



# Presentation Senior School

*"A community of learners inspired by the vision and values of Nano Nagle"*

23 September 2013

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I wish to thank parents/guardians very genuinely for the wonderful work they have done to prepare their children for this school year. I would like you to know how much we appreciate the time and effort you invest in preparing your child for school. It is so positive and affirming for your child to know that you value education and want him/her to be happy and successful in school. It is also extremely encouraging and motivating for our staff to see how much you all care about your children's education. In order to ensure the smooth running of the school, I would like to respectfully remind parents and guardians of the following:

## **Child Protection**

The school's child protection policy and a copy of the Children First guidelines are published on the school website. I (M. Tunney) am the designated liaison (DLP) for child protection in Presentation Senior School.

## **Contact Details**

It is absolutely imperative that we have up to date contact details for parents/guardians. If you move home or change any of your phone numbers, please send in your new contact details to our school secretary who will change them immediately on the student management system accessed daily by staff. Please also provide the school with an address of an email account you access regularly.

## **Pupil Personal Accident Insurance**

Parents/guardians who would like to purchase Pupil Personal Accident Insurance from Allianz are advised to complete the enclosed application form and return it to the office on or before Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September with the appropriate fee. I would strongly encourage parents/guardians to consider purchasing this insurance.

## **Boys**

I would like to very sincerely welcome the first boys to enrol in our mainstream classes. We have three wonderful boys in room 14 (Autism Unit) this year also. We are really looking forward to next September when we expect to have a much larger intake of boys from Presentation Junior School. We are currently planning to have our toilets reconfigured to accommodate the larger number of boys in September.

## **Attendance**

Parents and guardians are advised that children must attend school every day unless they are unable to do so for very valid reasons. All pupil absences must be explained by parents/guardians by sending in a note to the class-teacher. We are obliged to notify the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) of problems in relation to pupil attendance. Please go to [www.newb.ie](http://www.newb.ie) for more details. A copy of the school's attendance policy is published on our website.

## **Mobile Phones**

Children are permitted to take mobile phones to school. However, in order to avoid loss or damage, phones must be handed up to the school secretary when the first bell sounds in the morning. Phones are stored in a locked cabinet in the secretary's office and should be collected promptly at 2:30pm. Children who take phones to school must ensure that they are switched off while in school unless a teacher specifically requests that they are used for a learning activity.

## **Car Parking**

In order to facilitate drop off and collection of children, Mullingar Town Council provide parents/guardians and their children with the following:



- Free car parking in the public car park opposite the school for drop off in the morning and collection in the afternoon
- A lollipop lady (Marian) to help pedestrians cross the road safely to the school from the public car park
- One dedicated parking space for use only by drivers with a disabled person's parking card

A new footpath was also constructed during the summer months to ensure pedestrians could walk safely from the car park to the lollipop crossing. I strongly urge parents/guardians, who drop their children to school by car, to park safely in the car park opposite the school and ask their children to walk safely along the new footpath to the lollipop crossing. In order to protect the safety of children, and to prevent unnecessary interruptions to the flow of traffic on Harbour Street, parents/guardians are respectfully requested not to park on the double yellow lines on the road outside the school. Parents/guardians are also requested to park only in the marked car parking spaces in the car park. Co-operation with the above will help to ensure that all children are dropped off and picked up safely from school.

### Parents/Guardians Visiting the School

For security reasons all visitors to the school are expected to enter the building using the main reception entrance (often referred to as the ramp entrance) only. Parents/guardians who come to the school for any reason are also respectfully requested to use this entrance only. As stated earlier, parents/guardians are not permitted to go directly to any classroom in the school. Parent/guardian co-operation with this request is very much appreciated.

### Behaviour

An extremely high standard of behaviour, underpinned by the values of **respect, empathy, trust and integrity**, is expected from pupils, staff and visitors. We are very determined to maintain an extremely high standard of pupil behaviour in the school as we want to ensure that learning and teaching are never interrupted by unacceptable behaviour. I wish to advise parents to familiarise themselves with the school's code of behaviour which is published on the school website.

### Bullying

Bullying is repeated systematic aggression, verbal, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or group, against others (individual or group). Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which will not be condoned, cannot be described as bullying. When such behaviour is systematic or ongoing, it is bullying. **Bullying will never be tolerated in Presentation Senior School.** At assemblies, the children are always reminded to report bullying incidents immediately or, at least, before the end of the school day. If your child is too upset or afraid, for any reason, to report bullying incidents, please make an appointment as soon as possible to meet with the class teacher to make her aware of incidents that have occurred in the recent past. If, for any reason, you are not satisfied that the issues are being dealt with effectively or in a timely fashion, please make an appointment to meet with me.

Bullying, including Incidents of cyberbullying that occur outside of school, should be reported directly to the Gardaí.

### Communication with Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians are their children's primary educators. We are, therefore, very anxious to develop a strong partnership with parents/guardians. Our *Parents as Partners Policy* is published on the school website.

Parents/Guardians should be aware of the following:

- This month, each teacher will meet with the parents/guardians of the children in their class to discuss approaches to learning and teaching.
- Parent/Teacher Meetings will be held in November. Adequate advance notice will be provided.
- One printed newsletter will be sent out to parents each term. A monthly e-newsletter will also be sent to parents/guardians by email. Only those parents/guardians who have given us their email addresses will receive this newsletter.
- The school website will be updated regularly in order to provide parents/guardians with a continuous flow of information pertaining to school activities, events and achievements. Parents/guardians are advised to check the website regularly for updates.



- In an effort to be economical with school funds, we intend to reduce our usage of the text-a-parent service and rely more on email for circulating information to parents/guardians. All emails sent to parents/guardians will also be posted on the front page of the school website. However, all parents/guardians are respectfully asked to provide the school with the address of an email account they access regularly.
- A dedicated parent/teacher meeting room is available in the school for parent/teacher meetings. Parents/guardians who wish to speak to a teacher are respectfully asked to contact the school secretary to arrange an appointment. For security reasons, and in order to ensure that learning and teaching are not unnecessarily interrupted, parents are not permitted to go directly to any classroom. Appointments with teachers must be arranged through the main office only.

### Deputy Principal

Ms. Sullivan, who is the deputy principal, is job sharing with Ms. Shaw for this school year. As a result, an acting deputy will be appointed in the coming weeks. Details of the appointment will be published on the school website.

### Collaboration with the Junior School

As you are aware, we are continuing to strengthen our collaborative links with Presentation Junior School in order to ensure that there is a seamless school experience for boys and girls attending the Presentation Schools from junior infants to sixth class. As part of this collaborative work we have organised the following:

- **Children who complete second class in the Junior School will be guaranteed a place in the Senior School.** Enrolment will be automatic and parents/guardians will not be required to apply for places. Parents/guardians and their children will still have the opportunity to visit the school and view the facilities during the enrolment week commencing on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Parents/guardians enrolling children in the Junior School will be given an opportunity to view the facilities in the Senior School. They will also be made aware of the seamless transition process.
- A joint Parents' Association will be formed between the two schools and training provided for parents.
- Children in second class will be invited to events and activities in the senior school so they can become familiar with the building and the staff.
- A school mass for both schools will be celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October at 1pm in the Cathedral of Christ the King.
- A ceremony will be held on 21<sup>st</sup> November at 1:30pm in the Cathedral of Christ the King to celebrate Presentation Day. Parents/guardians of children in both schools will be invited.
- The Junior School and the Senior School will organise a joint Christmas carol service that will take place in the Cathedral of Christ the King. All of the children, parents/guardians and staff in both schools will be invited to attend.
- A joint termly newsletter will be sent out to the parents/guardians of children in both schools.

### School Uniform

I wish to very sincerely thank parents/guardians for purchasing the new school uniform. The new uniform looks absolutely fantastic and I believe the image of our school is very much enhanced by its introduction. Parents/guardians are reminded that children are expected to wear a full school uniform every day. A note from a parent/guardian should be provided when a child is unable to wear their full uniform every day. Parents/guardians are also reminded that for health and safety reasons:

- Girls must keep their hair tied back at all times in school.
- Jewellery, other than stud ear-rings, must not be worn in school.
- All children are required to wear flat black shoes.

### Healthy Lunches

As part of our healthy lunch policy, children are not permitted to eat chocolate, sweets or crisps in school. Children are permitted to eat one treat on a Friday which consists of a biscuit or small bar. Children are not permitted to chew chewing-gum at any time during the school day.



### Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives

All schools are required to have a school improvement plan for literacy and numeracy. We are currently finalising the details of our literacy and numeracy plan for the 2013-2014 school year which will be published on the school website before the end of the month. Some of the key actions include:

- Literacy Hour and Station Teaching in all classes using new literacy resources recently purchased at a cost of €5000
- Accelerated Reading Programme for third classes
- Lexia Reading Programme
- Reading Eggs Programme
- Group work teaching for Maths classes
- Mathletics Programme
- Increased use of diagnostic and screening tests to identify learning difficulties
- The principal will meet with parents of children with a significant number of unexplained absences.

The Lexia Reading, Reading Eggs and Mathletics programmes are extremely beneficial for all learners. However, we believe they will be **particularly beneficial for challenging more able students to engage in appropriate independent learning activities**. More details about each of the above will be published on the school website before the end of the month.

### Payments

Due to rising costs and the significantly reduced level of funding received from the Department of Education and Skills (DES), it has been necessary for us to make huge efforts to ensure that school funds are used only for unavoidable costs. As part of our efforts to keep the school solvent, I must ensure that every parent/guardian pays for the following items on the school booklists before the Halloween break:

- Book Rental - €15
- Materials - €40
- Reading Eggs - €5

Parents/guardians who have not paid for all of these items have been advised that they may pay the total amount in instalments between now and the end of October. Money received will be used to pay bills in the order outlined above. I believe everyone will agree that these fees are only fair if they apply to every child in the school. **We are extremely grateful to all parents/guardians who have paid for the items listed above.**

I wish to thank all of the parents/guardians who supported our Fun Family Race Night in June 2013. Support for fundraising efforts organised during this school year will be very much appreciated also.

### Parent/Guardian Complaints

A copy of the school's complaint procedure is published on the school website or available from the secretary's office.

### School Closure

Parents/guardians are reminded that the school will be closed on Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October for the referendum.

The staff in Presentation Senior School enjoy tremendous support and co-operation from all of the children and their parents/guardians. It is this co-operation and support, coupled with the dedication and commitment of staff, which makes our school atmosphere so pleasant and conducive to learning and growth. We are so grateful to all of you for this co-operation and support and we assure you of our continued commitment to excellence in all areas of learning and teaching.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Tunney  
Principal

