



CASTLEKNOCK COLLEGE

Weekly Bulletin from the Headmaster, Mr Oliver Murphy, to the parents of St Vincent's Castleknock College Friday 13 September 2013

Academic News

- This week we celebrated the fantastic Junior Cert results received by the class of 2013! They were extraordinarily good! 17 students received 6 or more As all at higher level. (You can see them on the website.) The highlights are on our website – why not have a look at <http://www.castleknockcollege.ie/junior-cert-class-of-2013.html>
- Joe O'Boyle was the top student this year, with ten straight As, all at Higher Level. Well done, Joe. But congratulations are due to the whole year, who have done exceptionally well – and to their teachers.
- Please see below a letter for each parent regarding the government budgetary cuts and how they are affecting fee paying schools. This letter is part of a campaign organised by The Joint Managerial Body for Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools. We hope that as many parents as possible will join us in the campaign to promote choice and fairness in education.
- I am asking families to Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) for half an hour every week. At some moment in the week, turn off the TV, computers and mobiles and everyone in the house drops everything and reads. After a while it'll be something to look forward to.

Club News

- The Chess Club meets in Room 1-21 after school every Tuesday. New members are really welcome. Our Chess Coach, Patrick Fitzgerald, wants to see all players soon, in order to arrange teams and matches.
- Soccer is up and running: the Under 16s and Under 18s train on Tuesdays and Fridays. We want to see all TY, 5th and 6th year students who wish to play turning up for practices every week.
- The Junior Debating Society meets at lunchtime every Thursday in Ms Coombes' room G-12. Ms Coombes would like to see all prospective speakers from year 1-3 turning up and participating in our debates. There will be external competitions later for the best speakers.
- The Senior Debating Society will start on Tuesday 24 September in Room 121 at 1.15 pm. There will be weekly meetings in the same place at the same time.
- Tennis, cricket, cross-country and table tennis continue after school for all ages every Tuesday after school. There have been great numbers attending. Keep it up right through the winter.

Vincentian News

- There are so many families going to Knock on Saturday, that we've had to book a second bus! We hope everyone has an experience that they will savour for the rest of their lives.
- The 1st years mothers lunch took place today, it was a wonderful occasion and a great way to welcome our new mums into the college. They ladies also raised €488 for the Ambo Leprosy Fund! Thank you very much!
- We have applied for planning permission for the lights for the Rugby Astro. We have now received over €140,000 and are on the home stretch in our fundraising campaign.

Sports News

- Our new minibus has arrived. It's a beautiful sixteen-seater Ford Transit, complete with the college logo. We paid an emotional farewell to the old blue jalopy which has gone to the knackers' yard. It served us well, but its successor is a splendid beast which will (we hope) bring many a team to victorious matches of every kind.
- In an earlier bulletin Mr Murphy congratulated the rowing team who won silver in the nationals at Ovens during the summer, but he failed to include Luke Newcombe. Congratulations to him also!
- The seniors had mixed outcomes in their matches this week: the 1st team lost 20-18 to St Andrew's but the Bs won handsomely. They have worked hard but know that there is still a lot to do.

Parent News

- We are looking for parents to help with table tennis at lunchtimes on Mondays and Fridays. Also, if other parents wish to volunteer with any of our sports, to help with the Senior Debating, or to drive students to matches, we'd be delighted to hear from them.
- There will be a talk for students in 5th & 6th year at school next Tuesday (organised by the Core Groups of 5th & 6th year) on road safety. The talk will be given by an expert on road safety. If any student feels uncomfortable about attending, could he please let the Year Head know beforehand.
- There will be a 1st year familiarisation evening held in the school on Thursday 19th September at 7.30pm. This is for both 1st year boys and their parents to help them to fully settle into college life and answer any questions they might have.
- We are currently carrying out a survey of the hot food provided in our school canteen. We would ask parents to click on the following link and complete a short survey. Thank you very much for your help with this.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JKSVRM2>
- Make sure to take a look at the details of our **adult evening classes and classes for primary school students** on our website: <http://www.castleknockcollege.ie/news/>
- History & German Trip to Berlin, October 2013: Reminder to all senior students to forward the second instalment or remaining balance to Ms. Doran Room 1-08 by Monday, September 16th. Departure : Wednesday October 23rd at 7.20am Return : Saturday October 26th at 12.30pm. Please submit full name as per passport to Ms. Doran as soon as possible.
- All sports and gym gear will be given to 1st years and new students on Monday. Students will be advised of exact times on Monday morning.
- We are Dragon Boat racing again this year! It is a great day out! Come along and support us at Grand Canal Dock on Sunday the 15th of September!

- **General Lost Property:** Every Monday morning members of the student council will go to each LAPC class with items of lost property that have been found. Please make sure that your name is written clearly on all of your belongings. This will be the only way that the owners of lost property can be identified.
- **Rugby Lost Property:** Any items of lost items found in the changing rooms will now be placed in a large container in the changing rooms. Boys can then check for their lost property during training sessions.
- **Other lost property** will be distributed to the owners every week by the Student Council – but only if the name of the owner is on it. Please label all clothes, books, pencil cases, art folders, TG portfolios etc.

TY News

- The names of the students who are involved in the photography group 3 which begins on Monday 16th and Kayaking Group 2 are listed on the TY page of the college website. <http://www.castleknockcollege.ie/forms.html>
- Thank you to the many parents and students who attended the information night in the Concert Hall on Tuesday night last. The TY students completed a good activity day on Thursday the 12th which was run by Outdoor Discovery. It was a well-deserved reward for the best Junior Cert results in the history of the school.
- All relevant TY forms can be found on the TY page of the school website: <http://www.castleknockcollege.ie/ty.html>

Dear Parent,

With Budget 2014 just over four weeks away, it is now absolutely critical that schools such as ours in the fee-charging sector increase and intensify our lobbying campaign to prevent any further cuts to our funding.

As you know, in recent years our sector has been the subject of radical funding reductions, going from one teacher for every nineteen pupils, to one teacher for every twenty three pupils, over the last several budgets.

These are not simply numbers in a classroom – they represent subject choices, staff levels, and an increased reliance on fees in order to maintain the quality in our schools. Now, some elements of the Government would like to see our school cut further.

Put simply, at the proposed ratios of twenty-five or twenty-six or even twenty-eight pupils per teacher, many schools in our sector simply will not survive, and those that do may see fee increases, subjects lost, and staff made redundant. This will be a devastating blow, and one we must all work hard to prevent.

We are asking all parents to contact their TDs immediately to let them know that these cuts are unacceptable and unsustainable.

A website has been set up at www.fairfunding.ie for this purpose.

I am asking each and every one of you to log on to that web page today, where under the “lobby your TDs” section you will find a tool for emailing your local representatives and a draft letter for you to send.

You will also find information on how we are funded, and what these cuts will mean. As Principal, I am asking you to give this matter your **most urgent attention**. Further cuts in the budget will hurt your pocket, your school, and your child’s education. Please let your TDs know today that you oppose any such measures.

Yours sincerely,

Oliver Murphy