



23 April 2020

Re: Progression of Recommendations of the Report of Independent Review Group (IRG) on the use of tablet devices at Ratoath College

Dear Parents/Guardians

I hope you and your family are keeping well in these very unusual and difficult times.

As you are aware we recently published the Report of Independent Review Group (IRG) on the use of tablet devices in Ratoath College on our school website www.ratoathcollege.ie. The members of the Independent Review Group (IRG) were Dr Carl Ó Dálaigh, former Deputy Chief Inspector, Department of Education and Skills, Ms. Cora Dunne, former Principal, Boyne Community School, Trim and Dr Ann Marcus Quinn, lecturer, Technical Communications and Instructional Design, University of Limerick.

Since the publication of the report, Ratoath College Senior Management Team have had a series of meetings with Ratoath College staff, Ratoath College Board of Management, Ratoath College Parents Association, LMETB CE, LMETB Directors of Schools and Organisation, Support and Development, LMETB heads of Buildings and the IRG in order to discuss the recommendations of the report and to progress the recommendations in a co-ordinated manner. The ICT Department and the Senior Management Team, Ratoath College have also had a series of meetings with external ICT related providers of CPD.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on progress at present:

- A **Book Rental Scheme** is to be introduced for all students in Junior Cycle at Ratoath College (1st, 2nd & 3rd Year) for September 2020. Book orders are currently being placed by the school with the LMETB procured book company. An application for additional funding has been forwarded to the Department of Education and Skills to assist with the initial cost of setting up this Book Rental Scheme at Junior Cycle. As you will be aware the school currently has a Book Rental Scheme at Senior Cycle .
- **Student Direct Costs** for the Academic Year 2020/2021 have been reviewed by the Board of Management of Ratoath College, forwarded to LMETB and ratified by LMETB at their Board Meeting on 27 February 2020. These will be communicated to parents/guardians of Ratoath College shortly. Incoming 1st Year parents/guardians will not be required to purchase an iPad for their son/daughter.
- **ICT planning** for the school for next year has been finalised. This will include an upgrade of the Wi - Fi across the building, linking the two servers in the school, the purchase of 2 new sets of devices (which can be moved from room to room as required for teaching and learning/demonstrations). Teachers will decide what classes they wish to use devices in alongside the textbooks. The LMETB Buildings Department are working with the Department of Education and Skills in securing the relevant ICT grants. The School will also utilise funding from the Digital Strategy for Schools Grant for implementing some of these plans.
- Plans are underway to transfer resources from **Schoology** to an alternative platform used by LMETB schools e.g MS Teams. This will mean a phased reduction of Schoology over a period of time at Ratoath College. The LMETB ICT Department will work closely with school management and teaching staff to facilitate this phased approach to change.

Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh sí



- **The appointment of post holders** at API and APII levels at the school continues as per Department of Education and Skills Circular Letter 0003/2018 and **ICT Co-ordination** will be one of the duties assigned to a post holder. This person will have responsibility for developing and reviewing the use of ICT in the school in partnership with all stakeholders. The post holder will also have responsibility for working on the school's long term ICT infrastructure planning.
- A series of **ICT related CPD sessions** are being scheduled for teaching staff at the school to enhance the range of CPD currently completed by the staff at the school in recent years. Provision of CPD will be facilitated by the PDST National Support Service, ICT Department Personnel, LMETB, Teaching Staff at Ratoath College and other providers as appropriate.

Thanking you for your continued support.

Please continue to follow the advice of the Chief Medical Officer and the HSE pertaining to COVID 19 and stay safe.

Kind Regards

Séamus Meehan
Principal