

First Year Information



Welcome to Our Incoming First Years 2022

First Year Students will Start their first day in Loreto College, Swords on Friday, 26 August 2022. The day will begin at 8.45 am and finish at 1 pm

What to expect?

1. Full Uniform to be worn to school on First Day.
2. No Text Books – all you need is one copy book and a pen.
3. Students will be provided with an individual timetable and locker – students must ensure they do not leave their locker unlocked
4. All students will get a Hardback school journal – it is a good idea to write timetable into the journal for future reference.
5. Bring a snack for the 10.45 break.
6. You will meet the Principal, the Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain , Year Head and some staff and senior students.

Various Activities will take place during the year—we have a First Year Sports Day in early September where all first years get to try all the different sports on offer—a fun day and another opportunity to make a new friend.





Lunch Time Arrangements

Lunch Pass:

The purpose of the lunch-time pass is to give students the opportunity to go home for lunch at 1.p.m. each day. As the lunch break is for 40 minutes only, we feel that only those students who live within a reasonable proximity to the school should apply for this pass so that they can return to school in time for afternoon classes which begin at 1.40 sharp.

Ms Sharon Gunn, Deputy Principal will issue a letter to each student who wishes to go home each day for lunch—this letter must be signed by Parent/Guardian and returned to the school with a passport size photo and €1 to cover the Lunch Pass.

Staying in School for Lunch

Students eat their lunch outside weather permitting.

Only those with a Lunch Pass have permission to leave the school premises during lunch time.



VS Ware— The school uses an admin system called Vs Ware—this can be accessed on the school website. All parents/guardians will be sent a text message with their Username—with this username they can create their own unique password and access the system—the username will never change but the password can be changed by the parent at any time themselves. If you have more than one daughter in the school they will be on the same account.

VS Ware is the place you will find your daughter's timetable—her attendance record—her school term reports and also VS Ware fees where all fees payable to the school are paid—cash/cheques are not accepted by the school due to security issues so you will need to use VS Ware fees for all payments.

Absence days are recorded on the system as Unexplained Absence—this is by default and should not concern you—the class tutor keeps the notes for absence and records details of same in a folder—the VS ware is a tool for you to monitor absences and to be aware if your daughter is late or absent without your knowledge. Once you are given access to the system we would recommend you make yourself familiar with the system. Please note that in order to view the Timetable you must change the date to a school date eg. If you open the timetable in August it will be blank—change the date to some date in Sept and the timetable becomes visible.



1st Year Year-Head—Ms Theresa Sheelan

Each Year Group has a designated Year Head who is responsible for the year group. For First Year 2022 the Year-Head will be Ms Theresa Sheelan. If Parents have any concerns re. their daughter they may telephone the school and either speak to the Year Head by phone or if necessary make an appointment and meet in person. It may be necessary to leave a message and have the Year Head return a call as Year Heads also teach fulltime.

What happens if I need to take my daughter home early from school?

If you have made an appointment for your daughter such as for the dentist, doctor etc. you should give your daughter a note requesting that she be allowed to leave school at a particular time—the note must be handed to the Year Head in the morning and your daughter will be given a 'Blue Slip' which she must leave into the general office when leaving. Students may not leave without first obtaining a 'Blue Slip'. We also ask that where parents are calling to collect their daughter that they only present themselves at the office at the time requested in the note—this will avoid having to disturb other classes

What happens if my Child is Ill in School?

The Year Head will telephone the parent/guardian and request that the student is collected from school. Students must be collected and will not be allowed to walk home alone. If a parent cannot come to the school they must make arrangements to have the student collected. **Students are Not allowed to contact Home before going to their Year Head.**

What do I do if my child is out of school?

Parents are requested to telephone the school if they feel their child will be absent from school for more than two days. On their return to school following absence the parent must ensure they give a note explaining the absence—this note will be kept by the class tutor .



Helping Your Child To Settle In School

The transition from Primary school to Secondary school is one of those life events that most people can recall in some way or other. In the main, it's a fairly manageable period and one that parents often get more emotional about than their children. The purpose of this section is to outline the major issues involved so that the experience can be facilitated and undertaken with minimum stress - for the whole family!



Big fish to small fish



By the time a child reaches their final years in primary school, they will be totally familiar with their school environment. They'll know their teacher very well, be comfortable with most if not all of the people in their class and will probably know most of the other faces in the school too. By sixth class, they are the most senior people in their school, they will be used to being given responsibility and they tend to be looked up to by the younger boys and girls in the school.



But within the space of two short months, September 1st sees these same students revert to being the most junior again in a brand new environment in a different location, with a different smell and atmosphere. Change can be a daunting task for any one of us but when you are 12 or 13 – with so many other 'complications' in your life - it is a change that takes quite a lot of adjusting to. The important thing to constantly remind yourself is that your daughter is more resilient and adaptable than we are (or give them credit for). Remember too that within a few short weeks, their new surroundings become more familiar and they'll be running from the PE Hall to the Science Lab and on to the Art room without the slightest stumble. The first couple of weeks can be traumatic though and this section offers both parent and child a survival plan to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Constant routine becomes constant change



The biggest change when entering the secondary school system is probably the constant change in the day-to-day routine. In primary school, they had one teacher all day in the one classroom. In Loreto College however, that routine changes utterly. There is a subject change every 60 minutes, and with this subject change there is a change of teacher. It is not unusual for a student to encounter six different teachers during a typical school day. A tip to help your daughter cope with this is to advise them to write down the name of each new teacher beside the name of the subject. All subject changes will involve a change of classroom too and the second big change that the new 1st years have to cope with is the constant movement between classrooms throughout the day. Getting lost during the first few weeks will be inevitable for some. A good tip is to advise your child to always stay with at least one other person from the class...there is definitely safety and confidence in numbers!

All of this 'new-ness' is bound to have some effect on the students and in these early days of adjusting, parents should try to be supportive, understanding and encouraging, ensuring their child eats well and gets plenty of rest and 'down time'.

The Schoolbag

Their timetable will take a lot of getting used to. Part of this new routine will involve the organisation of the schoolbag before each day. It's a new skill that some may struggle with and a little help in the early days will ensure they have the right books, and the right homework on the right day! Lockers are available and students may find a bag with wheels to be a big help with books.

Homework

Homework time is obviously going to increase and with it comes several new adjustments to be dealt with from the Primary School homework routine. Not all subjects are covered every day and not all subjects involve homework. This may mean that your child has two hours homework on one night and maybe one hour the next night. One of the best skills you can help your child to learn is that of effective time management. Help your child to even out their homework pattern by encouraging them to develop a homework timetable. Certain subjects get homework nightly (Maths), others on every other day, others still on a weekly basis (Irish essay). Help them to devise a method to spread out the workload over the 5 nights of the week. Don't under-estimate the importance of getting a structure and a sense of organisation at an early stage of their secondary school lives. Learning how to successfully manage their time is an invaluable life skill and will make the transition into their new environment a whole lot easier.

School Reports A new experience that comes with secondary school is the regular reports that come home from the school. It will have a mark and a descriptor per subject and space for any comments by any of the teachers. It will include number of days absent or late and any general notes relating to your child's performance. Again, these should be monitored and taken seriously, particularly in first year. It is important that your child sees you as an extension of the school system – if you're dismissive of feedback from the school, it allows a negative attitude to develop in your child which is not in anyone's interest. If you have an issue you would like to discuss with a teacher or the principal, please email the school at office@loretoswords.ie

Extra-curricular activities:

Taking part in after-school activities is a great way of getting to know more students in the school. Whether it's in the drama circle, the computer club or on the playing field, each student should find activities which they enjoy. Taking part in such activities builds confidence, they get to mix with other students from other years and as a result, they settle into the school environment a lot quicker. Students should be encouraged, from both home and school, to try out new activities. Even if they may have tried something before, or even if they don't know what the activity entails, students should be encouraged to try practically everything available through the school.

