



The Headmaster's Newsletter

02 March 2011

Dear Parents,

We are a community united in grief as we come to terms with the tragic death of our student Christopher Smith, aged 17.

Please remember in your prayers ...

Mrs. Doreen Cummings, wife of Brian Cummings, our Chairman of Governors, who is undergoing medical treatment.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of

Christopher Smith (13 MRL) who died tragically on 4th February. Please remember Christopher, son of Mr. M. Smith Head of Science, and his family in your prayers. They are very grateful for the many messages of support and condolence they have received.

Congratulations to ...

Jake Fitzmaurice, Y11, who has been selected for the Irish Exiles Under-16 rugby squad.

'Keep Kids Safe'

We have introduced a new and up-to-date Absence Reporting System at the College. The new system reads 'N' absence marks from the registers and automatically sends a text message/voicemail/e-mail to parents/carers. All Absence/Medical Appointment messages reported on the absence line are keyed into registers. Late pupils must sign the late book to avoid a call home.

Asthma

Many students at the College have been diagnosed with asthma. Please ensure that your son carries his inhaler with him at all times. We are happy to keep a spare

inhaler for him in the Medical Room. Please send it into College in a box, marked for the attention of the School Nurse, and clearly labelled with your son's name and form.

Car Parking

Anyone who parks illegally from 3.30-4pm risks deserved police action. If you insist on coming into Egerton Rd at the end of school make sure that you are parked **safely and legally**. **There is no road access to the College from 3.45-4.15pm**. Please ensure that YOU do not block our neighbours' driveways. There is plenty of parking available on Palm Grove and Manor Hill. I congratulate parents on the fact that the situation on Egerton Rd. is better than in any previous year.

Key Dates

18th Feb – NORMAL COLLEGE DAY.
21st-25th Feb. incl. – Half Term Break
Term resumes at 8.35am on Monday 28th February.

FOSA

Our next event will be a **Race Night on Friday 8th April**. Family tickets are available from the Office priced £10, including food.

Free School Meals

If you, or your spouse, are in receipt of Income Support OR Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance OR Guaranteed Pension Credit OR Child Tax Credit, with a total annual taxable income of **LESS THAN £16,190.00 BUT NOT RECEIVING WORKING TAX CREDIT**, you may be eligible to apply for free school meals and a school uniform grant (for Year 7 only). You should contact the Local Authority if you think you meet the above criteria.

Forgotten lunches PE kits

Please remind your sons that if they have left their lunch, PE kits or any other property at home to please go to Reception to check if it has been handed in by a parent. Items (marked with the boy's name) will then be left in the 'Collections Tray' for collection by them

Absence line

A further reminder – if your son is absent please call the direct line for absentees – **651 3576** – and leave a message **before 9.00 am** on each day that he is off school.

Hair Styles & Appearance

The College Policy is clear. Boys who have shaved heads will be sent home until their hair grows as will those with hair below the collar until it is cut. **No dyed or highlighted hair is allowed**. This rule applies equally to 6th Formers. I am the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes an acceptable haircut. **No earrings or piercings are allowed, including for 6th Formers.**

iPods/CD Players

A reminder of the College Policy. Boys SHOULD NOT bring these expensive items to College as we cannot guarantee their security. If a boy in Y7-11 openly brandishes one it is liable to confiscation. Any boy bringing a mobile phone to College does so at his own risk. Confiscated items will only be returned on Fridays after school. To reclaim an item, a pupil must bring a letter from a parent, which Mrs. Howlett or myself will countersign. Confiscated items cannot be reclaimed on any day other than Friday. Electronic equipment, including personal possessions, now plays an important part in student learning. However, it can be misused! I gently remind all parents that we retain the right to confiscate such equipment if we suspect misuse, such as inappropriate material being brought into the College or circulated.

Lost Property

If your son has lost uniform, kit, a coat or bag etc, do not immediately assume that it has been stolen or is lost forever!

Modern youth is utterly clueless in its inability to retain possessions (who loses their school trousers?!) and we have collections of lost property at the College & at the Games Fields. Please feel free to come & check.

Parents can do their bit by ensuring that your son's property is labelled or marked. Most of our collection is anonymous. Some boys have developed the bad habit of **leaving property on the Upper Yard** shelves throughout the weekend. Any lost property found on a Friday evening will be returned to its owners, along with a well-deserved sanction!

Sweet and Drink Selling

Any boy found doing this on the College site, or buses, will be excluded and his stock and ill-gotten gains will be confiscated and given to charity. This practice can lead to a trade in contraband, such as cigarettes, and worse! Schools are obliged to ensure that no sweets, fizzy drinks or chocolate are available on site, in keeping with the Healthy Schools agenda. Any family members found supporting these misdeeds will be reported to the education welfare authorities.

Key Stage Parent Governors

The Link Governors are:
Key Stage 3 (Y7-9) Mr J Greaves
Key stage 4 (Y10&11) Mrs J O'Gorman
6th Form (Y12&13) Dr J Oates
They can be contacted via the College website.

Sierra Leone Mission

Our Immersion Retreat Group of 10 6th Formers and 3 staff, **Mr Dowse, Mr Harris & Mr McGowan**, arrived safely in Freetown on Sunday 13th February. They are now in Makeni visiting schools including St. Francis and local Christian Brothers and projects. They return to Freetown at the weekend and arrive back in London on 21st February. They took 12 huge kit bags of materials with them for distribution to our partner schools. Thank you for your support and generosity.

Cyber Bullying

The College advises all parents to be vigilant regarding their sons' use of the internet. We have had to deal with some examples of on-line bullying during the past few months. Cyber bullying will be punished in the same way as other breaches of the Code of Conduct. Our sympathy is always with the victim.

Academy Status

As a High Performing Specialist School graded as "outstanding" by Ofsted we have been invited to become one of the government's fast track Academies. The Governing Body is investigating the implications of this status and we are consulting all stakeholders including parents. This would not affect our Catholic, Edmund Rice, ethos and our aim would be to avoid any unnecessary change. We will only proceed if we believe that the autonomy that accompanies academy status, and the funding arrangements, would enable us to further improve the education provided by the College. All parents were invited by letter to the Consultation Meeting on Thursday 17th February.

And Finally...

Jesus said: "I am the Resurrection. Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

Yours in Christ,

Headmaster