



17 September 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

**Senior Phase Students (S4-S6)**

For most of our senior phase students, this will be the first year that they will experience being in the school building learning, and hopefully with limited disruptions, while preparing for their National Qualifications. The last two years have been challenging for everyone involved and that has meant that our students are facing new situations in courses, feeling new emotions about peer relationships and how to balance workload, preparation, study and home life.

Our students would normally have had developed study techniques, time management strategies, ideas on how to deal with juggling outside school commitments and homework, plus explored strategies to deal with the pressures of their timetables. This year we will be working with all of the senior students to develop these areas and help them manage their anxieties about workload and balance. It is important to remember that in a normal year students would tackle their timetables and have points within the year that they felt more overwhelmed or anxious than others, points when they had increased workload and conflicting pressures on their time. The last two years have been extremely turbulent and the students haven't prepared in their traditional way for their National qualifications due to differing final assessment methods, therefore we are expecting that our students will need extra support, encouragement and assistance both emotionally and to develop resilience.

Employers, colleges and universities are looking for students to study subjects at the highest level possible that they can, and with the greatest number of subjects that they can throughout the year. This allows them to see not just the grades at the end of the year, but also how students learn to deal with pressure points, time management, prioritisation and many more employability skills that assessment results don't allow them to judge. It is normal for students to feel some pressure or worry about coursework in Senior Phase and strategies are both in place, and being further developed, due to the unique set of circumstances we are in, to deal with those throughout the year.

If your child asks about reducing their subject load this year, please bear the above advice in mind before making a final decision. We would encourage all of our students to continue to dig deep and work hard, come to school ready to learn and to keep communicating with us so that we can support them at whatever stage they are in on their learning journeys.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine McNay  
Depute Headteacher