

# Mount Lourdes Student Council

## Progress Bulletin - 2023/2024

This bulletin has been produced by the Student Council to summarise some of the key issues addressed at formal Student Council meetings over the past academic year, actions taken, and progress made to date.



### Warm Weather' Uniform

This was a popular request from many form classes, given the five weeks of hot weather in May/June 2023. The issue was brought forward by Yr 9 councillors Kacey Gallagher, Cora McGrath and Ciara McCrystal. The students suggested a new policy of short-sleeve shirts and no ties to be worn in summer term as a means of coping with spells of hot weather. Investigation of this idea and consultation with local uniform suppliers raised several new issues related to the following:

- MLE students tend to wear jumpers/blazers, even in hot weather
- Extra costs of summer wear, at a financially sensitive time
- Difficulty in procuring the green shirt colour by manufacturers

- Impact of change on the school's uniform standards
- Low likelihood of very warm weather in Co. Fermanagh

Actions that were agreed on included the need for the school to actively promote sensible precautions during periods of hot weather such as greater hydration opportunities, relocation from very warm classrooms, leniency in wearing the school tie, and a windows open policy.

### Vending machines

Yr 11 councillors Brijit Varghese and Niamh Hegarty brought forward the issue of long canteen queues and the desire for more vending machines in school. In a meeting with Mrs Colton (school bursar), discussion was focused around the advantages of students purchasing healthy food in the canteen.

Any profit made in the canteen is reinvested to further improve the food selection available. Research by Mrs Colton into vending machine providers questioned the health of the snacks on offer and the high prices charged. Two new water vending machines have been put in place in the St Fanchea's Building and in the main school. The online I Pay system is currently speeding up canteen efficiency and it is hoped that this system will also provide the canteen with the ability to accept food orders for pre-packaging and quicker distribution later in the school day.



### Toilet Maintenance

Yr 14 councillors raised the issue of a number of toilet cubicles being out of action due to damaged locks or plumbing related issues. This has caused overcrowding in toilet areas and potentially affected student punctuality. A meeting with Mrs M Cosgrove (Cleaning Supervisor) led to an audit of toilet facilities and a plumber has been engaged in maintenance. Some of the toilet facilities are of an age where finding spare parts can be difficult, but generally progress has been good.

### Football Pitches

Year 13 councillors raised the issue of football pitch improvement. Mrs Cullen has been in discussions with Prunty Pitches about the drainage and aeration of the grass pitch and this work will take place in the near future. There are ongoing discussions around the longer-term development of the school's football pitch as part of a wider collaboration with Fermanagh GAA. Discussions on a future project will continue in the near future. Also, the school's 3G pitch is currently being improved. Mr K McManus (Caretaker) is washing the surface and a resanding process, provided by an outside agency, will occur when this initial work is completed.



## Mobile Phone Policy Consultation

The Student Council were involved in consultation around the school's changes to mobile phone usage. The councillors felt that mobile phone reliance in Mount Lourdes has become too great and that restrictions would be beneficial to students' mental health and wellbeing. In particular the negative issue of mobile phone usage in reducing conversations and the building of friendships was highlighted. It was agreed by all that there are essential times when phone usage should be allowed under teacher direction eg, for learning in the classroom, access to Microsoft Teams and listening exercises etc in languages.



Student Council Meeting in Action

## Gym Access

Access to the school gym was requested for Yr 13 and 14 students during free periods. Mrs Cullen informed the council that she wants school facilities to be used to full potential where possible, for the benefit of students, including the gym. However, a major concern exists around health and safety as well as insurance coverage against accidents. Use of the gym would only be possible under qualified supervisors which the school would need to employ. A number of student councillors were tasked with researching information from local gyms and GAA clubs. Mrs Cullen advised that this request would be kept under review in the near future when development ideas were being planned.

## Key Developments

September 2024 saw the introduction of the updated school blazer. The new blazer now contains reflective arm strips, as requested and designed by last year's Student Council. Also, the school's tennis pavilion building has been renovated, redecorated and completely refurbished as a lovely area for students and teachers to use for both curricular and extra-curricular activities. The new hub has 'wellbeing'

as its core aim and will be able to be booked for use with groups. The Fund-raising Committee are currently in the process of naming the new hub.



## Leadership Workshop

Student Councillors received an inspirational leadership workshop on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, facilitated by Mannok Chief Financial Officer Mrs Brenda Rennick. The leadership session focused on developing leadership skills and qualities. The students found this experience highly educational and extremely motivational. The session ended with a very productive question and answer session. Mrs Rennick is a past pupil of Mount Lourdes and the school is grateful for her work with the Student Council.



Leadership Workshop – April 2024





‘The Courtyard’

### **Student Council Elections 2024/2025**

We thank all who represented their year groups so well on the Student Council of 2023/2024. The councillors involved did themselves, their families and the school proud. Over the coming weeks, the process of electing a new Student Council for 2024-2025 will occur. Membership of the Mount Lourdes Student Council is a great honour. It is also an excellent opportunity to develop leadership and teamworking skills. We encourage pupils to consider stepping forward to be part of the new team for the current year. Good luck to all who stand for election.

