

December 20th, 2021

Dear parents, guardians and carers,

### **School Reports:**

VSWare reports are now live. It is essential to understand that Junior Cycle examinations are not graded the way those over the age of 18 would have experienced. You will not find traditional grades. A mark has been included where this is relevant and helpful. What you will find is that our First Year reports attempt to underline what has gone well and to give advice on how to proceed. As students proceed to Second Year and into Third Year and as students become familiar with the system, we will provide specific test results in all subjects.

You will note that we have provided information on 'what went well' and 'even better if'. We absolutely make no apology for valuing academic performance, but we want our reports to be as helpful to students and parents as possible.

### **Feedback:**

We had originally planned on getting Second Year parental feedback on our parent/teacher meetings. However, we have decided to combine this research with a survey on the assessments, and to include First Year families after their parent/teacher meetings.

### **Parent Staff Association:**

It has been brilliant to see this vital association thrive. There is now a report from a member of the PSA to each board meeting. In terms of communications around schoolwide issues please note the following:

- I won't normally meet individual parents about a schoolwide issue. The best and most effective way to make suggestions, is through the PSA who I meet with our deputy principal nearly every month.
- The PSA can be contacted at [psa@goatstownetss.ie](mailto:psa@goatstownetss.ie)

It's never too late to come along. All parents and guardians are automatically members. You can find information about the PSA and minutes of meetings [here](#).

### **Student Council:**

Student Associate members have now attended two full board meetings this year. They have given the board updates on the work of the student council, and I am grateful to Anna who coordinates the council as well as the entire student council and in particular to the two reps Jack and Maggie.

### **Debating:**

This has become a very popular activity in our school. We are unbeaten as we go into the new year. We have a very articulate group of young people in Goatstown ETSS. Big thanks to Niamh, Anna, Ronan and Patrick for training the teams.

### **HEPA filters:**

The school has received a minor works grant for ventilation which we will use to purchase HEPA filters for each classroom. We have tested one model over the last few weeks which is expensive, but which is suitable for a classroom with up to 30 individuals. There is a delay with suppliers at the moment, but we will do everything possible to have these in place for the new year.

### **Online Learning:**

Nobody wants school to have to go to online learning. And our expectation is to open as normal on January 6<sup>th</sup>. However, it would be remiss of us to not prepare for the worst. You will find our online protocols and timetables for each class with this app notification. In the event that we have to return to online learning, it is essential to review this document which explains everything you need to know about how we will operate.

### **First Year 2022:**

The Board has decided to limit the number of places to 72 (three First Year Classes) as per our admissions notice. We have almost completed round two of the offers process. There is still a considerable waiting list.

### **Creativity Week:**

Although there is a little while to go, I thought I would share the plan for Creativity Week in February. Thanks to Niall for organising this. Thanks also to Sharon Carty, our Arts Council Associate who has worked with us since we opened.

### **STEAM Weebly:**

STEAM subjects are Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths.

You will no doubt be aware of the super work that Jennifer and Trevor do in the area of Science and Technology. Jennifer and Trevor have created a mini website which will link to our main website. It is still under construction but will ultimately include updates and links to work done by our school in these areas. You can check this out here: <https://goatstownsteam.weebly.com/>

### **SWAY:**

The Sway newsletter is a fantastic way to read and hear about all of the fantastic things that we have been up to this term. You will find a link to the SWAY [here](#). Thanks to Niamh and Clodagh in the office for their work on editing this.

### **Thank You:**

I want to thank each of my colleagues for all that they have done this term. Leading strategy teams, teaching expertly, working hard on really positive teacher/ student relationships, organising lunchtime and afterschool activities, dealing sensitively with a range of challenges, moving back and forth between the old building and our lovely modular buildings, planning, creating, advising, guiding and much else. Our team of ASN Assistants are second to none and it has been a pleasure to have Clodagh on board as our school administrator.

### **Return to school and the school calendar:**

Although we will notify you about any changes to the calendar, we strongly advise that you keep an eye on the school calendar on our website. This is updated very regularly and is the most up to date version of the school calendar. We also ask that you follow us on *Twitter @goatstownE* on *Facebook Goatstown Educate Together Secondary School* and *Instagram Goatstown ETSS*. Even if you don't have accounts, you can see what's up there by clicking the links on the homepage of our website.

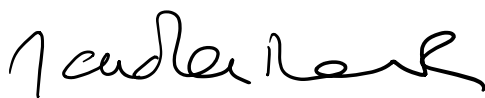
There are some compulsory closures for our school during the next term. These relate to Junior Cycle training and training for the whole staff on supporting the work of the Autism Support Programme (ASP). These closures are on the website calendar apart from the ASP training which will be confirmed closer to the time.

We return to school on Thursday, January 6<sup>th</sup> 2022. Staff are meeting first about the academic year 2022-2023 from 8.40-10.30am. Students are to return at 10.45am.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families every peace and prosperity over the holiday season and for 2022.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Browner', written over a thin blue horizontal line.

Jonathan Browner (principal)



# CREATIVITY WEEK

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Feb 2nd - Singing Workshop  
Feb 2nd - Rock Painting  
Feb 3rd - Percussion Circle  
Feb 4th - Street Art workshop  
Feb 5th - Dance Dance Dance