

St Fergal's College



Wellbeing Newsletter

A Positive Start to the New School Year

Welcome Back!

A very warm welcome back to all our students, families and staff as we begin another school year here in **St Fergal's College, Rathdowney**.

The return to school is a time of new beginnings. For some students, it means returning to familiar classrooms, friends and teachers. For others, particularly our new First Years, it means taking the exciting step into **secondary school**.

Whatever stage your child is at, the beginning of a new school year can bring a mixture of excitement, nerves, anticipation and even a little worry. These feelings are completely normal. Our aim is to support every student to feel **safe, connected, confident and ready to learn**.

Ethos

Guided by its mission statement, St Fergal's College, Rathdowney, is committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful and supportive learning environment where every student is valued, encouraged and empowered to achieve their full potential. The school promotes excellence in teaching and learning, equality of opportunity, personal responsibility and active engagement within the wider community. Through a culture of care, collaboration and mutual respect, St Fergal's College nurtures the academic, social and personal development of each student, preparing young people to become confident, compassionate and responsible citizens.

Starting Secondary School – A Big Step!

Starting secondary school is an important milestone.

There are new subjects, new teachers, new routines, different classrooms and perhaps a much bigger school environment to get used to. It can feel like a lot at first!

It is important to remember that **settling in takes time**.

Students don't have to know everything on their first day. Asking questions, making mistakes, trying new things and gradually becoming familiar with the school routine are all part of the journey.

For our First Years:

Give yourself time to settle in.

Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Talk to your teachers if something is worrying you.

Get to know the people around you.

Try something new – clubs, activities and sports are great ways to make friends.

Remember that everyone was new once!

You don't have to have it all figured out on Day One.

Attendance Matters (Anseo)

One of the most important things students can do for their wellbeing and education is to **come to school regularly**.

Every school day is an opportunity to learn something new, spend time with friends, build relationships with teachers and take part in school life.

Missing school doesn't just mean missing one lesson. Sometimes, being absent can mean missing an important explanation, a piece of classwork, a chance to connect with friends or an experience that helps students feel part of the school community.

Regular attendance helps students to:

- Keep up with their learning
- Maintain friendships and relationships
- Develop confidence and routine
- Feel connected to the school community
- Make progress towards their goals
- ☺ Support positive wellbeing

Every day counts. Every student matters.

Of course, there will be times when a student is genuinely unwell or unable to attend. When this happens, communication between home and school is important.

Building Healthy Routines

A good morning can make a big difference to how we feel throughout the school day.

As the school year begins, families can help students establish simple routines:

The Night Before

- Pack the schoolbag.
- Check what books and equipment are needed.
- Prepare the school uniform.
- Set an alarm.
- Aim for a good night's sleep.
- Put phones and devices away at an appropriate time.

In the Morning

- Get up with enough time to avoid rushing.
- Have breakfast where possible.
- Drink some water.
- Leave home with enough time to arrive at school calmly.
- Start the day with a positive mindset.

Small routines can help reduce stress and make mornings much easier.

Looking After Our Wellbeing

Wellbeing is about more than simply being happy. It is about learning how to look after ourselves, manage challenges and recognise when we need support.

This year, we encourage students to focus on the **5 Ways to Wellbeing**:

Be Active

Movement, exercise and sport can help our physical and mental wellbeing.

Connect

Spend time with friends, family, teachers and people who make you feel supported.

Keep Learning

Trying something new and challenging ourselves can build confidence and resilience.

♥ Give

Helping someone else, showing kindness or getting involved in our school community can make a real difference.

Take Notice

Take a moment to notice how you are feeling. A short break, some fresh air or simply slowing down can help.

It's Okay to Ask for Help

Starting a new school year can sometimes feel overwhelming.

If a student is worried about school, friendships, learning, attendance or anything else, **please encourage them to talk to someone.**

They could speak to:

- A parent or guardian
- A teacher
- Their Year Head
- A trusted member of staff
- A friend
- Another adult they feel comfortable talking to
- Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness.

It is a sign that you are looking after yourself.

A Message to Our Students

Whether you are joining us for the first time or returning for another year, remember:

You belong here.

You don't need to be perfect.

You don't need to have everything figured out.

You just need to keep showing up, keep trying and keep asking for help when you need it.

There will be good days and difficult days. There will be successes, mistakes, challenges and opportunities.

Take the year **one day at a time.**

Show up.

Get involved.

Be kind.

Ask for help.

Believe in yourself.

Your journey starts with one day, one lesson and one positive step at a time.

A Message to Parents & Guardians

Thank you for the important role you play in supporting your young person as they return to school.

Encouraging good routines, regular attendance, healthy sleep, open communication and a positive attitude towards school can have a significant impact on a student's experience.

If your child is finding the transition back to school difficult, please don't wait for a small worry to become a big one. **Talk to us.**

Working together, home and school can help every student feel supported and ready to succeed.

Here's to a Great Year!

As we begin the new school year, let's work together to create a school community where every student feels:

Seen. Supported. Included. Connected.

We wish all our students a happy, healthy and successful school year.

Welcome back to St Fergal's College!