

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL, CASHEL

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT 2015-2019

RE: DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR SCHOOL FROM 2017-18 & BEYOND

29 June 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are writing, in the main, to inform you of significant staffing and accommodation developments that will take place in our school starting this summer. These improvements have been carefully planned and worked towards over several years for one purpose only - to improve the opportunities the school can offer to each and every boy whose education you have entrusted to us.

Over the last eight years, we have witnessed the hard work of our school community as we faced cutback after cutback. We suspect it was difficult for many not to become demoralised as critical teaching supports were stripped away from primary education in just the same way as our health service and public housing suffered from cutbacks. 'Austerity' on a human level has been very unfair to education but rather than giving in or giving up, the school staff 'boxed clever' and set about documenting the needs of all the boys in the school so that when better times returned, we could all benefit quickly from additional resources. Those better times are, to a certain degree, now returning, at least in the form of additional **staffing** and **classrooms**.



Board of Management June 2017

STAFFING

From next year, because of (i) increased pupil numbers and (ii) the new Special Educational Needs model, our staffing will be as follows: **11 class teachers** (up from 10 this year) and **8 Special Education Teachers** (up from 5 this year). We are waiting for our SNA allocation for 2017/18, but we will retain our **3 SNAs** with the possibility of 1 more.

Congratulations to **Mr Pat Molloy** and **Mr Conor Taaffe** who are now permanent members of staff following redeployment from the Supplementary Panel. We have further posts to fill so the Principal is not in a position to announce teacher allocation to classes until that process is completed. He will contact parents with their son's teacher for next year as soon as possible.

Overall, the favourable staffing allocation will be of great benefit to our boys. It allows the school to have **11 mainstream classes** next year: Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First Class (x2), Second Class (x2), Third Class, Fourth Class, Fifth Class (x2) and Sixth Class.

These greatly enhanced staffing levels in the classrooms and at support teacher level will make a real and immediate difference to the education of each and every one of our boys but will make the biggest difference for those most in need of help. This means they will progress to secondary school with an improved foundation in both education and the skills to learn and grow throughout life.

ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS

A new building programme to commence over the coming months will include **four new classrooms** and possibly a further Special Education room to be used for intensive work with smaller groups of boys

Two classes will be for mainstream pupils. Two are classes dedicated to the special challenges faced by boys with autism and they may even be joined by some girls with similar needs. With a maximum of 6 students to each of these classes, the experience elsewhere was decisive in the Board's decision to offer this special education service for our existing student body and others in the wider community who chose a mainstream school environment.

This massive investment has been achieved through the careful planning, work and dedication of the staff of teachers, Special Needs Assistants and the support team over the past several years. Their energy and enthusiasm for improving the school has been a pleasure to witness during our time on the last two Boards.

The school will keep you informed of the progress of building works and there will undoubtedly be disruption over the coming year with so much work going on. To speed up the pace of delivery of these benefits, **one class of senior boys will be allocated an additional teacher and a classroom off-campus is being sourced at present with detail being communicated to the parents of those boys shortly.** We will also have an information meeting early in the new term to show plans for the new building works and teaching and learning opportunities. It may be that you can help out in some way or have questions that we can address, so we hope you can attend.

OTHER ISSUES

As part of ongoing efforts to reduce costs to parents, new Junior Infant parents have been advised that they can buy **sky blue polo-shirts** as part of their sons' school tracksuits. We now offer the same possibility to all parents. Your son can wear either a royal blue or sky blue polo-shirt as we phase in **sky blue** as the new colour.

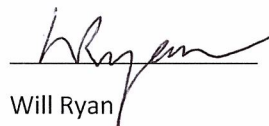
Finally, we would like to thank our Board colleague **Sheila Ryan** who has been a Parent Nominee over the past two years. With the graduation of her son this week, Sheila's term has come to an end and we will all miss working with her. Sheila's contribution to school life over the past eight years, as a parent, dedicated member of the Parent Association and, more recently, as a Board member has been immense and we will miss her. Sheila is succeeded by Marie Maher who has two sons attending the school, having been chosen by the parents in the 2015 Board of Management elections. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the 6th class parents from the Parent Association who are moving on to pastures new and thank **the Parent Association** in general for its work for the school. Most recently, the Parent Association donated €750 for Guided Reading Books for 3rd-6th classes which is another wonderful gift from them to the school. If any of you can give a little of your time to the PA next year, please do. It is a great way to support the school and meet other parents in a sociable setting.

On behalf of the Board of Management, we wish you all the very best for the summer holidays.

Yours faithfully


Cian O'Carroll

Chairperson


Will Ryan

Principal