



Dear Parent/Carer,

1 of 4

Welcome back from the Christmas break. We wish you and your family every blessing, fulfilment and good health for the year ahead. We hope that you are all renewed and refreshed having started a new term. An especially warm welcome to the first full term for new teaching staff: Ms Geiss in Science, Mr Upton in RE, Mr Hassan in Business, Mr Vertigan in Economics and Ms Krenc in Geography.

Before we returned to school, the Church celebrated the feast of the Epiphany. The story of the Wise Men focuses on their difficult journey to find the infant Jesus. We are all on a journey in life and for some of young people, especially those in Year 13 and Year 11, it is a journey that comes to fruition shortly. It is an especially anxious time for some as they await for university offers.

The school continues to be an exciting environment in which to study and work. At half term the ski trip sets off for Austria. This term, the Brilliant Club visits Corpus Christi College and the debate team competes in Urban Debate league. On Friday we had a visit from one of our local MPs, Mr Jeremy Corbyn. We are fortunate to have the continued support of our local Parishes, and in particular St Joseph's so that we can continue to celebrate the sacraments and Mass.

It was good to again meet so many parents and carers at the 'First Friday' meeting last week. A range of topics were covered, some of which we have been able to respond to immediately, others which we are intending to do so shortly. The questions and discussions overflowed. One of the discussions at the 'First Friday' meeting was about how we can improve communication, and in particular receipt of letters home. There was a consensus that parents would rather receive letters by email rather than in hard copy and for whole school / group letters to be available on the website. With this in mind, there is an intention to move to this communication process. If you have not let the school know your email address yet, we ask that you do so now. If you do not have access to the internet, please let the office know and arrangements can be made for you to have a hard copy of letters sent. The school will review this change in communication during the year to ensure that it does have the desired outcome.

The drive to improve communication at the school has been assisted by the following IT based packages:

**'go4schools'** - Enabling you to access information regarding your son, including information on attendance, progress, achievement and behaviour.

**'show my homework'** - Enabling you to check what homework has been set and when it is due and

**'parent pay'** - Enabling you to pay for lunch as well as trips and visits. It also allows you to check what your son has eaten for lunch.

The feedback is that these programmes, mostly, assist the communication process at the school, although we understand that some parents may need more training on using them. The school is planning further support sessions to ensure you can access and understand the information available.

Finally, thank you for your good wishes for the New Year and for ensuring that your son has returned to school fully equipped for learning and looking smart. Please be mindful of the policy on coats, black only. Non uniform items brought into school will be confiscated. Some have returned to school with new hairstyles and facial hair. Can I remind everyone that our policy on uniform requires hairstyles/colours to be natural no extreme hairstyles or symbols cut into the hair or eyebrows and no facial hair.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mr A English', written in a cursive style.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ms J Heffernan', written in a cursive style.

Ms J Heffernan  
Executive Headteacher

Mr A English  
Associate Headteacher



**First Friday - 1th January 2019**

**Notes from the meeting with parents/carers**

**Prep Time:** There was a discussion on prep time and its value and purpose. It was good to be able to restate that this is an opportunity for your son to complete homework, attend a meaningful assembly, read and access the library or secure targeted intervention to support progress. It is also a time for the form tutor to speak with you child about progress, attendance, wellbeing concerns and support. Prep time is also a very useful time for students to prepare themselves for the day and be in the right frame of mind for school. Prep was generally viewed positively by parents and also in the recent School Council feedback. After the initial first week of teething trouble, punctuality has returned to the usual high standards. Initial feedback and evaluation of impact indicates that this is a valued addition to school life.

**Homework:** Parents expressed a concern about not all homework being shown on show my homework and lack of consistency with the setting of homework. This is noted and ensuring that homework is recorded on show my homework by staff will again be addressed. It was also noted that it needs to be clear what the homework is and the deadline for completion.

**Assessments/Targets:** Some parents suggest that they should not be too close together because boys become anxious and worried because they have not had much time to prepare. This was noted and that the school should publish a timetable on the website of not just when the assessment week is, but on which day's different assessment will take place.

**Targets:** A parent asked a question about targets and what course of action do the school take if a student has fallen below their predicted grade? Different action is taken depending on the extent to which a boy is falling behind and the perceived cause of this. Quality first teaching is important, and full engagement from the students. In addition there is targeted intervention, review meetings and letters from department or the HOY. Where concerns continue, there is a more detailed special programme.

**Communication:** Another parent was concerned about the lack of communication between staff and parents especially when it comes to assessments, targets and levels of their son's progress. Parents would like more communication so that they are aware of what is happening in their son's education at different points of the year. As stated above, a calendar of all assessments will be on the website and that parents are kept informed and updated about the progress of their sons. This will also be assisted by access to 'go4schools' and parents evenings.

**First aid:** One parent expressed a concern about the first aid in the school and communication of incidents at school. It was noted that parents/carers should be informed and this will be followed up. The school has qualified first aiders in the school.

**Queues at lunchtime:** There was a concern that their sons not eating as the queues are too long and the quality of the food is not good enough. A new manager has started this week and this will be monitored, but there was a view that the food was of a good quality but that the boys were drawn to fast food off site. There was also a concern about the boys being allowed out at lunchtime and that this also leads to unhealthy eating. It was explained that the agreement to Year 10 leaving site was under review. Parents present supported this. Parents were reminded that they can access what their sons are eating on 'parent pay' - they can now see what their son's eat on a daily basis and keep an eye on what they are eating. It was agreed that the school would look into the length of the lunch time queues.

**Mobile Phones:** Parents discussed concerns about the use of mobile phones and social media, especially in terms of wellbeing and distraction from studying. Not only are they a distraction to learning, but also make students vulnerable to mugging on the streets. There was a very useful discussion on this and it was noted that there needs to be follow up with parents and students.