



23rd October, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

We have arrived at the end of our first half term of the new academic year. It has been a challenging and constructive learning curve for the whole school community. We have all had to reimagine most aspects of the usual practices in school and embrace new ways of being leaders of learning both inside and outside the classroom. Despite the varied challenges we have all worked collaboratively to become solution focused and devise new ways for the new norms.

Our student body has assisted us every step of the way. When asked to stay apart, to fix a mask or hand sanitise they have obliged willingly. We put a strong emphasis on the sense of community in the school and each student's individual responsibility towards others. Time and time again our students have shown that strong sense of social responsibility which is a valuable life lesson and an important byproduct of the world we all now inhabit. Our students are learning also that their world is ever changing and that they must adapt, be solution focused and develop resilience. These life skills will stand to each and every student as they navigate their way through this changed landscape supported by school and home.

This positive attitude from our student body has allowed classes to resume with a focus on revising material done last term and moving the curriculum forward to where it should be. Students seem happy to be back in a school routine and delighted to socialise with their friends at break and lunch, keeping appropriate social distance. Every space in the building is in use as all halls, prefabs and the gym are now classrooms. The students and teachers have finally got to grips with the one way system and we can all find our way from one point to another though it can take quite a bit longer.

Learning continues apace and we are also ready if there is a return to remote teaching and learning. Each student has a Google Classroom in every subject and they have all been set assignments on them to ensure they can manage the system. Our 1st Years have been given extra digital support to assist them learn new digital skills. I spoke to all the 1st year earlier this morning on a Google Meet to ensure that they knew how it works.

All around us in OLS life continues with a sense of energy and positivity. Lunchtimes are a hive of activity between the library activities, pods out training on the hockey pitch, and

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different club meetings. Maths Week engaged the whole school and the 6th Year counsellors are currently leading the school through a new competitive inter house cup which focused on student merits for the month of October. Study Skills Week assisted students focus on the most effective way for each person to study and lots of students won study hampers after they submitted their sample study plans. The Student Council is growing in strength and have organised today's fancy dress raising funds for our continuing School Facilities fundraiser to replace the astro turf pitch and also funds for the Council to develop the student voice. They even put together a festive Halloween flash mob to show to the school.

The house competition to design the logo for each houses' tee shirt brought forward a rich display of talent and the final designs really show the special place House holds in our school community.

Our TYs experienced a new style of work experience with many working remotely from home with their parents. We will be very interested to see how they got on. Our new TY leadership initiative LIFT which was introduced last year brought immediate success with the nomination of 2 students for LIFT awards. We were delighted to watch the awards ceremony online and see one student highly commended and the other student win her category. Both are exceptional achievements in the school's first year of involvement.

Our school collection for local nursing homes is very impressive and the letters that different classes are writing to residents of the nursing homes reminds us all that we must ensure that we support those in our community who need it most.

Gael Linn visited the school to present the Coiste Gaeilge with the Gaelbhratach award for all their work promoting Irish throughout the community stages and they will represent OLS in January.

The promotion of STEM continues with lots of groups supported in their project submissions for the BT Young Scientist award. We are delighted that 3 projects made it through the initial stages.

Our 6th Years have embraced gardening and have taken over the roof garden which is gradually taking shape. They enjoyed a 6th Year breakfast in the school grounds this morning organised by their 6th Year leaders as a well earned break from their hard work in the classrooms.

We all look forward to Reading Week when we return after the mid term break , which we mark with different literary activities and competitions and a reminder to all students to pack their novels to read throughout the week.

Please take the time to read the October newsletter which will be released on the school APP later, which gives a flavour of the busy life of the school and of how well our students have adjusted to being back to school. OLS is not only about education in the classroom, it

places as strong a focus on opportunities to develop outside of the classroom and you can read lots of examples of this in the newsletter.

Whilst life in Level 5 has become narrower in many aspects for society, life in school continues to be broad and educationally enriching.

We will soon welcome some of our class of 2020 back to the school as we also prepare to host the November 2020 Leaving Cert exams.

Winter Uniform

We have been extremely lucky with the weather to date and our students have been able to get outside every break and lunch. However we are aware that this will not always be the case. Going forward for the Winter term students will have the option to wear their full PE uniform every day or their full school uniform with tights. No black leggings are allowed. Layers are very important so please ensure that your daughter will be warm enough throughout the day.

Covid Reminders

Now that we have moved to Level 5 restrictions we appreciate that we must all play our part in keeping the numbers of Covid 19 suppressed as much as possible.

Please **do not send your daughter to school with any of the 4 symptoms;**


- A fever (high temperature- 38 degrees celsius or above)
- A cough
- Shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- Loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
-

Please **do not send your daughter to school:**

- **if a family member is being tested for Covid 19 or**
- **if your daughter is a close contact.**

I really appreciate your continued support as we continue to prioritise the health and safety of the whole community and your daughter's education as we journey together through these times.

Yours sincerely



Principal