

## Newsletter for Parents

### An over-view of school development in 2019-2020

This newsletter is an opportunity to share with you some of the developments that have occurred in St Louis, Dundalk and highlight a few areas of school life we're thinking about changing and about which we'd love to hear parents' opinions.

---

### PE Gear & possible new school coat

We learned in September that local supplier CX Sport was closing its business and this created a supply issue for a number of students, especially for first year students.

After a number of months we were able to buy the final items from CX Sport and sell them directly to parents & students. We sold enough to cover the cost to the school. There are a number of odd sizes remaining but not enough to meet the demand for next academic year. As a result we plan to source another supplier before the summer. We will continue to accept the current PE gear as acceptable uniform as well as the new version which we hope will be as similar as possible to the current PE kit.

We would also like to consider changing the school coat from the green jacket to a navy, more fitted, waterproof coat. We will consult with representative students, parents, staff & members of the Board of Management before any change is implemented. A sample should be available over the next few weeks.



## Voluntary Secondary Schools-funding



# Government funds only 70%

Many people are surprised to learn that voluntary secondary schools like St Louis, Dundalk receive only 70% of the necessary funding required to run the school, from the state.

They do not realise that the "voluntary" aspect of the title refers to the necessary annual contributions made by parents to support the school by providing subject-related materials or funds to run the school building, utilities and other associated costs.

The Board of Management has just received the audited accounts for the 2018-2019 year. A report for parents is included in the accounts and available for those who wish to see it. We manage almost €500,000 per annum and are accountable for every cent that passes through the school. The salaries of the nine ancillary staff are subsidised by grants to the school but bills for water, gas, electricity and insurance are also very high, despite our best efforts to conserve energy at all times. Insurance alone cost €20,000 this year.

We regularly send text reminders to parents about some of the fees owed that are directly associated with particular subjects or activities. We have received almost €40,000 from parents this academic year but there is still a large shortfall of €70,000 at this time. The admin fee of €100 is very poorly supported but it relates to genuine costs related to providing access to the internet, wifi, chromebooks, paper, printing, telephone, post, the vsware management system and other admin costs.

Please consider paying some of the admin fee, everything can be paid in smaller installments online or in the office.

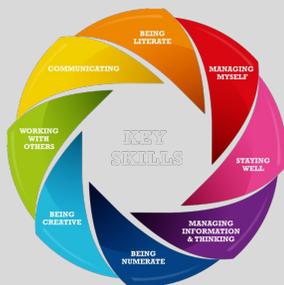
---

## Junior Cycle Reform



### Junior Cycle - a changed landscape for students in class

In an effective Junior Cycle classroom all students are active in class: questioning, probing, problem-solving, talking to their peers, evaluating their own progress against established, clear criteria.



We use a lot more data and information to measure progress and empower the students to take more and more responsibility for their own learning. Students, with a range of abilities, are known to each Teacher as an individual. We are moving away from spoon-feeding towards promoting the growth of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for the young person to learn and more importantly, how to learn in a world where information is available at the touch of a button but it may not be accurate or reliable.

New ways to assess progress is probably the most obvious change parents will see if their daughter is a Junior Cycle candidate. Students are assessed using "Assessment for Learning" practices. All assessments are seen as opportunities for feedback about how to improve. Sometimes the feedback will be generated by the student themselves about their own progress or through peer assessment. Teachers will help students to know what success looks like before they attempt to complete a piece of work and offer advice about how to reach the student's full potential. Students will complete Classroom-based assessments and Assessment Tests before completing shorter final exam papers after three years of study. All of these experiences support learning and skills.

As a result of the changes in Teaching & Learning, reporting has changed too and Teachers now offer specific advice for improvement when reporting to students & parents including conversations at Parent-Teacher meetings.

All of these changes are supported by international research and more importantly support student wellbeing. finally it is hoped that

a happier girl will learn better and feel more empowered and be more ready for the real world.

[Further information for parents re. Junior Cycle reform](#)



## Better attendance & smartphones in school - how can parents help?



### School Attendance

Promoting full attendance at school is one of the best ways you can support your daughter's

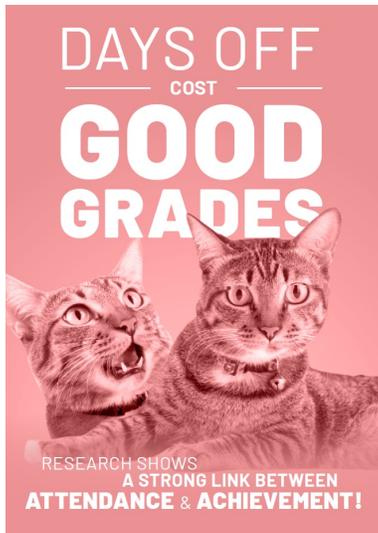


### Smart phones in school

We need your continued support to uphold the school's policy of banning the use of smartphones during the school day.

education and positive wellbeing. On average, over 50 students per day are missing from school. Some of these are genuine cases of illness but some students are permitted to leave school early for concerts etc. We urge you not to permit your daughter to miss school as each day missed means 9 missed lessons. There are only 33.4 weeks of school every academic year and so each day really counts!

We have clear evidence that girls who have a high rate of attendance also achieve higher grades in state exams.



We understand that a smartphone is a convenient way for you to contact your daughter during the day but access to a phone can also lead to distraction during lessons, cyber-bullying, access to inappropriate content, sharing of images, videos etc.

We provide access to the internet for learning through chromebooks so there is no valid reason to have a phone.

Acceptance of the school's code of behaviour is the first agreement made between enrolling students, their parents and the school's Board of Management. As a result, a breach of the school's rule on phones is considered a serious issue. The phone are confiscated and the student is detained for an hour after school.

Please help us keep students and staff protected from abuse by policing your daughter's use of her phone and actively supporting our stance in this aspect of school life. A school policy only works if it has the support of all the adult partners in the school community.

Phones are expensive, easily broken, lost or stolen.

[Links to relevant articles on school website here](#)

## Climate Action in action!

### Green School Committee

The School has a very active Green committee of over 50 students, lead by Teachers Ms J Mallon & Ms L Rice.

They won a national award in 2019 for water conservation and are currently working on earning a An Taisce Green Transport flag for the school. The project is supported by Louth County Council's Sorcha Brophy and was also entered into the SEAI "One good idea" competition. The team recently won the Leinster final and are looking forward next stage in April. Students and Teachers are being encouraged to ride their bikes to school.

A number of the committee are also working on Global Citizenship Education projects and have developed the annual Multicultural day into a week-long festival of events at break and lunch-time where students can learn more about each other's diverse cultures and practices.



## A Catholic School in 2020



Catholic Schools Week 2020

26 January – 2 February 2020

## Living in Harmony with God's Creation

Public School Living in Harmony with God Living in  
God Living in Harmony with our Neighbours Liv  
thers Living in Harmony with All Generations Liv  
rations Living in Harmony with the Earth Living  
arth Living in Harmony in our Catholic School Liv



We recently celebrated Catholic Schools Week and continue to promote the school's Catholic ethos through our positive relationships and good example. People often ask about the relevance of a Catholic education in modern Ireland but those of us who work in the school understand the powerful influence we are privileged to have on the young people who enter the doors every morning.

We welcome students of all faiths and none to St Louis every day. We teach them to be wise and kind to themselves, to others and to the planet. We act as witnesses of the Catholic faith and instil in them the values that have been passed from generation to generation in the hope that will leave school and go on to live happy, full lives.

## Extra-curricular opportunities for your daughter



- Rugby
- Rotary Leadership
- Soccer teams
- Debating - UCD
- Soroptimist Public Speaking
- Volunteering with local parishes
- Work Experience
- Chess
- Sports Day
- Active Healthy Living Week
- Multicultural Week
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Euroscola
- Search for a Star talent competition
- Art club
- Athletics
- Business- mini companies & Trade fairs
- Badminton - weekly
- Basketball teams
- Camogie team
- Drama- TY show March 18th-20th
- Young Scientist
- Trips to Zoo, planetarium etc
- Gaelic teams
- Green Committee
- Gardening

Please encourage your daughter to engage in some extra-curricular activities to boost self-esteem and develop skills necessary for the 21C

Students are asked to include " Other areas of Learning " on their Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement so it is important to develop the whole person as stated in our mission statement:

### Mission Statement

As a Catholic school, St. Louis Secondary School, Dundalk, aims to educate the whole person and to encourage the qualities of respect, truth, responsibility, happiness and excellence in a caring inclusive atmosphere.

### Aims of the school

To provide a social and academic environment which fosters learning

To strive to ensure that Christian attitudes and values are knit into the fabric of school life

To provide through the curriculum, teaching methods and allocation of resources, teaching and learning situations which enable all pupils to:

Develop their intellectual capacity to the full.  
Stimulate their curiosity and imagination.

- Golf
- Choir
- Orchestra
- Trad music
- Book clubs
- Mock Election
- Junk Koture
- Trips to galleries, the theatre, musicals...
- Trips abroad Madrid & New York in 2020
- Darkness into Light 7 other charity events
- Park Run 5km

We are always open to suggestions for new or alternative activities - encourage your daughter to talk to us about her views.

Develop their aesthetic awareness; assist in their physical and moral development, and acquire an appetite for further knowledge and skills in later life.

To prepare each pupil to be a responsible member of our democratic society, equipped to play an active part in its development.

To be a caring community in which the individual is given a sense of significance and importance and a consciousness of the needs of others.

To be a participating partner in the wider community, welcoming parents and other friends of the school to share in our work.

