



JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

OLD CONNA, FERNDALE ROAD, RATHMICHAEL, CO. DUBLIN.

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11th February, 2018

I hope your children are enjoying the mid-term break and I would like to take this time to share a few notices with you.

Philosophy Themes

To provoke discussion and thought, some of the themes for the past few weeks have been:

Can you let go?

Are you awake?

Who do you trust?

For more information about the assembly themes please click [here](#).

Child Protection

The Children's First Act, 2015 and the recent Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children published in 2017 places new statutory obligations on all teachers and schools. It also requires the school to produce a Child Safe Guarding Statement by March which will replace the existing school Child Protection Policy. To ensure all teachers and school personnel receive training in the new legislation, the Department of Education and Skills has requested schools close for two half days.

To this end, I would like to notify you that on

Wednesday, Feb 28th, the school will closed at 12.40pm instead of 2.00pm and on

Friday, March 16th, the school will close at 12.40pm instead of 3.40pm.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation with this.

Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.

As part of the new Junior Cycle, each student will receive, on completion of 3rd year, a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement. This will document, in addition to the exam results, other areas of learning and standards achieved in continuous assessment tasks and short courses. Our Transition Year students completed their reflections before their trip to India and on their return will receive their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement Certificates.

Substitute Teachers

You may have heard recently in the news about the shortage of teachers in the secondary school sector. This has not really affected the school until recently when Mr. Telford went to India with the Transition Year students. Despite much endeavour, we were unable to find one teacher to cover all of his French classes. Classes did continue, however in a few cases, the teacher covering the class would not have been a specialist in the language. Going forward, we will put measures in place to ensure that if any

subject learning has been missed, students will have the opportunity to catch up.

Strategic Plan

The school is currently formulating a plan for the future development of the school. Your input is much appreciated and if you would like to get involved in the process please let me know.

Transport

When announcing the move to Old Conna last year, the commitment was given to provide transport free for the first year. Currently discussions are taking place to see if this will continue for another year or if there will be a charge. Regardless of these discussions, please note that the same transport routes currently on offer this year will also be in operation for the next school year. If you would like to be part of the parent transport sub-committee looking at these issues, please let me know.

Astro-pitch

It is with great delight that we can announce that a new surface is being ordered for the astro-pitch. This will be ready after Easter. This will be a fantastic addition to the Old Conna campus as it will facilitate the playing of hockey, football, tennis, basketball and other sports all year round. In practical terms, this will mean that nearly all of our Physical Education classes will take place on site in Old Conna and that most of Wednesday afterschool sport will also take place in Old Conna.

Policies – Catering, Admissions

The Board of Management has recently reviewed and approved two policies: the Catering and Admissions Policy. Please note that if for medical reasons, a child needs to bring a packed lunch, a packed lunch form needs to be completed and returned to the Deputy Principal at the start of each term. Otherwise it is expected that all students will eat the freshly made food provided every day. Both the Catering and Admissions policy can be found on the school website [here](#).

In addition, please note that we will be circulating shortly forms to all students to ensure that we have the most up-to date list of food allergies.

BOM Agreed reports

The most recent Board of Management Agreed reports are now available on the website. Please click [here](#) if you wish to read them.

Evolving Family Workshops

The last of the Evolving Family Workshops took place on Saturday Jan 27th. The topic was Philosophy Stories for Children and over 70 people registered for the event. The series was a great success and we hope to continue the workshops next year.

Learning and Teaching

Currently we have two areas of focus: feedback and literacy.

With feedback, we are looking at the way feedback is given, the types of feedback and the strategies that help students act on feedback. Asking students to complete reflections on their November exams and talking about these reflections at the class-

teacher meetings in January was one example of initiatives in this area. For the exams that just finished last week, each student will receive a cover sheet describing an area of strength and of improvement. We hope this initiative will develop in our students the habit of reflection and increase the rate of learning.

The other area of focus is literacy. The particular focus we have is in increasing student confidence about speaking aloud in class. We intend to conduct further surveys later in the year to determine if the various strategies being employed have raised the levels of confidence in speaking.

Exams

The February exams for all students have just finished. Reports on progress will be ready for most students by the beginning of March. However the exam year students may have to wait a little longer as exams have been sent out to be externally marked.

Junior Cycle Wellbeing Course

Mr. Kortenhorst led the student trip to south India as part of their Well-being course. For two weeks they experienced the daily school life of students in India. To read some observations of the trip please click [here](#).

Transition Year Update

Our Transition Year Students have just returned from India where they have been teaching English to 100's of school children. To see some pictures from India please click [here](#).

TY Information Evening for 3rd year parents and students

We invite you to an information evening on the Transition Year program for next year. The information evening takes places on **Wednesday Feb 28th, 7.30 pm**. On the evening our Transition Year Coordinator Mr. Timothy Telford will outline the programme for next year. In addition you will also meet some current students reflecting on their Transition year experiences. For more information about the student showcase last December please click [TY Showcase Night](#).

Sports Update

The past few weeks has been a very busy one with great participation in Ultimate Frisbee, athletics, soccer and hockey. Our girl's Ultimate Frisbee teams travelled to Cork for the Murray Cup competition and came 4th overall, our athletics team competed very admirably in the East Leinster Cross County Championships (see [here](#)) and our girls' and boys' hockey teams have competed very successfully in their respective leagues.

Summary of Events coming up

School Re-opens – Monday Feb 19th

Early School Finish (Child Protection Training) – 12.40pm, Wednesday Feb 28th

TY Information Night – 7.30pm Wednesday Feb 28th

Philosophy Week – Monday March 5th

Early School Finish (Child Protection Training) – 12.40pm, Friday March 16th

Seachtain na Gaeilge – Monday March 12th

End of School Term – Friday March 23rd

A philosophical thought for the day

“The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man's determination”.
- Tommy Lasorda

Yours warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Declan Kelly".

Dr. Declan Kelly

Principal

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