**15/06/2018.**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

 I hope this correspondence finds you well and are enjoying the great weather and additional contact time with your children. Please understand that this letter has been compiled to ensure a smooth transition into the new academic year 2018/19 for you and your son/daughter. It contains a vast amount of information and details which are designed to assist and erase any uncertainties that may arise in your preparations for your child’s return to school. The information relates to very specific student and school services and activities and is designed to be factual and precise. I acknowledge that the language may read as “dictatorial” but please rest assured it is not intended to be. The information requires your full attention.

Furthermore may I inform you that there will be no school Newsletter this year. The purpose of the newsletter was to update the school community on the activities and developments occurring in our school environment over the past academic year. However thanks to the amazing work carried out by the school website committee and Transition year students they have managed to capture, report and upload all of the schools activities over the past year. They have ensured that the school website has a strong sense of self through clear articles, bulletins, content and photos. I would encourage you to visit our new school website at [www.cashelcommunityschool.ie](http://www.cashelcommunityschool.ie) and familiarise yourselves with school events, archives and galleries. The website is a vital communication hub that we will continue to develop throughout next year.

That said please find enclosed your son/daughter’s end of year report and other items as outlined.

1. Back to school arrangements
2. Summer Examination report.
3. School Calendar.
4. Evening Study Form.
5. Letter regarding Book Rental Payments from the Parents’ Association re new payment methods.
6. Template letter to forward to your local Councillor re traffic management outside the school.

***Also please note Booklists are available on the school website this year under the Academic Life Tab***

 The following are the arrangements for the re-opening of the school for the 2018/19 school year.

1. Wednesday August 29th: Students return to school (First year only).
2. Thursday August 30th 6th & 3rd Year Students return.
3. Friday August 31st 2nd, 5th and TY Students return.

1. **School Uniform - ESSENTIAL DETAILS FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS.**

School uniforms, as the name implies, promotes responsibility and uniformity within the school. Uniforms show that you are part of the school, hence giving students a sense of belonging to the school, while creating an identity for the school in the community. Wearing a uniform is a badge of pride, wearing your uniform with pride means you are being respectful to the school and is an important part of being a school student. It is our expectation that all students will wear the official school uniform, without modification, at all times.

However, it is regrettable that a number of students continuously persist to breach the school’s uniform regulations with regard to its appearance and condition. It is not acceptable for students to present in uniforms that are in disrepair. Also the school has clearly outlined what it deems as acceptable footwear and adherence to the policy in respect of footwear is essential. Please note if a student presents with inappropriate footwear they will not be permitted into their timetabled class and parents will be contacted in order to rectify the discrepancy. As you can appreciate students’ ownership of their responsibilities is a vital cog in their development into responsible young adults. Your support on this issue would be greatly appreciated.

In order to ensure that all students return to school in the proper uniform it is essential that all students and parents familiarise themselves with the following points regarding the school uniform and plan accordingly for the return to school.

1. The school uniform may be purchased from **Imps and Elf’s Friar Street Thurles**, or from **Uniform World, Ard Gaoithe, Business Park, Cashel Road, Clonmel.**  All students must have a full school uniform for the new school year and this uniform must be in good condition and must be maintained in good condition throughout the year. In particular, uniform **jumpers** which are in a poor condition at the end of the 2017/18 school year must be replaced before the start of the 2018/19 school year. **Parents must ensure that the uniform which is purchased is totally in keeping with the details of the uniform specified by school management and as available from Imps and Elf’s and Uniform World Clonmel.** Parents should place the order for the uniform before June 29th in order to ensure that the uniform is available for the new school year.
2. The school uniform trousers for girls is available from Imps and Elf’s Thurles and from Uniform World Clonmel. Girls have the option of wearing either the school skirt or the school trousers.
3. All students require a **second uniform** in the event of accidents or laundering difficulties. Please note that a tracksuit is not an acceptable alternative.
4. A complete school tracksuit is absolutely essential for all junior cycle students. School track suit may be purchased from online **O’Neill’s www.oneills.com/shop-by-team/education/schools/cashel-community-school.html.**  All senior cycle students must have appropriate P.E. gear.
5. Shoes must be black, brown or navy in colour. (Mixed colour combination stripes or logos are prohibited). Please note that only shoes constructed with leather uppers will be acceptable as part of the school uniform. Shoes should be durable and weather proof. We ask that the shoes used for the school are used for little else to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. I wish to emphasise that boots including “ugg boots”, runners, sports shoes or canvas shoes including “vans” are not acceptable and are clearly in breach of the terms of the uniform code with regard to footwear. Students must also wear shoes with flat or low heels and soles**.** In particular, parents and students should note that runners, of any colour, are not part of the uniform. **Please note the content and detail of this paragraph as Cashel Community School will be insisting that students wear regular shoes to school. Furthermore it should be noted that regular school shoes are less expensive to purchase than some of the other forms of footwear mentioned above.**
6. The wearing of excessive jewellery, facial piercings and accessories is not permitted. Boys may not wear jewellery on their ears.
7. The school code of behaviour states that “the use of make-up is not allowed”. Consequently students are not allowed wear **make-up** during the school day.
8. Hair must be neat and tidy at all times and of a natural colour. Hairstyles that are deemed to be in contravention of the spirit of the school rules are prohibited.
9. Each student must wear full school uniform every day and be neat and tidy in his/her overall appearance (Ties must be visible, undergarments must not be visible and shirts tucked into the students trousers or skirt). A breach of these rules is perceived as being a deliberate and calculated disregard for school rules.
10. Boys must be clean shaven. Please note if a student presents unshaven they will not be permitted into their timetabled class and parents will be contacted in order to rectify the discrepancy .
11. It is essential that students have their name and class printed clearly on all property such as books, clothing, sports equipment etc.

 **It is absolutely essential that all students familiarise themselves with these key rules regarding uniform. Students who are in breach of these regulations will not be allowed join their class at the start of the school year.**

**School Books** - **IMPORTANT DATES AND DETAILS**

I wish to take this opportunity to thank and compliment the Parents’ Association on the efficient and effective manner in which the book rental scheme is organised on an annual basis. I also wish to thank the majority of parents and students who show their appreciation for the book rental scheme by caring for the books and complying with the accepted procedures regarding the book rental scheme. The continuation of the book scheme depends on your cooperation and the cooperation of your son/daughter. Parents availing of the book rental scheme should take note of the following dates and times.

1. Books must be collected from the school on **Thursday August 16th** between 11.00 a.m. and 2.00 p.m. and between 4.00 and 7.00 p.m. In order to avoid congestion and undue delays parents are asked to note that books will be available during these times and it is not necessary or feasible to have all parents queuing for books at 11.00 a.m. This will have benefits for parents collecting books as well as for the parents who operate the book rental scheme. Books **must** be collected on **Thursday August 16th.**
2. A bundle of books relevant to your son/daughter’s subject choices will be available for collection on the dates and times specified above. Parents must sign an agreement when books are issued which commits parents to ensuring that the books are maintained in good order and returned at the end of the school year.
3. The rental fee must be paid at the time when books are collected. The rental fee is **€80** for all classes except Transition Year where the fee is **€30**. The fact that the rental fee is unchanged for 2018/19 is a major achievement.
4. The Parents’ Association have a number of payment options available this year please refer to attached letter of information.
5. **Please note that workbooks, exam papers, etc., which are not available from the book rental scheme will be on sale in the school on August 16th during the operation of the** **book scheme. These books will be covered for a €1 fee by the Parents Association.** Similarly local shops selling school supplies will also have a shop in the school on August 16th where parents and students can purchase school bags, maths sets, calculators, copies etc. which are required for the new school year. Please support local businesses. This is an ideal opportunity for parents to purchase all essential school materials at one location.
6. Students should respect books provided through the Book Rental Scheme by covering books, keeping them securely and returning all rented books in good condition at the end of each year.
* All books must be kept in good condition and free of writing.
* Books must have un-damaged plastic covers or be covered with clear contact at all times.
* Books must be returned clear of writing, in good condition and with an undamaged plastic cover.
* Where books are lost or returned in an unacceptable condition, the cost of replacing the book rests with the student.
* Very Important – Books which are found in school on lockers or bag-racks will be placed in lost property and a charge will apply for reclaiming each lost item.
* A book inspection will take place annually.
* It is in your interest to respect the property that is on loan to you, therefore please respect where and how you place your school bag at all times as well as the books themselves.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Parents’ Association for their tremendous work on your behalf this year. They have given the school fantastic support and guidance throughout the year. It’s great to witness parental involvement in all aspects of school life. Their commitment and application is reflected in their increased attendance and involvement in all Parent Association matters. The Parents’ Association has increased its presence within the school environment in areas and initiatives such as Leadership Day, School Musical and Open Night. Personally I have welcomed their inputs, advice and support on many school related matters which were deliberated and discussed over the past year. Two areas that came under scrutiny for improvement over the year were looking at mechanisms of improving communication and cashless payment solutions. It was felt that if improvements could be established in these areas that they would be of great benefit to the school community. In response the following developments have been arrived at.

Payment Solutions

The Department of Education & Skills and its education sector procurement hub, the Education Procurement Service (EPS), in conjunction with the Schools Procurement Unit (SPU), the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) and school bodies, has established a framework of market providers in order to provide payments solutions for schools to avail of. The payments solutions will facilitate the handling of payments from parents to schools electronically (including internet, mobile phone app and chip and pin), while continuing to allow parents that wish to make payments by cash, cheque, etc.

• Easypayment Plus

• MIT Education Solutions

• Three Ireland

The school has secured the services of MIT Educational Solutions for the forthcoming school year, however they will not be available at the start of the academic year due to time constraints.

School App

We see the App playing a critical role in providing schools with an integrated communications platform that is secure, controlled, easy to use and ensures the school is compliant with current legislation and best practice.

• Improves level of communications and published information to parents

• Provides parents online access to student reports through the system

• Online payments system/connected to MIT Educational Solutions

• Multi-functional /study Buddy

• Interface with current web page/ Website Updating

• Notifications

• Social Media - Posting and Publishing

• Central server or cloud storage for all school photos/images

I wish to take this opportunity to inform you that with the consent of the Parents’ Association it was decided to increase the annual standard fee to €50, the increase of €10 will pay for both the App/Payment solution development, operational and transactional costs for the upcoming year.

Therefore as we move towards the commencement of the new academic year it is essential that parents are aware of all the costs incurred. There will be a standard fee of €50 . This fee covers the following

* Provision of the student Record Book
* Student Council/Links Training
* New School App Development
* Establishment of a cashless payment system and service (price includes cost of transactions)
* Locker provision and upkeep
* Student Awards
* Student Retreats

Parents and Guardians will be able to make this payment on Thursday 16th of August while collecting their books from the Book Rental Scheme. On payment parents/guardians will received a Student Record Book which will be officially stamped, this will serve as a receipt for the Record Book and the Locker. It is hoped that this measure will alleviate parental concerns in relation to students being responsible for financial transactions.

**Student Record Books**

The Student Record Book is **Mandatory** in Cashel Community School. The Student Record Book is designed to

* Monitor the student’s attendance and punctuality.
* Monitor the day-to-day behaviour of each student and record detention.
* Provide a number of permission forms which require the signature of the student’s parents/guardians.
* Provide a journal to organise homework on a daily basis.
* Provide information on the progress of the student.

The Student Record must be purchased from the school.

1. **Lockers**

Please be informed that the utilisation and accommodation of lockers was highlighted as unsatisfactory by both parent and student bodies during the WSE inspection in 2015. These views have subsequently been aired and debated within official student and parent fora. In order to address these difficulties we plan to purchase another 200 new lockers with double the capacity, for the forthcoming school year. Please note students are required to have a locker. It is also essential that their lockers are secure at all times. This will necessitate students in 1st,2nd ,3rd and 5th year purchasing a suitable lock to secure their locker. Experience has led the school to recommend that parents purchase a combination padlock for their child as many students misplaced, forgot or lost their padlock keys during the course of the school year resulting in the destruction of locks in order to gain access to the students’ property which resulted in the students having to purchase a new padlock. May I take this opportunity to stress that all lockers must be securely locked at all times.

1. Students who have school lockers must accept the following conditions:
* No food or drink of any kind to be left in a school locker.
* Lockers are liable to inspection at any time.
* Students are responsible for all property left in their lockers.
* Students should report any irregular interference with their lockers to their Year Heads.
* Students are only allowed go to their lockers before and after school and at both break times.
1. **Traffic Arrangements**

Included in your pack is a standard letter which the Parents’ Association are requesting that you fill out and forward it to your local Councillor or representative. It is hoped that this campaign will compel the local authorities to address our traffic management concern for the welfare of our student body. However in the interim please abide by the following procedures.

In the interest of safety it is essential that parents do not drop off or collect students inside the school gates or on the roadway from the roundabout to the school gates in the morning or at the end of the school day. Parents are requested to park in a responsible manner in an available space on the Dualla Road which may on occasion be a short walking distance from the school. The following general guidelines will enhance the safety of students on the roadways adjacent to Cashel Community School.

1. Parents must not drop off or collect students inside or adjacent to the school gates before school starts in the morning and at the end of the school day.
2. Parents who insist on parking in the basketball court or on the driveway during the last class each evening are showing very little respect for the students and teachers who use this area for timetabled school activities. Similarly the parking of cars in these areas endangers the safety of all students leaving the school at the end of the school day.
3. The congestion on the Dualla Road between 3.35 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. is totally unacceptable and endangers all students, pedestrians, parents, staff, motorists and local residents who use the Dualla Road at these times. Each parent has a role to play in contributing to the solution to this problem by parking in a responsible and legal manner in an available space which may on occasion be a short walking distance from the school.
4. Parking is not permitted close to the pedestrian crossing and between the pedestrian crossing and the roundabout. Please note that the Gardaí or the Traffic Warden will issue parking tickets to cars that are parked illegally on the Dualla Road. Your cooperation on this matter will enhance the safety of your son/daughter and of all students as they make their way to and from school.

6. Students and parents should note that Joe Ahern and the Rock House staff will continue to provide lunches in the school and this service will resume on **Thursday August 30th.**

7. Please note that school transport operated by Bus Eireann will resume on **Wednesday August 29th.**

 **I firmly believe that if parents and students follow the guidelines contained in this letter it will ease the pressure on parents and students as they prepare for the return to school in August/September and it will also ensure that students have a positive start to the 2018/19 school year. I believe that a positive start is the basis of a successful and happy school year. I wish you and your family every success during the 2018/19 school year and I look forward to your support and co-operation throughout the year. Please contact me if I can be of any further assistance to you on these matters.**

**Please remember that by enrolling your child in to Cashel Community School you as a parent have fully accepted all of the policies, requests and regulations governing the school.**

 Please keep this letter secure during the summer holidays as it contains details, arrangements and dates which you will need as you and your son/daughter plan for the start of the 2018/19 school year.

Yours sincerely,

John Gallagher.

 (Principal)