

First Year Letter August 2018

August 2018

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

I hope you have had a relaxing Summer and that you enjoyed the wonderful weather.

It is that time of year again when we look forward to the new academic year encouraged and fortified by the outstanding Leaving Certificate results.

I congratulate the class of 2018 on their magnificent achievement.

- 17% of students achieved over 500 points (National Average 2017 was 11%)
- 38% achieved over 400 points (National Average 2017 was 35%)
- 88% achieved over 300 points (National Average 2017 was 60.5%)
- 66% of the Leaving Cert Applied Students achieved distinctions

As your daughter enters Secondary School it is an exciting time in your family. I hope that your daughter has an engaging and interesting year with us.

I look forward to working with you in the coming academic year, with a view to forming a successful home /school partnership, which will benefit your daughter's education and development. On a practical level, in working out this partnership between home and school, there are a number of points, to which I would like to draw your attention.

Tuesday 28th August

First Years will start school on Tuesday 28th August at 9am and will finish at 4pm. Seamus Whitty, who met with the students in May will deliver another workshop on Tuesday afternoon.

September Information/Consultation Evenings

There will be a First Year Parents' meeting on **Wednesday 19th September at 8pm.** The purpose of this meeting will be to highlight the priorities for your daughter for the year ahead. It will also give you an opportunity to meet with other First Year Parents.

Attendance/Punctuality

It is very important that students attend school every day. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of being in every class every day.

Arriving in good time for school allows a student to get organised for the classes ahead. The School will be open each morning from **8.00 a.m.**

Academic Success/Regular Study

Establishing good patterns and routines of work and study in September are very important. Academic success is built on consistent and regular study coupled with systematic revision, not just prior to exams but throughout the whole year.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing will cross the three years of Junior Cycle and build on substantial work already taking place in the school in supporting students' wellbeing.

The four main pillars of the junior cycle Wellbeing programme are Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Physical Education (PE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and guidance education. I will elaborate on the topic of Wellbeing at the parent information evening.

Choosing option subjects for Junior Cycle

Students in First Year will engage in taster modules in all option subjects in September and October. Students will then choose at the mid-term break their options for Junior cycle. A meeting for parents and students will take place in October.

Students leaving the school during the school day

Students who leave the school during the school day must sign out at the office and can only leave the building in the company of their parent(s). Students who wish to leave the school with an adult other than their parent, must inform the office staff who can then confirm the arrangement by phone with the student's parents.

A number of Leaving Cert students who are over 18 years of age can leave the building after signing out.

All students who arrive late in the mornings will meet with the Deputy Principal, Ms. Walsh. Students who come to school after the first class must sign in at the office and offer a **written explanation for the late arrival.** **Students who do not sign in are marked absent on the attendance system.**

School Reports

The school reports will be available to parents on the eportal system. You will receive login details that will allow you to view your daughter's timetable, her attendance and school reports on eportal through the school website.

You will receive a School Report after the Midterm Break in November, after the February exams and in June after the Summer exams

Parent Teacher meeting: Feedback to parents

The Parent Teacher meeting for First Years will take place on 16th January (Provisional date).

Financial Support toward the cost of the Book Rental Scheme

The Department of Education and Skills give all schools funding to support Needy Students. A needy student is defined as a student from a family where there is:

- Genuine hardship because of unemployment or short time working
- Prolonged illness of a parent
- Large family size with inadequate means
- Single parenthood
- Other family circumstances (e.g. alcoholism) indicating a similar degree of financial hardship

The Department of Education and Science guidelines divide such families into the following three categories:

- Families which are dependent mainly on social welfare payments
- Families on low incomes from employment (Such families should be in receipt of the Family Income Supplement (FIS) or beneficiaries under the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear scheme)
- Families which are experiencing financial hardship because of particular circumstances in the home Entitlement to a medical card is not necessarily an indication of eligibility.

Finance Matters

Sincere thanks to parents and guardians who continue to support the school financially. The payment plan scheme has been very successful, a large number of parents and guardians are availing of it. The school as previously indicated is under pressure financially so it is really important that monies due to the school are paid.

Voluntary Contribution

The Board of Management requests a voluntary contribution from parents. This money will go towards supporting activities for the girls for example Health Promotion Theme Weeks, guest speakers, and sporting activities.

The Board is requesting €100 per student and €150 per family as a voluntary contribution. This represents a cost of €2 per week. The activities provided to the students are excellent and must be funded.

Board of Management communication

Please note that the Board of Management Agreed Report is posted on the school website after each Board meeting.

Contact with the Year Head

The Year Head to First Year for 2018-2019 will be Ms. Margaret Walsh. I encourage you to contact her if you wish to discuss your daughter's progress or if you have any pastoral care concerns.

Book Rental Scheme

The books are the property of the school. Any books lost/damaged must be replaced by parents/guardians.

The books will be available to your daughter for collection on Monday 20th August 10-1pm and 2-4pm.

Behaviour Code

The purpose of the behaviour code is to provide, promote and maintain a safe, pleasant and positive learning environment. We want our school to be a place where both students and staff will be able to achieve their full potential. This code is a live and positive set of beliefs and actions that helps to ensure that the school and classroom are effective settings for learning and teaching.

The Code of Behaviour encourages and promotes good behaviour by ensuring that the students understand why the code is important. It stresses their part, as students, in making the code work. It is important that students can see that the code is implemented in a fair and just manner. The code establishes clear boundaries and rules for students while at the same time being inclusive.

Students are encouraged to make a worthwhile contribution to the school community through positive behaviour.

The behaviour code is firmly based on the need to have **self-respect** and **respect** for all other members of the school community. This respect fosters a positive attitude in all aspects of school life.

The Board will be reviewing this Policy on Tuesday 21st August. The reviewed Policy will be available on the website on Wednesday 22nd August.

Please download and sign the Behaviour Acceptance Form and return it to your Class Tutor, the first day at school.

I will be holding information/consultation evenings in September with the parents from each year group to discuss the priorities for the year ahead. These meetings will include discussions on the Behaviour Code.

Uniform.

The official school uniform is to be worn at all times. All personal items; e.g. jumper, should be marked clearly with owner's name. The school uniform consists of the following:

- 1. Yellow shirt.**
- 2. Brown trousers or Brown Knee Length skirt with black or brown tights.**
- 3. Dark Brown V-necked jumper with school crest.**
- 4. Pair of black or dark brown flat heeled shoes. Sneakers are **NOT** allowed except for P.E. class.**
- 5. Tie Optional (but if worn must be worn properly)**

The school recommends that students do **not** wear make-up. Excessive use of hair colouring and jewellery is not acceptable and students may be asked to remove it.

Internet Usage

The Board will be reviewing this Policy on Tuesday 21st August. The reviewed Policy will be available on the website on Wednesday 22nd August.

Please download and sign the school Internet Acceptable Use Policy Form and return it to your Class Tutor, the first day at school.

The Board of Management will be reviewing policies at the Board meeting on Tuesday 21st August. This policy will be available on the school website on Wednesday 22nd August.

Social Media Platforms

Presentation Secondary School has various Social Media platforms which you can follow us on and keep up to date with news and events.

Our website is www.presentationsecondarylistowel.ie

School Email: office@preslistowel.ie

Twitter account @pressec_pss

You can find us on Facebook under @PresSecListowel. We would appreciate a like, a follow or even a look at the website.

Listowel Races September 10th -14th September

The School will open from 9am to 12.30pm each day.

Road Safety outside the School gates

We received a number of complaints on an ongoing basis from members of the public regarding the behaviour of drivers and students outside the School in the mornings and evenings. Please park safely before students get out of your car. We are fortunate that there is adequate parking opposite the school. Can I ask parents not to park on the double yellow lines outside the school please.

Car Park

Can I gently remind parents that the school car park is limited to staff only between 8.30am and 4.30pm please. We have very genuine concerns about road safety issues on the main road following a number of complaints recently. We have two wheelchair car parking spaces that we would like everybody to respect.

Lunch time activities

We have a number of activities going on at lunch time - Board Games, Health and Fitness Club, Junior Cycle Science Club, recreational Badminton, Table Tennis, Choir, Book Club, Ciorcal Cainte, and Library activities just to mention a few. We encourage all of the students to go for a walk at lunch time, exercise is so vitally important to health and wellbeing.

Supervised Study

Supervised Study will begin on Monday 3rd September 2018. On Monday and Tuesdays it will commence at 4.15pm and finish at 6.15pm, for the remainder of the week it will run from 3.45pm to 6.15pm. It will cost €20 for the five days or €4 per day.

Students who are waiting for buses in the evenings can study in Ms. Muireann O'Sullivan's room

Any students who wish to remain in the school building after classes finish each day must remain in the Social Area for insurance reasons

Canteen

The canteen services provided last year were excellent. Surveys conducted with students indicated high levels of satisfaction with the service. The Health Promotion Committee, Home Economics Department and the Student Council were consulted on the menu offered with a focus on healthy options.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are *not* allowed in school, i.e. students should leave their mobiles at home. In the event that a student's phone is confiscated by a staff member, the parent/guardian will have to collect it from the school office.

Students who are ill, or in any other genuine/urgent situation, should come to the school office and the necessary contact with home will be made from there.

If for a reason a student has to bring her phone with her to school it must be handed into the office at 9am where it will be kept for the day and returned at the end of the school day. Students must sign in and sign out their phone. Students will be asked to place their phone in a zipped bag with their name on it. (Bags will be provided)

The Board will be reviewing this Policy on Tuesday 21st August. The reviewed Policy will be available on the website on Wednesday 22nd August.

Please download the Mobile Phone Policy Acceptance Form and return to class Tutor the first day at School.

School Trips

Please download the school trips policy acceptance_form and return to class Tutor.

School Insurance matters

Alliance have advised that all students must purchase the 24hr Insurance Cover, therefore, it is compulsory that all students have the 24hr cover.

I have been advised to inform parents that students who arrive on the school premises before 8.30am in the morning are the responsibility of their parents. School supervision technically begins at 8.30am.

Use of School Journal

The school journal is a very useful organisational tool. The Student Council reviewed the journal in May. We now have separate journals for First Years. I would ask you to encourage your daughter to develop good habits in relation to recording homework and completion of same. Please check and sign your daughter's school journal on a weekly basis.

Health

Parents of students with any **medical issues**, please contact me in relation to same.

Permission to go “up town”

First, Second and Third year students will **not** be allowed “up town” at lunchtime. Senior Cycle students will be allowed “up town” as a privilege. This privilege can be removed from a student at any time if any misbehaving occurs ‘up town’ at lunch time.

Student Council

I look forward to engaging with the Student Council again this year. Olivia Stack is our Head Girl for 2018-2019. A new Deputy Head Girl will be appointed in September. The Student Council is open to everybody who wishes to be involved.

Data Protection; Use of Pictures of Students in Publicity Literature 2018/19

Staff sometimes use photography/video in the classroom and to record such events as trips, projects, sports and competitions. Photographs and videos may be used on the school Social Media platforms and in Newsletters. Local media also cover school events.

The Board will be reviewing this Policy on Tuesday 21st August. The reviewed Policy will be available on the website on Wednesday 22nd August.

Please download the Data Protection Form and return it to your class Tutor the first day back at school.

Parents’ Association

The Parents’ Association AGM will be held at the start of the year. I encourage all parents to attend. The Association will be planning fundraising events for the year ahead.

School Self- Evaluation/School Improvement Planning

We will be concentrating this year on how we report and give feedback to students and parents as part of our school self-evaluation.

Wellbeing in Junior Cycle will be the focus of school improvement planning

Student Return Dates

Tuesday, 28th August	Return of First Year and Transition Year students 9.00am – 4pm
Wednesday, August 29th	Return of 3rd, 6thyr, 9.00 am – 3.20pm (Classes as normal for 1st Years & TY)
Thursday, August 30th	Return of 2nd, 5th, LCA 1 & 2 students 9.00 am. – 3.20pm (Classes for all students)

I hope that the coming year will be a happy and productive one for all of us. If I or my staff can be of any help to you, please do not hesitate to call us. I look forward to working with you throughout the year.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Eileen Kennelly

Principal

Email: Eileen.kennelly@preslistowel.ie

Check List for Return to School **2018-2019**

1. Behaviour Code Acceptance Form 2018-2019
Return to Class Tutor
2. Acceptable use Policy Internet Usage 2018-2019
Return to Class Tutor
3. Mobile Phone Policy Acceptance Form
Return to Class Tutor
4. School Trips Policy Acceptance Form
Return to Class Tutor
5. Respect and Dignity Policy (Anti-bullying Policy) Acceptance Form
Return to Class Tutor
6. Data Protection: Permission to use photographs and videos of Students
Return to Class Tutor
7. First Years return to school on Tuesday 28th August 9am – 4.00pm
8. All expenses to be paid please. Thank you