



Loreto Secondary School Clonmel

Coleville Road, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary

Wednesday 30th August 2023

Arrangements for Thursday 31st August, Friday 1st September, Saturday 2nd September and Monday 4th September

Dear Parents / Guardians,

As we journey through these difficult days, we continue to support each other by our prayers and our presence together. As a school community we are doing all that we can to help our students and families so impacted by the terrible tragedy of last Friday evening.

Although our return to school timetable has remained unaffected to date, the Board of Management has decided, in consultation with NEPS (our Educational Psychologists), that our school will be closed on Thursday as a mark of respect to Nicole and her family and to facilitate all those who wish to attend the funeral.

The Board of Management has also decided, in consultation with NEPS, that on Friday while the school is open to allow us to prepare for the funerals of Grace and Luke, there will be no class for students. After the funerals the school and our Sacred Space will be open from 1pm to 3pm to provide an opportunity for any student who would like to drop-in to meet some of their classmates and/or teachers.

Thursday 31st August

Nicole (Nikki) Murphy's funeral (RIP link [here](#))

There will be a Loreto Guard of Honour for Nicole's cortège as it arrives to the church and again following the funeral Mass. The Mass is in St John the Baptist Church, Kilcash (Eircode E91 A4E9) and commences at 12 noon Thursday 31st August 2023.

We are asking our current students, to join with our Class of 2023, to form this Guard of Honour. In making this request, we are conscious that for some this might be difficult, so please be assured that it is ok not to be part of this and to be present in other ways on the morning.

We are asking the following of any parent/guardian who would like their child/children to participate in Loreto's Guard of Honour at the funeral:

- Students should be accompanied by a parent/guardian please.
- Car parking is very restricted in Kilcash, if possible, please car-pool.
- We are requesting current students attending the funeral to wear their uniform. You may also like to bring the school jacket and perhaps an umbrella.
- Please arrive at the church by 10:45am which is when our Guard of Honour will form.
- Parents/Guardians may wish to stand with their child/children.
- The Guard of Honour will form as follows:
 - Class of 2023 (i.e., last year's 6th years who will not be in uniform) nearest the church,
 - then 6th Years,
 - then 5th Years, etc

whilst also recognising parental choice as to with whom and where families might stand.

- Loreto staff members will coordinate the Guard of Honour.

Friday 1st September

Grace and Luke McSweeney's funerals (RIP links [here](#) and [here](#))

On Friday 1st September Grace and Luke McSweeney's funerals will take place. We will be asking our students to volunteer to stand together outside the school walls to give silent support to their family as the cortège passes Loreto. Students who wish to be involved are requested to come to school by 10:15am on Friday in uniform, perhaps also bring the school coat and an umbrella. As soon as the cortège has passed the school the students will be free to go home or to follow the cortège to attend the funeral.

Saturday 2nd September

Zoey Coffey's funeral (RIP link [here](#))

On Saturday 2nd September Zoey's funeral will take place. The Board of Management know that some of our staff and students will be attending Zoey's funeral. Again, we request any students who are attending the funeral might consider wearing their school uniform.

Monday 4th September

Return to school

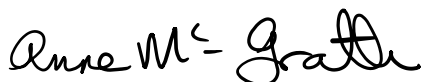
School will continue as normal on Monday with TYs attending their work experience and all other students will be here in school.

In the coming days many students will wish to attend the funerals. These will undoubtedly be very emotional events, so the coming days will be challenging. We would advise that your child/children be supported in this by you attending alongside them and that you keep in close contact with them after the funeral services.

Furthermore, on return to school students may be in class with relatives or close friends of those who have lost their lives. It may be beneficial to talk to your child/children about how they can support each other on their return to school. We, of course, will do this also in assemblies and in class.

As we continue to journey through these most difficult days, please know that we are here for our students, including all those of our Class of 2023, in the coming days, weeks and months, and we are holding them and all families in our prayers.

Yours faithfully,



Anne Mc Grath,
Principal



Sarah Rice,
Deputy Principal

HOW TO COPE WHEN SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS

- Reach out – people do care
- Talk to your friends, family and teachers - talking is the most healing medicine
- Remember you are normal and having normal reactions – don't label yourself as crazy or mad
- It is acceptable to cry
- It is acceptable to smile
- If your feelings and reactions seem different from those of your friends, remember everyone reacts differently
- When the stress level is high there is a temptation to try to numb the feelings perhaps with alcohol and drugs, this complicates matters rather than bringing relief
- Some people find that writing or drawing is helpful. What about writing a note or letter to the family of the person who died or the person themselves?
- Spend time with people who have a positive influence on you
- Make as many daily decisions as possible. This will give you a feeling of control over your life, e.g. if someone asks you what you want to eat – answer them, even if you're not sure
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal – don't try to fight them – they'll decrease over time and become less painful
- Make a special effort to take care of yourself during this time. Try to get some extra sleep, eat nutritious foods and get some exercise, even if it is just a walk
- Sticking to your "normal" routine helps. Structure your time – keep busy
- Take time out – go for a cycle or kick a football
- Provide some balance to the negative things that have gone on by doing something special or fun for yourself. Think about something that makes you feel good. Then make it happen – like going to the cinema, listening to music, calling a friend, etc. Laughter is good medicine. Watch a funny movie or play a silly game with younger children to lighten your spirits
- Use of social media can help but do not rely on it as your only source of support
- Useful websites: www.spunout.ie; www.youth.ie; www.reachout.com.au

Above all, realise that what you are experiencing is normal following a traumatic event. Be understanding of yourself and others.