



Castlerea Community School

Castlerea, Co. Roscommon

Tel: (094) 9620177 / 9621013. Fax: (094) 9621016

June 2024

Dear Parent / Guardian,

As we reach the end of yet another school year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your support of our school this year and to compliment and congratulate all of our students on the many achievements during the year, both curricular and extra-curricular. We have had a very busy and successful year in school and you, as partners in the education of your children, deserve much of the credit for that.

The 2023/24 academic year has been a year of great progress for CCS. Our new AS rooms are now fully open and operational and this has been an enriching development for our whole-school community. Our new state-of-the-art Science labs were fully open for students and we are now about to begin work on a refit of our school library. CCS is a growing school that is constantly striving for improvement, adapting to the needs of our students and endeavouring to remain dynamic and energetic.

The 2023/24 academic year was marked by many successes, both in and out of the classroom, in areas such as sport, public speaking, STEM, technology, music and the arts, entrepreneurship, social innovation, the Irish language and many other areas.

It was also a year of whole-school activities and events, with our Wellbeing Week, Gaelbhreach and Lá Glas, Active Schools Week, Christmas events and Carol Service, not to mention our various trips and other such activities.

I wish to share our sincere congratulations and best wishes to the Leaving Cert Graduation Class of 2024. We support them as they look forward with hope to the positive opportunities and life experiences that await them and we encourage them to continue to learn, grow and progress with courage and optimism.

As we look towards the new academic year, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our incoming first year students as well as those who are joining us into other year groups. Undoubtedly this is a time of great change and can be daunting for you, but I have no doubt that you will experience a great sense of welcome and support from our whole school community as you begin to establish yourself and settle in over the coming months.

Contained in this letter are some important points to note as you prepare for the academic year ahead. You will also find a summary sheet of information attached with this email.

2024 – 2025 school calendar

Enclosed with this letter you will find a copy of the academic calendar for the upcoming year. Please ensure that you keep this safe as it will be an important reference for dates such as parent / teacher meetings and school holidays. While we strive to adhere to the dates agreed at this point, should any unforeseen circumstances arise which causes a date to be changed, you will be informed of such by text message.

Return to school dates

The dates for return to school are highlighted in the academic calendar. Please note that incoming 1st years and the newly appointed prefects return to school on Fri 23rd August 2023, from 9.00am until 1.15pm. Students will participate in an induction programme and team building and so, therefore, school books will not be required.

School Uniform

The 2024/25 academic year sees some changes to our school uniform. From this year on the boys' uniform will comprise navy trousers, blue shirt and navy crested jumper. There are no changes to the girls' uniform. Current 5th Year students who are not purchasing new uniform items may continue to wear the grey shirt and grey trousers this year, but all students purchasing new items are asked to purchase the new colours. Following consultation with students, the new school jacket is being introduced for the 2024/25 academic year. Students have already been provided with details regarding the purchasing of this jacket from the online store. Students may continue to wear the existing school jacket which they already have or can be purchased locally, along with the uniform.

Communication between school and home

Communication between school and parents/guardians is vital for the development of the students' academic success and this can be facilitated through our school administration app VShare (instructions included with email), through notes in the student journal, meetings, phone conversations or at our parent/teacher meetings. In the past the parent/teacher meetings have been very well attended and received very positive feedback in the aftermath. From 3rd to 6th year, students are invited and strongly encouraged to attend those meetings with a parent or guardian in order for their voice to be part of the conversation, help them to take ownership and responsibility for their learning and hear directly how they are progressing and how to further that progression. In the case of 1st and 2nd year students, parents and guardians are asked to attend with a list of their son/daughter/care's teachers and any questions or concerns they may have prepared in advance with input from the student.

VShare app:

All communication from school including information and reminders of school outings, weather events etc. will be via the VShare app. The free VShare app can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. Parents / Guardians have the facility to view their students' profile, attendance, results and reports at any time as well as submit absence or late notes and requests. You are requested to allow notifications for the app to ensure that any urgent messages can be received. Parents and students are reminded of the procedures for communication in the event of late arrivals or early departures in the accompanying information sheet. Information on how to set up and use the VShare App can be found on the following link: <https://support.vshare.ie/en/parent-app-overview>

Code of Behaviour

Our school Code of Behaviour is available to view on our website and I would urge you to familiarise yourself with its contents before the start of the school term. A synopsis of the code will be printed in the student's journal and you and your son/daughter/care will be expected to sign acceptance of this at the beginning of the school term. You are reminded that students must present in full school uniform each day and only the school jacket is permitted to be worn both inside the school and while travelling on school activities. A number of school uniform pieces have been left in school – both uniform, jackets and PE gear, and are available for collection from the bag racks before the new school year begins. After this time, they will be disposed of. We take great pride in the good behaviour and conduct of our student body and the reputation which we hold both locally and further afield and we look forward to another very successful year.

Mobile phones

The use of mobile phones is not permitted during the school day, unless under the direction and supervision of a teacher. **Mobile phones are not a requirement for school** and students are encouraged to leave them at home to avoid any difficulties with them. Communication home should be through the school office and not directly via a mobile phone. Where students bring phones to school, they are obliged to keep their phone in a Phone Locker pouch at all times throughout the day while on school grounds.

Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Scheme

Under the Junior Cycle Schoolbooks Scheme, which has been introduced by the government, all Junior Cycle students will be able to access free textbooks, workbooks and core classroom resources, such as the school journal, hardback copies and calculators.

1st year students will receive their textbooks, hardcopies, school journal and calculator as part of this scheme. Kits for specialised subjects e.g. Home Ec., Art, Music, Graphics will be provided by the subject teacher in September. Students will be informed of the August date for collection, via the VSware app, at a later date. Terms and conditions are attached also which will be shared with the parents/guardians electronically and when collecting the books. Kits for specialised subjects e.g. Home Ec., Art, Music, Graphics will be provided by the subject teacher in September. Students will be informed of the August date for collection, via the VSware app, at a later date. Terms and conditions are attached also which will be shared with the parents/guardians electronically and when collecting the books.

2nd and 3rd year students will receive any additional textbooks, exam papers or subject specific materials, as required as part of this scheme.

Regular monitoring and inspection of books will take place throughout the year and books should be kept in a suitable and fit condition.

Book Grant

A Book Grant is available for students from 5th and 6th year which enables parents/guardians to claim part of the cost of new books purchased. (subject to meeting stated criteria and accompanied by original receipt). Application forms are attached with this letter and should be submitted along with original receipts to the school before the end of September.

On behalf of everyone here in CCS, we wish you and your families a relaxing and refreshing summer and we look forward to welcoming back our existing and new students at the end of August.

Yours sincerely,

Eileen Ryan

Ms. Eileen Ryan (Principal)