

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we approach the Christmas season, I want to update you on several important developments and upcoming activities in our school community.

Christmas Exam Week

Next week, we will hold our Christmas assessments. During this time, the regular school timetable will be paused, and students will follow a special **exam timetable**.

We kindly ask all parents to ensure their daughters carefully review the timetable and are fully aware of when their exams are scheduled. If your daughter does not study a particular subject, she is **not required to be in school** during that exam period.

The reduced timetable has been designed to facilitate focused assessments while providing students with sufficient time to prepare between exams. We encourage all students to use this opportunity to review their materials thoroughly and perform to the best of their abilities.

Happiness Week

The final week of term, leading up to the Christmas holidays, will be **Happiness Week**. This is part of our ongoing wellbeing initiative to promote positivity and mental health among our students. A variety of activities will be planned to celebrate the spirit of the season and foster a sense of joy and community within the school. Further details will be shared with students and parents closer to the time.

Christmas Holidays

School will close for the Christmas holidays on **December 20th**, and reopen in the New Year on **Monday, January 6th, 2025**.

Senior Cycle Redevelopment

As part of the ongoing Senior Cycle redevelopment, our school will begin implementing new assessment and curriculum changes starting next September. These changes will pertain to students entering 5th year, who will be introduced to tranche 1 subjects, including Biology, Business, and Chemistry. Over the next few years, additional subjects will be rolled out:

- **September 2026:** Accounting, English, Geography

- **September 2027:** History, Home Economics, Maths, Music
- **September 2028:** Art, French, Irish

By 2030, all Senior Cycle subjects will adopt the new assessment model, where at least 40% of marks will come from an Additional Assessment Component (AAC), reducing reliance on terminal exams. Comprehensive training will be provided to our teachers to ensure a smooth transition.

Transition Year Review

As required by the Department of Education, we are reviewing our Transition Year (TY) programme this year. Our TY Coordinator, Mr. Coleman, and Deputy Principal, Ms. Cunningham, attended a training session on this, and will lead this review with input from staff, students, and parents.

Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE)

Changes to national SPHE guidelines include a new Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum, requiring 60 hours of instruction over the final two years of school. To date, four of our teachers have completed intensive SPHE training to ensure that our SPHE programme is as robust as possible.

City Connects Program

We are delighted to announce that Mount Carmel has been selected to participate in the *City Connects* initiative starting next September. This program, which has been highly successful in supporting primary school students in the Northeast Inner City, will now extend to post-primary schools. We look forward to its implementation and the benefits it will bring to our students.

Recent School Activities and Events

The past month has been vibrant and eventful at Mount Carmel. Here's a snapshot of what's been happening:

- **Stand-Up Awareness Week (Nov 4–8):** Celebrating and supporting LGBTQ+ youth through activities, displays, and library events.
- **Anti-Bullying Week (Nov 11–15):** A focused effort on raising awareness and promoting kindness, coordinated by Ms. Costello.

- **Think Languages Week (Nov 18–22):** Celebrating languages and culture through French singing workshops, quizzes, and field trips, led by Mr. Gunning and Mr. Dunlea.
- **College Awareness Week (Nov 18–24):** Inspiring students about further education with guest speakers, university visits, and a parent information morning led by Ms. Costello and Ms. McLoughlin.
- Our **School Musical** is making a comeback after many years of absence and Mount Carmel are proud to host **School of Rock** later this year. Auditions have been ongoing, and excitement is building in the school. We hope to see you at one of the shows and your support is very much appreciated.

School Trips and Outings

We aim to complement academic learning with engaging outings. Recent trips, among many more, include:

- 1st and 2nd-year students visiting *The Borrowers* at The Gate Theatre
- 6th-year Geography students' field study at Powerscourt
- A JCSP trip to Dublinia
- 3rd-6th Year trip to Smithfield Ice Rink
- Junior Cycle trip to Customs House

We appreciate your ongoing support and partnership in your child's education. If you have any questions or require further information about any of the updates shared, please do not hesitate to contact your daughter's Year Head

Warm regards,
A Carty
Principal