the Tarbert Comprehensive School community.

It is my hope to have a Newsletter like this sent to you 3 times a year. It is designed to keep you informed on various matters in our School. A more current and regular snapshot of our School can be gained by downloading the VSware app to your smartphone or by consulting the School website. I encourage all parents and guardians to regularly stay in touch through these outlets.

The first half term has flown by since our return in August. I want to compliment all involved for making the school reopening a success. 86 new first years joined us this year. These students have already settled into the School and are a welcome addition to our student body.

Slowly but surely School life is returning to near normal. That said – we continue to be cautious in our approach to school life so as to protect the health and wellbeing of all who learn and work here.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Mrs Mary McGillicuddy (Chairperson),
Ms Ann Flavin,
Ms Maria O’Gorman,
Mr Stephen Goulding,
Ms Niamh Wall,
Professor Michael Walsh,
Mr Kevin O’Keeffe,
Mr James Connolly,
Sr Frances Day,
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.

Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2021



Staff illness and a lack of substitute teachers

As we are in the season of more widespread illness and continued caution in relation to Covid symptoms, it is important to realise that staff absences are unavoidable. What is different this year however is the lack of available substitutes to replace those absent. On a number of occasions this year alone we have been hugely stretched as a School as regards cover.

I want to reassure parents that the school makes all efforts to replace absent teachers – firstly with teachers qualified in the subject both within the school or externally. However more often than not in the current climate, it is exceptionally difficult in finding qualified teachers to substitute. It should be noted that this is a national issue affecting schools at primary and post primary level. Students and parents should therefore expect disruption in relation to unavoidable staff absence for the next few weeks. As always we will do our utmost to minimise any loss of tuition.

Year Heads/Co-ordinators

If you have any concerns around your child then you should contact your child's Year Head in the first instance. Naturally from time to time there will be settling problems at school, indeed there may equally be issues at home affecting your child, in any year group, therefore it is vital that we are let know if there are any concerns or difficulties; no matter how small they may appear.

The Year Heads for the academic year 2021-22 are:

1st Years – Ms S Dillon

2nd Years – Ms E Fitzgerald

3rd Years – Mr J. Dore

TY Co-ordinator – Ms M. Hogan

LC1 & LCA1 – Ms R. O'Donoghue

LC2 & LCA2 – Ms S. Fitzgerald

LCVP Co-ordinator – Mr P. McElligott

You may contact any of the above by telephoning the school office. All members of staff have their own 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 (Ms Yvonne O'Connor), Deputy Principal and Principal may be contacted.

Coronavirus COVID-19



School Procedures

All matters Covid related are available to Parents/Guardians on the School website.

Please visit www.tarbertcomprehensive.ie

Actions by parents and students to minimise the Risk of Introduction of COVID-19 into Tarbert Comprehensive School (see full list on the school website):

- 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;
- Any 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;
- Any 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;
- Students are asked to have at least 3 cloth masks available daily. This allows students to rotate the use of their mask every couple of hours;

School Calendar/ Parent Teacher Meetings

The school calendar 21-22 is available to view and print from the school website under Policies & Publications. The calendar includes holidays, other school closures and important dates to remember. My advice is for parents to print it off and keep it nearby.

Parent Teacher meetings have resumed this year. It is always our preference to host these meetings in person and face to face but that may not always be possible. The Department of Education has yet to publish guidance on the matter. While the LCA2 and LC2 meeting ran in person very successfully on November 8th last - this may not operate for other year groups. Guidance and instructions on the format of the remaining meetings will be issued to the parents of that year group(s) a few days in advance. Please note that the TY meetings are staggered so as to balance overall numbers and are on separate dates.

The remaining meetings this year are;

- 3rd Year Thursday 25th November 2021
- LC1/LCA1/TY1/TY2 Tuesday 7th December 2021
- 2nd Year Tuesday 11th January 2022
- 1st Year & TY3 Thursday January 27th 2022

New Junior Cycle

Junior students now study the JCSA (Junior Cycle Student Award). The phasing in process is now complete and all students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year are completing the new Junior Cycle in all subjects.

At the end of their exams students will get a certificate called the JCPA – Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. With new courses come new forms of assessment and new ways of teaching. Our 2nd year students will undertake their first CBAs (Classroom Bases Assessments). The emphasis here is on continuous assessment. The assessment will take many forms, depending on the individual subjects, ranging from written work to oral or visual presentations/projects. The aim of the CBAs is to give the students an opportunity to showcase and get credit for skills developed in subjects outside of the traditional exam.

The grading for the CBA's will be the following:

- Exceptional
- Above Expectations
- In Line with Expectations
- Yet to Meet Expectations

The assessment of these will appear in the Christmas/summer reports along with end of year exam grades. They will also appear on your child's JCPA which will be presented to the year group in the academic year following their Junior Cycle exams.

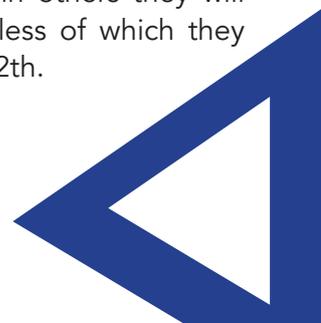
When in 3rd Year these students will also undertake a second CBA in each of these subjects. The following dates and Junior Cycle/CBA information for parents are all available on the school website, found under Junior Cycle section. (There are changes to this for the current 3rd years due to school time missed last academic year).

2nd Year CBA1

| Subject | Window for completion (in Tarbert Comprehensive) |
|-----------------|---|
| Business | November 22nd - December 17th |
| History | November 29th - December 17th |
| Visual Art | January 10th- May 6th |
| Home Economics | January 10th - March 25th |
| Geography | January 10th - January 28th |
| Engineering | January 10th- January 28th |
| Mathematics | February 28th - March 19th |
| Graphics | February 28th - March 19th |
| English | March 8th - March 26th |
| Science | March 8th - March 26th |
| Wood Technology | April 25th - March 13th |
| French | April 25th - May 13th |

AT's or Assessment Tasks are also completed in 3rd year. It is a written task completed in class time (double class) and is sent away to the SEC for correction. The task is specifically linked to the 3rd year CBA so that students are comfortable and familiar with the topic. The AT is worth approximately 10% of the final grade in most subjects.

Due to Covid-19 this year's 3rd Years are not required to complete a second CBA or an Assessment Task. In some subjects they will complete CBA1 (may have been missed from last year) and in others they will complete CBA 2 instead. Regardless of which they complete the final date is March 12th.



3rd Year CBA

| Subject | CBA Window for completion |
|---|--|
| Graphics/Wood Technology/ Engineering/ Home Economics/ Visual art | Being completed as part of 3rd year Project |
| Maths (CBA1) | Completed in September |
| Irish | November 29th – December 17th |

All students in the new JCPA also have other areas of learning. So the more your child is involved in School related activities the better – such as being involved on the School football team, choir, young scientist, student council etc. Students from 1st year will keep a log of what they do – by 3rd year this is verified and recorded by the School and acknowledged on the official results.

All JCPA students must also study the area of Wellbeing – this is a combination of SPHE, CSPE, PE and other aspects of care that the School offers. In second year for example, Tarbert Comprehensive computer classes will also contribute to wellbeing as students will examine the notion of digital wellbeing – so that students are aware of appropriate online behaviour, dangers online etc.

Finally students will have the normal sit down exams in June of 3rd year. However the final grades have also been changed. A, B and C grades are being phased out. From now on students will have the following descriptors:

| GRADE | RANGE(%) |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Distinction | ≥90 to 100 |
| Higher Merit | ≥75 and <90 |
| Merit | ≥55 and <75 |
| Achieved | ≥40 and <55 |
| Partially Achieved | ≥20 and <40 |
| (not graded) | ≥0 and <20 |

All in all the changes are exciting and we will keep you up to date with developments.

For further information please go to www.curriculumonline.ie

New JC and subjects studied outside of School

Parents should be aware that students must study a minimum of 8 subjects and maximum of 10 for the new JC.

Where a student wishes to undertake a subject outside of the recognised school setting, then Parents need to be aware that:

- Students who choose to study a subject outside of their school cannot complete the requirements for the Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) and Assessment Task;
- Subjects undertaken outside of a school setting count as part of the maximum of 10 subjects for certification.

In other words it is now virtually impossible for students to take on an extra subject outside of their own school under the New JC.

Child Safeguarding Statement

Parents are directed to the School website under the policies section in order to view the School Child Safeguarding Statement. All students, staff and students of the School should be aware that Mr Richard Prendiville is the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for all child protection concerns in the School. Ms Leila Moloney is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP). The full Statement and Assessment is available on the School website.

School Visitors and Parental arrivals

Please be aware that walk-in parental visits to the School are prohibited. Visitors must come by prior appointment or from contact through the School office. Parents/Guardians of an ill student will be contacted via the School office.

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 co-operation is therefore vital in this regard.

Leaving Certificate Results

Congratulations to the class of 2021 who received their excellent results in September. A statistical analysis shows that our school is yet again well above the national averages in the point's race. I am also really pleased with the high number of H1 grades achieved this year. On average students received almost 67 points more in Tarbert CS for their top 6 subjects than the national average. Overall 11.6% achieved over 600 points compared to 5.7% nationally, 42% of students got over 500 points compared to 27% nationally while 72% got over 400 points.

I am very proud of these results that are a remarkable testament to the comprehensive, mixed ability, co-educational ethos that infuses this school. I wish to congratulate the students and teachers on the quality of these results.

This year our highest achieving students were Camilla Bunce, Ciaran MacNamara and Ciara O'Donoghue who achieved a H1 in all of their subjects and achieved the maximum 625 points. We wish them and indeed the entire class of 2021 well in their future studies and careers.



Book Grant

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. It is hoped that these grant forms will be processed as soon as possible.

From time to time families can experience

financial hardships. 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 whereby 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 Mr Prendiville, Ms Moloney or Ms O'Connor, Chaplain, and the matter will be dealt with sensitively and in total confidence.

Student Insurance

Parents should be aware that we pay accident insurance for all our students. We pay this from the parental charge 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 the Insurance Policy. Claim forms are available from the School Office.

Christmas Exams, school reports & V\$ Ware

Christmas/Autumn Exams ran over a two week window from November 15th to 26th in the form of class tests. Students have been reminded about the importance of these Christmas exams as a key stepping stone in their State Exams preparation and as an indicator on their progress in school to date. Exam results will not be posted home – instead they can be retrieved online through V\$ware. By now all new parents have been issued their V\$ware login details. V\$ware is the schools computerised administration system. All school reports are available to view online on V\$ware for your child or your children. Please feel free to contact the school if there are any issues concerning access or viewing these reports. Naturally the onus is on parents to keep their login details secure. In no way should login or password details be shared with other families. The school will text home all parents to alert them as to the availability of the results online. It is my hope results will be available to view from mid-December 2021.



V\$ware can now be downloaded as an app on all Apple and Google devices - use it to view attendance, results or indeed to explain your child's absence. The app is very user friendly, easy to navigate and accessible on all smartphones/tablets.

If you have difficulty going online or have internet problems at home and cannot view these results – then please contact the School and we will make alternative arrangements for you.

Pre Exams and Whole School Spring Exams 2022

Pre Exams for Junior and Leaving Cert students as well as formal in-house exams for all other year groups begin on February 1st 2022.

The cost of the Pre-Exams will be made known to parents in January. The cost will be capped if you have more than one child doing pre exams this year. The money is being collected by the secretaries in the main office whereby a receipt will be issued and is due before Friday January 28th 2022.

The Pre Exam form will be given to students of exam classes in early January with full details. As with all matters financial, please feel free to contact myself or Ms Moloney around any concerns or difficulties you may have and the matter will be dealt with the upmost of sensitivity and discretion.



Guidance Department

The final year of school is one of the busiest and most challenging times in a young person's life. While studying, there is the added stress of having to decide the next step on the career journey. Students must work positively with teachers in the weeks and months ahead - success is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration! They must take time to fully research all their future options (check entry requirements, course content, possible careers) and always ensure they have a back-up "Plan B". Students should call to the Guidance Office to book their individual appointment slot and regularly consult the Guidance Notice Board and their individual school e-mail for up-to-date information. LC2's will have Guidance classes again in the coming weeks to cover CAO applications, "Hear" and "Dare" Schemes, SUSI Maintenance Grants, Apprenticeships, PLC's and other training options.

Colleges are hosting Open Days - mostly virtual - (full calendar is available on "Qualifax" and the "Careers and Education News" website). The new Leaving Certificate Grading Scale with Revised Points is highlighted for your attention. Also listed are some very important websites and key dates.

Covid-19 has not taken away dreams, career ambitions and potential, I look forward to working with students and offering every possible support and encouragement going forward.

Best of Luck for the year ahead!

Jeanette Griffin.

TCS Guidance Department - Key Dates 2021 - 2022

CAO - Application Facility Opens for 2022 05/11/2021

Discounted CAO Application Fee (€30) available up to 20/01/2022

Normal Closing Date for CAO Application (€45 fee) 01/02/2022

Apply for HEAR & DARE online – (as part of your CAO application) – tick box by February 1st 2022

HEAR/DARE Application Information Session will be hosted live online by Scheme Administrators on Saturday 8th January 2022

Closing Date for Final Completion of Online DARE / HEAR forms (on CAO website) 01/03/2022

DARE / HEAR Supporting Documentation to be posted and must arrive in CAO 15/03/2022

CAO - Online Change of Mind (free) Facility becomes Available 05/05/2022

CAO - Change of Mind Closes 01/07/2022

PLC Applications Open from January/ February 2022

SUSI Maintenance Grant Applications open April 2022

Start Date for the 2022 Leaving Certificate Examinations 08/06/2022 State Examinations Commission

IMPORTANT WEBSITES:



| | |
|--|---|
| www.qualifax.ie | (Essential Course Search Engine) |
| www.cao.ie | (CAO information and Application) |
| www.accesscollege.ie | ("Hear" & "Dare" Schemes) |
| www.fetchcourses.ie | (FET includes Apprenticeships, Traineeships, PLC courses) |
| www.careersportal.ie | (Essential Course and Career website) |
| www.ucas.com | (Study in England) |
| www.studentfinance.ie | (Grant Information) |
| www.susi.ie | (Maintenance Grant Application) |

All College and PLC Websites e.g. U.L., UCC, MIC, MTU etc

| Higher Level Grades | Higher Level Points | % Bands | Ordinary Level Grades | Ordinary Level Points |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| H1 | 100 | 90-100% | O1 | 56 |
| H2 | 88 | 80-89% | O2 | 46 |
| H3 | 77 | 70-79% | O3 | 37 |
| H4 | 66 | 60-69% | O4 | 28 |
| H5 | 56 | 50-59% | O5 | 20 |
| H6 | 46 | 40-49% | O6 | 12 |
| H7 | 37 | 30-39% | O7 | 0 |
| H8 | 0 | 0-29% | O8 | 0 |

Bonus Points will continue for Higher Level Maths (at grade H6 & above)

| Revised <u>LCVP</u> Points | | | |
|----------------------------|----|-------|----|
| Distinction | 66 | Merit | 46 |
| | | Pass | 28 |