

NEWSLETTER

Sutton Park School



Academic Year 2007 - 2008

Welcome Message from Head of School Mr Michael Moretta

I hope that you all managed to have some kind of break this summer, particularly from the unremittingly bad weather here in Ireland. I am writing to you at this time primarily to report on our very impressive Leaving Certificate results, but also to provide you with the information pack you receive every year in the form of the August Mailing. It is, I am afraid, one of those key signposts signifying that the long summer holidays are coming to an end. I hope you like the new format of the newsletter and that this structure enables you to home in on the specific item of information you require rather than wading through the entire content.

2007 Academic Results

On Wednesday 14th August our 6th Year students, along with approximately 50,000 other students throughout the country received their Leaving Certificate results. There has been much written in the press regarding the enormous stresses and tensions surrounding taking the Leaving Certificate, but I am very happy to report that, for the most part, the occasion was a joyous one at Sutton Park. The great majority of this years group left the room with results that either met or far exceeded their expectations. For me personally, it was a privilege to share the special moment when each student received his or her results.

The headline figures are as follows:

- Those students gaining 500+ CAO points was very close to 18% - well above last year.
- Those students gaining 450+ CAO points reached 36%
- Those gaining 400+ CAO points 52%.

These results represent a significant improvement on last year's figures in all three categories and are among the very best in the last five years. As a consequence, we are all hopeful that most of the class of 2007 will be offered their first choice places when the CAO process begins in earnest next week.

What struck me after I had analysed the final scores of each student was just how dangerous it is for teachers, students and parents to make judgements about the final examination performance too early. When the final results appeared, most of this group performed well above their own expectations.

Internal exams and assessments throughout the fifth and sixth years are only snapshots, revealing a small glimmer of the potential of each student rather than being an accurate reflection of attainment. Significant numbers of the class of 2007 massively improved on mock grades and internal assessment marks. Indeed, a large number seemed to me to have significantly underestimated their ability and potential.

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Exams as stressful and content-based syllabuses such as the Leaving Certificate papers can only be approached effectively with a large amount of self-belief and confidence. It is our job as teachers to build up each student and provide them with the self belief and support to maximise their potential. This year we are restructuring our academic advisor system and focusing on mentoring and guidance in a more dynamic and I hope constructive way. I hope that the new system will allow all students in the important examination years to be engaged in substantive and fruitful discussions with their advisors about their exam goals.

We do have a very solid basis of results and achievement on which to build. I am sure you will join with me in thanking all the teachers and support staff who helped our Sixth Years achieve these excellent results. I would also like to thank the parents of all involved. It is never easy being a parent during the Leaving Certificate years. Your support and the active partnership achieved during these two vital years is integral to success.

Some individual stories of achievement need to be singled out. Niamh Barnwell was one of only 11 students in the country to gain 7 straight A1 scores. Indeed, she gained an amazing 790 points overall from the 8 subjects she studied at Leaving Cert level. This is a truly remarkable achievement by a young lady who is going on to study medicine at Trinity College.

Two of our International students achieved points scores of over 500. One student in particular needs a mention. Arriving from Japan three years ago and unable to speak a word of English, she managed to achieve a magnificent 530 points.

I could spend much more time mentioning individual stories of remarkable achievement but I would hate to detract from the performance of the entire year group. Everyone deserves to be congratulated for their achievements in these exams.

First Day of School

Wednesday, 29th August is the first day of school for all students and school will finish at 1:10 pm. All students should be in uniform.

In the following weeks there will be afternoon Clubs on Wednesday, and this is compulsory for students in First to Fourth Year. Afternoon Prep will begin on Thursday from 3:30 pm to 4:40 pm.

Please remember hair must be **one natural colour** and **runners are not permitted**. Your Form Teacher and registration classrooms are shown on a separate sheet and you will meet in your form class at 8:40 am for registration.

Uniforms and Books

Senior School Uniforms only will be available to purchase at the school on Monday 27th August next. Payment will be accepted by cash or cheque.

Junior School Sports Uniform, which is also acceptable as day uniform, can be purchased from Pat O'Farrell Uniform Shop, Unit 4-5 Strand Road, Portmarnock, Co Dublin, Tel: +353 (0)1 8463512 or alternatively, navy or red clothing is also acceptable.

All Sports Uniform for both Junior and Senior school is available also from Pat O'Farrell Uniform Shop.

Books

All new students will have the opportunity to sample all subjects for the first few weeks at Sutton Park School, once they have decided which subjects they wish to continue with, they can then purchase these books from various sources.

The Open Book Shop based in Sutton Cross, Dublin 13 has a wide range of academic books which you may purchase. If you wish to order online you can also try **www.books.ie** and place your orders.

All books for compulsory subjects can be purchased prior to school starting. Please see our website **www.sps.ie** for an up to date booklist for each year.

All Junior School books are provided by Sutton Park School.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Welcome Message from Junior School Principal Ms Geraldine McGuire

It has been a lovely summer for those who had the opportunity to enjoy the limited sunshine. I hope you had many opportunities to enjoy the company of friends and family during the long summer days. The new school year approaches and I am sure that both you and the children are ready to return to school and its structured day.

We will be welcoming a number of new students who I know will be made to feel at home very quickly.

Our teachers for Junior School are as follows:-

Junior Infants	Ms Karen Sweeney
Senior Infants	Ms Joan Sherlock
Grade 1	Ms Jane Cullen
Grade 2	Ms Suzanne Beardsley
Grade 3	Ms Roisin McCarron
Grade 4	Ms Christine Ellickson
Grade 5	Ms Emer Hoy
Grade 6	Ms Leslie Reynolds

Children of **Junior Infants** will finish school at 1.15 pm each day until the end of October. When we return to school after the half-term holiday on November 6th, their school day will continue until 2.45 pm (for those who wish to avail of the longer day).

As most of the children find the return to school plus the extended school day exhausting, we ease them in gently by not introducing the extended day until the week commencing Monday, 3rd September.

This arrangement means that from Wednesday, 29th August until Friday 31st August, the school day for your child will start at 08:45 am and end at 1:15 pm.

For the first three days of the new school year, the children of **Senior Infants** will finish school at 1.15 pm. From Monday September 4th, their school day will continue until 2.45 pm.

During the first week of the term, the class teachers will write to you giving details of **PE times** and other relevant information.

Please ensure that we have your **current mobile phone numbers**, as this is the most efficient way of ensuring easy and speedy contact with all parents.

Members of the PTA and I would be delighted if all new parents could join us for **Morning Coffee on Wednesday August 29th**. Coffee and tea will be served in the Dining Room in the basement from 8.45 am. We will distribute the PTA Guidebook for New Parents, and hopefully introduce you to other parents.

I look forward to seeing you all on Wednesday August 29th. Please note that all classes will **finish at 1.15 pm** on this day.

Junior School Supervision

The School is willing to provide supervision for children who finish class at 2:45 pm but need to remain on the premises until 3:30 pm because of transport arrangements. If you wish to avail of this facility please return the supervision form enclosed before start of new term. Supervision will commence on Monday 3rd September 2007.

SENIOR SCHOOL

Staff Day

Staff day will be held on Monday 27th August where meetings amongst teachers and staff will take place in organisation for the start of school on Wednesday 29th August.

New Senior Student Orientation Day

This is an extremely important event as it gives all new students the opportunity to meet their teachers, administrators and other new students and receive the essential information that will help them make a smooth and happy transition into secondary school. Please ensure that your child's attends.

All new parents or guardians, both primary and secondary, are cordially invited to join us for **Tea in the Atrium of the Library Building at 09:30 am**. This will give you the opportunity to meet some of your child's teachers and other new parents.

For all new and returning students, the regular school schedule commences on **Wednesday, 29th August at 8.40 am** and school will finish at 1:10 pm. There will be a Malahide bus to collect them at 1.30 pm instead of the usual 4.50 pm. There will normally be clubs on Wednesday afternoons and team matches.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you to check the School website www.sps.ie for periodic calendar updates.

We look forward to welcoming you all to Sutton Park Senior School.

Afternoon Prep

Attendance at Afternoon Prep from Monday to Thursday is compulsory for students from First to Third Year, unless a parent letter excusing the student for one or all afternoons is submitted to the Deputy Principal. Please note that if a student is excused from Afternoon Prep, it is expected that their homework record will be satisfactory; otherwise they may be required to attend Afternoon Prep.

The completion of homework assignments plays a very important role in helping students to understand and to absorb the concepts learned in class. The school offers students a period of Afternoon Prep on **Monday to Friday from 3.40 pm to 4.40 pm**. One hour is not sufficient to complete homework and revision so students are expected to continue at home.

On Friday afternoons, attendance at Afternoon Prep is not compulsory; but you must tick the Friday box if you wish your son/daughter to stay.

Your son /daughter may have games practices at Prep time so please state on the form when you know the afternoons games are taking place.

The attendance schedule is enclosed for your completion. We thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this attendance schedule, which should be given to the form teacher one week after the start of the new term.

Junior & Senior Cycle Subjects

In the Junior Cycle (First, Second & Third Years) the majority of subjects are compulsory. Nearly all start in mixed ability groups in First Year, and are split into distinct Honours and Ordinary levels at different times throughout the Junior Cycle.

In the Senior Cycle (Fifth & Sixth Years) subjects are taught at Honours/Mixed Ability level only or are divided into distinct Honours and Ordinary level groups.

Students should tick their selective subjects and levels on the Subjects Forms enclosed.

Supervised Evening Study

Sutton Park School offers Senior School pupils the option to attend Supervised Evening Study from 5.30 pm to 8.45 pm, Monday to Friday during Term time. Pupils may also avail of an Evening Meal provided in the Dining Rooms. Please inform the Canteen at morning break on the day of your Evening Study if you require an evening meal, payment must be made to the Canteen at this time.

The Timetable will normally run as follows:-

From end of Prep/Games – 5.00 pm	Break
5.00 pm – 5.30 pm	Evening Meal / Break
5.30 pm – 6.30 pm	First Study Period
6.30 pm – 6.45 pm	Break
6.45 pm – 7.45 pm	Second Study Period
7.45 pm – 8.00 pm	Break
8.00 pm – 8.45 pm	Third Study Period

Pupils who wish to attend must be prepared to work quietly and diligently during each study period. To avoid disruption, we regret that, other than in exceptional circumstances, we cannot allow pupils to attend on a casual basis. Please complete the enclosed form if you wish to avail of this service.

Medications Dispensing

From time to time the nurse or designated members of staff are asked to dispense paracetamol or other over-the-counter remedies to Senior School students who have headaches, sore throats etc. On the advice of the School Safety Officer, we are making parents aware of this service and giving them the opportunity to **withhold permission** to issue non-prescription medications, or to limit or add to this service.

There are several options on the form enclosed, including a space where special conditions should be described, if necessary. It is in everyone's interest that you return a completed form to the Main Office as soon as possible. A copy of this will be given to our school nurse for her records.

Please note that in the event that you do not return this form, we will assume that you HAVE GIVEN PERMISSION to dispense non-prescription medications.

General Information

Summer Hockey Camp 2007

The hockey camp will run from Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th of August. It is recommended that all students interested in playing in a school hockey team attend. The cost of the camp is €35 (payment to be made at the first session, with cheques made payable to Sutton Park School). All students involved must have a gum-shield and shin pads for safety reasons.

Times:

Grade 6, 1st & 2nd Years	10:00 - 12:00 noon
3rd to 6th Years	13:30 - 15:30 pm

N.B It is vital that any boys' All-Ireland squad member attend the afternoon training sessions.

All enquiries regarding the camp can be made by contacting Mr Scully at the school.

Summer Basketball Camp 2007

The Basketball camp will be run from Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th of August. It is recommended that all students interested in playing in a school basketball team attend. The cost of the camp is €15 (payment to be made at the first session, with cheques made payable to Sutton Park School or pay by cash).

Times:

Grade 6, 1st and 2nd Years	13:00 - 14:30 pm
3rd to 6th Years	11:00 - 12:30 pm

N.B Please note we organised both camps (hockey and Basketball) in a way so they are perfectly compatible for our students in the morning one activity and the other in the afternoon. So please bring a packed lunch (full of liquids) and enjoy a full day of sport!

All enquiries regarding the camp can be made by contacting Mr Dossena on 087 0550692

All Ireland Hockey Championships

In October [Wednesday 26th/Thursday 27th/Friday 28th] we are hosting the All Ireland Schools Hockey Championships. The first game of this prestigious tournament takes place on our hockey pitch. I know that to host a tournament of this size is a huge honour and it will be a excellent way to kick off celebrations of our 50th Year.

50th Anniversary 1957 - 2007

In September 1957, Sutton Park School opened its doors as the first co-educational and multi-denominational school in Ireland. To date with over 400 students currently enrolled, we celebrate 50 years of nurturing and developing all that is best in our pupils.

To mark this special occasion we will host a celebratory 50th Anniversary Weekend in November 2007 where all past and present students, parents and teachers will come together to celebrate this remarkable achievement. We have benefited greatly by the legacy of those gone before us. It is now our turn to enhance this legacy for those who will follow.

The festivities are planned for 24th and 25th November 2007 and will commence on the Saturday afternoon with an open day for alumni to visit and meet with past and present teachers, tour the school and observe the great advances made at Sutton Park today.

That evening, a celebratory banquet will take place at the School and on Sunday afternoon, we will host a pupil's hockey blitz followed by a Jazz brunch.

We have also organised during November, a party for the junior school during their school day and that will be followed by a "battle of the bands" afternoon for the students of the secondary school. It promises to be a very memorable weekend.

Check the website www.sps.ie or email 50years@sps.ie for more information. More details will follow soon.

Staff Changes

This year we are joined by two new teachers. Miss Houlihan joins our Art department and takes over from Mrs Garvey and Miss Pender. Mrs Garvey was Head of Art for twenty years at Sutton Park and last term she announced her decision to enter what appears to be a very active and creative retirement. In creating a full time Art position I know that Miss Houlihan will bring a great deal of stability and continuity to the Art department. She joins us from Santa Sabina School and has many years experience teaching examination classes to all students in both the Junior Certificate and Senior Certificate levels.

We also welcome Mrs Kummert who joins the English Department for the Christmas term, helping us cover for Mrs Colgan's maternity leave.

ECIS Accreditation Inspection

It seems completely fitting that during our 50th Year we will also be inspected by the ECIS organisation in order to renew our accreditation as an International School. In early November – just over Half Term a full inspection team will arrive on the site and observe the school in action. As many of you know this is the combination of two year's work and it gives us all a chance to review and renew our policies and procedures. Our international identity is an essential part of our ethos.

Calendar

This is a very important year for the school and I want to draw your attention to a number of significant events . You will of course receive more information on these as the events draw closer. Please take the time to look at the Calendar on our website. Regular updates and further information on these and other events will appear there during the course of the term.

School Musical

In October the School will be presenting a major school production. On Monday, 15th October to Friday 19th October the performances of the musical “High School Musical” will take place. These productions will afford the opportunity for many of our students to be involved in a wide range of roles. There are singing parts, opportunities for dance, lighting and sound roles and of course plenty of opportunities for those with musical talent to showcase their talents.

We welcome parental help for costumes and makeup if you wish to volunteer. Please contact Mrs Howard if you wish to help.

Auditions will begin on Wednesday 29th August from 2pm and every day until Friday and over the weekend.

Mrs Howard hopes to announce the cast list on Monday, 3rd September.

New Computers

We have spent a great deal of the last few weeks of the summer term and the holiday period in preparing for the arrival of a significant number of new computers. The servers were installed in the last few weeks of last term. Installing new computer equipment into schools always creates some initial difficulties, but you will note a significant improvement in our ICT infra-structure in the coming weeks.

Mr Newman [Board member and until recently the Parent representative on the Board of Management] and myself visited Dunshaughlin Community School over the holidays to observe the wide range of teaching and learning applications that can be applied in a school environment once you have the right ICT infra-structure. We both came back full of ideas.

I would like to invite any interested parents – especially those with an IT background to join a small working party one school starts. I recognise that most of you are very busy people and have no intention of pinning you down to hours and hours of meetings. However, it would be really interesting to put together a small group of some 5 or 6 parents with a special interest and expertise in this area to plan further developments in our ICT system.

If you are interested please contact the School Office and they will arrange an appointment.

Information Handbook

A copy of the School Information Handbook will be available after the first full week of term.

Instrumental Music Tuition

Individual tuition in piano, violin, guitar, cello, flute and recorder are available to students at Sutton Park School. Provided appropriate staff is available, we may also offer tuition in voice, and in clarinet and saxophone. Parents should enquire from the Main Office if tuition is available for a particular instrument.

Piano fees, as indicated on the current Fee List will be charged to your account each term. It is not permitted to pay on a part-term basis and we regret that, other than in exceptional circumstances, no credit will be given for absences. Normally a half term's notice is required if you wish to withdraw your child from Music tuition.

Fees for tuition in all other instruments are payable by arrangement with the individual teacher concerned.

If you wish to have your child(ren) to be instructed in any of these instruments, please complete and return this form and return it to the Main Office before the beginning of Term. Please note that you should complete the form even if your child(ren) were being taught last year. The teacher concerned will contact you in due course.

Current Contact Details

Sutton Park School should always have current contact details in case your child becomes ill or if there is an emergency. We update our parent lists annually and ask you to please complete the relevant details and return to the School Office. In addition, if your details change during the year, please **advise Reception at +353 (0)1 839 9400**. We ask separated parents to give the details of the parent with whom the child(ren) normally resides with during the week, under Parent 1 of the Parent Contact Details Form. This form is enclosed for your completion.

Absence Letter

Any Parent/Guardian of any student that will be absent from school for any reason must contact the school before school starts and inform reception of their absence, and the reason for this, so that the relevant teachers can be informed.

Boarding Students

Boarding students arrival date is Sunday, 26th August.

Homework Diaries

All Junior School Students and Senior School students from Years 1st to 4th will be given a Homework Diary at the beginning of term. This diary must be used to record any homework given by their teachers.

We look forward to seeing you in the new term.

