



## LETTER FROM THE HEADMASTER. EASTER 2006.

Dear Parents,

### SUMMER CONCERT

The Inaugural St. Gerard's Senior School Summer Concert will take place on Monday May 8<sup>th</sup> in the Junior School Hall. The Concert will showcase the excellent musical talent the school has to offer and will be co-ordinated by the Music Department. It is intended that it will set new standards for musically talented students to attain to in the future. Tickets will be available from the School Office and all students and parents are most welcome to attend. It promises to be an enjoyable concert and I look forward to seeing you there.

### SUGARLOAF RACE

The Sugarloaf Race, which was cancelled on St. Gerard's Day due to poor weather conditions, will take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April and I encourage all Senior School students to participate in this traditional event in the school and we look forward to the greater luck with the weather on the day.

### JUNIOR SCHOOL OPENING

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May the official opening of the Junior School will take place at 9.30 a.m. in the Junior School Hall. All parents are most welcome.

### SENIOR SCHOOL

I am delighted to circulate to all parents material regarding the development that will take place in the school over the coming twelve to eighteen months. This is an extensive project and we are looking forward to the challenges that it will present. It is our aim to carry out all elements of the project with little or no disruption to the day to day running of the school and to the education of your children. A plan for the Senior School and the Main House will be on display in the School Office at the beginning of next term.

### SOCIAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME

The Social Awareness Programme began in January 2006, co-ordinated by Ms. Sheila Maguire of the Careers Department. To date we have had speakers in the school from St. Vincent de Paul, Concern, Alone, Aware and most recently from the Garda Síochána who gave an excellent and visually stunning two hour presentation to the students of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year regarding on all teenage issues regarding the law.

### WEBSITE

The new school Website is almost complete and the new web address is [www.stgerards.ie](http://www.stgerards.ie). This site will be fully activated early in May. Anyone contacting the school on our former address of [www.stgerards.net](http://www.stgerards.net) will be automatically directed to the

[www.stgerards.ie](http://www.stgerards.ie) site. It is our intention that as we move forward that parents and students will be able to access information regarding the school through the website and that prospective parents will be able to use the website as a prospectus while considering the possibility of sending their children to St. Gerard's.

## DEFIBRILLATOR

A defibrillator has been installed in the School Office and the School Nurse, Ms. Gemma O'Connor has been fully trained in its use. A number of the teaching staff and sports staff have volunteered to receive training in the use of the defibrillator over the coming months.

## PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The Parents' Association are doing excellent work to date and have organised a lecture on 'Adolescents – Alcohol and Drugs' to be held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> April in the LRC at 7.30 p.m. I strongly encourage senior school parents to attend. The keynote speaker is Dr. Bobby Smyth and a panel of experts will be present. This is an area of great concern to parents and educators of teenagers in Ireland today.

## UNICEF

Much work has taken place in developing a social awareness project between the school and the Parents' Association. The school and the Parents' Association are delighted to announce the project through UNICEF "Schools for Africa". In the school from September, speakers from UNICEF will address all year groups and the majority of the subject areas will encompass aspects of the UNICEF project so as to create a strong awareness of Mozambique and the Schools for Africa Project in all students. The Parents' Association are currently organising an Autumn Ball which will raise much needed funds to support this cause.

The students of St. Gerard's are very privileged and it is incumbent on both the school and the parents to create a greater awareness of the social injustices that there are in the world and encourage the students to give a little, rather than to take a lot. I firmly believe that this Schools for Africa project, through UNICEF, will grow into a project of significance over the coming years here in the St. Gerard's .

## MEDICAL FORMS

I would be most grateful to those parents who have not returned the Medical Information Form as yet to the school, if they could do so by return of post to the School Nurse, Ms. Gemma O'Connor.

## TRANSITION YEAR MUSICAL

Well done to all of the students in Transition Year who made the production of Fiddler on the Roof a most memorable one. We were most fortunate to have the show produced to such a high level and to have an excellent school hall in which to showcase the performances.

## THE STUDENT COUNCIL

The Council continues to grow from strength to strength and their most recent project of Waste Management and Green Schools will begin to show benefits over the coming months.

## DEBATING

Many congratulations to Dearbhail O'Crowley (4<sup>th</sup> Year) on being the outright winner of the AIB Phil Speaks National Debating Competition in Trinity College on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April. This is an outstanding achievement for Dearbhail and for the school. Gavin Fullam (6<sup>th</sup> Year) won this highly prestigious prize last year and it reflects exceptionally well on the school and on debating/public speaking in the school.

Debating continues to go from strength to strength with numerous school teams participating in a wide and varied programme locally and nationally with evident success.

## MOCK EXAMINATIONS

6<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year students did well in their Mock Examinations recently. It is important that they have a positive and focussed final term and we wish them well during the month of June.

## SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE

Seachtain na Gaeilge took place during the week of Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March. The Irish Department organised several events throughout the week and entered various teams in Irish table quizzes as well as producing an Irish magazine in the school.

## SCHOOL TOUR

Forty 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Year students had a wonderful trip to Vienna and found the experience educational and invigorating.

## SPANISH EXCHANGE

Seventeen students from 2<sup>nd</sup> Year and 4<sup>th</sup> Year travelled to Malaga in Spain as part of our Exchange programme. They will be in Spain for three weeks and return to school after the Easter break.

## IRISH RUGBY TEAM

We were delighted to welcome the Irish Rugby team to St. Gerard's School for training purposes during the Six Nations Tournament. Members of the Irish Squad will return to the school in May to visit the Senior and Junior School students to show off the Triple Crown Trophy. We look forward to building on our relationship with the Irish Rugby Team and sharing our wonderful sporting facilities with them in the future.

## INTERNATIONAL FOOD FAIR

Many thanks to the hardworking In House Committee for the lively and entertaining International Food Fair organised on the 8<sup>th</sup> March. It was a great success in raising funds for the new Junior School Library.

## SPORTS

It is not my intention to go through every Sports Team in the school and to congratulate them on their sporting success and endeavours to date here. I am most impressed by the positive attitude of our students to sport and the enthusiasm that they show through their participation. It is very positive to see so many of our rugby, hockey and cross country teams participating in the latter stages of their competitions right through to the beginning of April. All of the coaching which the students avail of here in the school will reap benefits for the various teams in all sports as they move forward. It is our commitment to enhance the sporting facilities and the quality of our coaching so as to maximise the sporting potential of our teams in the future.

## 3<sup>RD</sup> YEAR STUDENTS.

I look forward to meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Parents regarding 4<sup>th</sup> Year Options on Tuesday May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7.30 p.m. in the Junior School Hall.

### [www.bebo.com](http://www.bebo.com)

I wish to draw your attention as a matter of urgency to this particular website which the majority of the Senior School students are using at present (the same as thousands of other students here in Ireland). Many of our students have posted detailed information about themselves as well as personal photographs on this site, many of which are of a very detailed nature. Many students believe that this information is secure – it is not. The school could access this information in a minute as could anyone else. In some cases, students have posted hundreds of photographs of themselves and of their friends.

This website is also being used as a vehicle for bullying and intimidating fellow students. Several of our students have been affected negatively by the material posted by other students about them.

The School has blocked access to this site in the school since last October. Having viewed some of the material, the school is concerned regarding the material listed and the vulnerability of the students to access to their material by others. I strongly encourage all parents to discuss this issue with your son/daughter and to review the access which your child has to this site and the material which they have posted (or others have posted about them) about themselves. Several other schools have similar strong concerns and have addressed these to the parent body at this time.

## SUMMER TERM DATES

For your information, I enclose a full list of dates for the coming Summer Term.

## SCHOOL DATES FOR 2006 – 2007.

The outline dates for coming academic year are as follows:

### **Term 1**

Monday August 28<sup>th</sup>

October 23<sup>rd</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> inclusive.

Friday December 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Term commences.

Half Term.

Christmas Holidays commence.

### **Term 2.**

Tuesday January 8<sup>th</sup>

February 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> inclusive.

Friday March 30<sup>th</sup>

Term commences.

Half Term.

Easter Holidays commence.

### **Term 3**

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April

Friday June 1<sup>st</sup>

Term commences.

Term ends.

Yours sincerely,

**Tom Geraghty.**  
**HEADMASTER.**