

RETNS Board of Management Meeting, 8th January 2018 - Report to the School Community

Class size: The recent budget announced by the Minister for Finance proposed a reduction in class size nationally by one from 27 to 26 at primary level. Smaller class sizes are of benefit to pupils and staff as they enable a positive and inclusive learning environment. The BoM discussed the recent budget proposal and noted that RETNS has maintained class sizes of 28 – one above the recommended number – for some years. It was agreed to maintain the class size at 28 for the incoming junior infant class in September 2018, but to reduce the class size to 26 in line with recommendations for the 2019 and subsequent school years.

Child protection: As outlined in the weekly update yesterday, the remaining provisions of the Children First Act 2015 came into effect on 11 December 2017. Under these provisions, teachers are considered “mandated persons” who must report certain child protection concerns and schools are required to develop a Child Safeguarding Statement by March 2018. The BoM discussed these new requirements and has put in train the development of the statement. The current child protection policy and procedures remain in force until the statement is finalised.

Finance: Many thanks to all those who contributed towards the replacement of the sound system as part of the wonderful Winterfest celebrations. A total €1,400 was raised and this will go a long way towards meeting the final cost involved. The BoM also expressed its thanks to the PA which made a contribution of €800 towards the children’s fundraising drive for new tablets. Significant fundraising has taken place in the past year and the BoM expressed its sincere thanks to the members of the school community for their generosity and co-operation. Unfortunately, although our fundraising efforts have been successful to date, expenditure has also increased, for example, the recent very significant hike in insurance costs. The BoM will continue to ensure cost reduction measures are explored and implemented, and is also anxious to ensure the school’s financial situation is improved through continuing fundraising efforts this year.

Development Committee: The BoM discussed the formation and ongoing work of the Development Committee. The BoM is preparing a strategic plan for the school with a view to identifying development priorities, health and safety requirements and consequent fundraising objectives. The BoM would welcome the input, involvement and participation of parents and guardians in this process.

Website: The BoM expressed its thanks to Stephen Goodwin and Una Hennessy who undertook the redevelopment of the school’s website to make it more accessible and mobile friendly. The new website is now up and running.

Policies and Plans: The BoM discussed its policy and planning priorities for the coming year.

The BoM also considered some routine matters, which for reasons of confidentiality are not included in this report.

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