

Our Ref: RS / AMCG  
Your Ref:  
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Date: 07/10/21



### Education and Families

Robert Smith  
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Dear Parent / Carer

### October Holiday Week begins Friday 8 October

- School closes tomorrow at 12.30pm for the October Holiday. Classes resume at 8.55am on Monday 18 October. Our Future Friday Programme will take place as normal on Friday 8 October.
- I wanted to thank you for your support with school uniform. We are not quite where we want to be yet, but we know it has been a difficult period. Each day we are asking young people who are not in full uniform to redouble their efforts. If you are unable send your child to school in the full uniform at this time for any reason – please let us know and we will discreetly provide the items of uniform your child needs. In particular I would ask your support regarding blazer and plain black shoes – this is where most improvement is required.
- As you know we have had ongoing positive cases of COVID19 in the school since August. Thankfully, in the vast majority of cases the young person concerned has been asymptomatic or slightly unwell. Cases have fallen off in the last few weeks and this pattern is holding up. We will keep you informed if there is any evidence of a school based cluster using the standard letter and the school website.
- We had hoped to begin to invite parents into the school building following the October holiday. However, the latest advice received by me on 5 October states: *“Parents/carers should continue to be discouraged from visiting school premises. Any strictly necessary visits must be risk assessed and agreed in advance. A maximum of 3 parents indoors and 10 parents outdoors are permitted at any one time, where it is deemed strictly necessary for them to be on-site.”* Unfortunately, we are therefore unable to hold in person parents’ evenings until a further update is received.

S2 Parents’ Evening was in the calendar for last week. I am aware that the event was really important for S2 parents as we still have never met them in person inside the school building. We are currently preparing an additional report on your child’s progress since August for S2 parents which we will send to you after the October holiday. You will also receive details of a phone appointment with your child’s pupil support teacher to discuss your child’s progress or any concerns you might have. You may also receive a telephone call from us inviting you into the building to discuss your child’s progress.

Given the ongoing uncertainty around dates when we might be able to invite you into the building; we have decided to offer all parents of all year groups the opportunity to attend an online parents’ evening where you will be able to have those important face to face discussions with your child’s class teacher. I know it is not ideal but if we begin the process now then we might be able to offer in



person events as the health situation improves. We will send you invitations, login details etc. in advance of the information evening. Upcoming parents' evenings are:

**S3- 2 November**

**S4 – 23 November**

**S1 – 2 December.**

S5/6 parents' evening is in the New Year. We will update you before then. In addition, we will look to provide an additional date for S2 parents to come to the school in person or take part in an online parents' evening – depending on the guidelines and advice in force.

- **Covid19 mitigations in place from 18 October 2021**

Face coverings on school transport

Enhanced school cleaning routines

Face coverings inside the building and classrooms unless exempt. Please remind your child to bring a face covering each day to school. This would also help cut down on the amount of discarded face masks around the school and the neighbourhood.

Physical distancing between adults, and between adults and young people remains in place at 2m

We will continue to encourage enhanced hygiene protocols for staff and young people, particularly regular handwashing

From October 18 we will no longer require to have staggered break, interval or finish times.

### **Vaping in school**

- I also wanted to let you know about an outbreak of vaping in and around the school, particularly affecting S1 pupils. We have taken the appropriate action and spoken to the parents of the young people involved and the police. It seems that the children are ordering the materials online and through social media. Adults are arriving in cars to meet the young people, collect the cash and hand over the materials. Very concerning. Some young people are spending all of their lunch money on these items. Others are selling the materials to other children. The police are investigating the matter. I would ask that you have the appropriate conversations with your own child. For the avoidance of any doubt - we consider the smoking of **any materials** on school grounds to be a very serious breach of school rules and will take action against any young person involved.

### **Patronal Feast Day Mass**

- His Lordship Bishop Toal will be saying Mass tomorrow in school to celebrate our patron's feast day. Unfortunately, we cannot invite the whole school to Mass or have any invited guests as we would normally do. S6 pupils and the Caritas Award Group will represent the whole school community. We attended the Caritas Award Commissioning Ceremony in Motherwell Cathedral together with all secondary schools from the diocese. It was a beautiful ceremony and the bishop spoke to the young people and teachers about the importance of devotion and prayer to Our Blessed Lady – today is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. We will remember all of you in our prayers at Mass tomorrow.

*"Prayer is to the spiritual life [of the school] what the beating pulse and the drawing of the breath are to the life of the body."* – St. John Henry Newman

I thank you for your ongoing support and best wishes during what has been a very difficult year and a half. If you need to contact us about anything please do not hesitate.

Every best wish

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Smith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Smith

Acting Head Teacher