

## **AGM of St. Munchins College Parents Association 2021**

### **Principal's Address**

Over the last number of months, we have been challenged both personally and professionally to adapt to the new reality brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. As educators, we played a vital role in the national effort to maintain a sense of normality and calm in a very unpredictable environment.

Throughout the last 18 months, we have been challenged to support our students, learning from home since March '20 and then to return to a very different school environment in Aug '20 and then move from the classroom back to the living room once again in Jan '21.

It was also essential that we assisted our parents to enable their boys to engage in remote learning as best they can, and to enable our school to meet the needs of our most vulnerable students as best we can. It proved extremely difficult to find a balance between participating in online live classes and working through TEAMS, focussing on State Exam students (3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Years) and other groups and the differentiating between very academic boys with students with additional and special needs.

And all of this in an environment where the level of access to a digital device and suitable WiFi ranged from excellent to hit & miss.

As Principal, I am grateful for the support we have received from all of the staff and all of the parents of St. Munchin's who have worked tirelessly to support their students and sons throughout this crisis. If we have learned anything in the last 18 months, it is that school community is not confined to the school environs and buildings but resides in authentic school relationships and supports that have developed between teachers, management, students & their families.

The Government announcement on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> is fast approaching and more restrictions we believe will be eased; it seems like a weight has been lifted from the nation and the collective mood is rising. Let's hope it all stays on track and coupled with good school protocols and common sense, we can look forward to a more normal year for everyone.

Special thanks also to all of the teachers, students and parents that were involved with the Accredited Grades Process- everything went so smoothly, for which we are grateful and the LC Results published in September were a credit to everyone.

Thanks also to all of the staff for their contributions and time that was put in by our Senior Management, Middle Management Team of Assistant Principals, the S.E.N.

Team, Anti-Bullying, ICT Team, Pastoral Care Team, SSE, and all Extra-Curricular, Sporting & Co-Curricular Activities.

Our Parents must be commended on their regular participation & presence here in the College and for the contributions and support that they have made to the college community over the years.

Thanks to our generous and supportive Parents Council who are an intrinsic part of the College. School management values and seeks to develop the role of parents as part of the school community. We are very grateful to our Chairperson, Kathleen Daffy, Outgoing Secretary, Pamela Walsh and Treasure, Anna Butler and their hard working committee for all of their time & energy over the last few years. Also, the fundraising exploits of the Parents Council have been critical to the new school development and to future improvements. Without these events, we simply could not have achieved the amount of new development that you see around the College. I would encourage as many of you to get involved in the Parents Council- the burden is light while the craic and friendships are terrific.

I look forward to working with our new Parent Council members in the coming months and years.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to all those who serve on Boards of Management, particularly Ruth Dougan & James Broderick our Parent's representatives on the present Board and who are now stepping down after 6 wonderful years. Their work is done on a voluntary basis and while much of it is routine, nevertheless, it requires a commitment in terms of time and goodwill that is, perhaps, sometimes taken for granted. With the involvement of parents, teachers and Trustee nominees, who are usually locally based, Boards of Management in our school represent a true example of local partnership in action.

Thank you once again and best wishes for the year ahead.