



St. Anne's School

Ballymany Cross

The Curragh

Co. Kildare

Ph: + 353 45 441 494

Fax: + 353 45 441737

R56 VH67

Email: office@stannesthecurreagh.ie

Principal: Pauline Dempsey

Roll No. 19277B

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Dear Parent/guardians

I am aware that the difficulties we are experiencing in opening the new building are causing concern and some anxiety to families due to the uncertainty around when it is due to open. I am writing to bring you up to date on the situation so far and to clarify why we are in the position we are in.

We were only advised that there was a problem with our electricity connection late on Friday 28th August. This was the date it was supposed to be connected, leaving Monday 31st August and Tuesday 1st September for testing the system and Wednesday 2nd for cleaning the building and the official handover. There was also uncertainty as to when the connection could now be established.

We pulled in as many influential contacts as we could to try to get the situation resolved and we were finally connected this morning thanks to our contact.

We were also able, thanks to a retired board member, to bring in soldiers from the Curragh to help move furniture and large pieces of equipment yesterday. Please remember we had to move nine classes, two internally and seven to the new build from our old prefabs at the bottom of our site.

Today we were advised not to go into the building while testing was going on due to the large numbers of our staff who needed to access it. You will all be very aware that there are insurance issues to be taken into account regarding everything that happens in this building, especially as we have not yet had the official handover. The contractors involved have been very supportive of us and will be on site tomorrow to continue work.

It is important to recognise that from the schools point of view the classes have to be physically set up and prepared for the pupils. Just having access to a room is not enough nor is placing tables and chairs within that room. Resources have to be re-organised and available for use from the outset. Staff have to unpack the many, many boxes of work, every single piece having been designed and created to meet each pupil's specific educational needs in each subject area. This structure is essential if we are to provide at even a basic

level for our children and it would be unreasonable to expect them to have anything less on their first day back.

As for the reopening day for this building, all I can advise is, assuming all goes well with the testing and assuming the building is compliant with all regulations and the handover goes ahead, and please note that this is completely outside of the control of the school, we will be open on Wednesday 9th September as we have, as a staff, prepared for this.

In the event that problems arise from a construction point of view or any compliance issues arise, I will keep you informed at the earliest time possible of any changes.

I regret having to pass on this information and on behalf of the school, make a commitment to open as soon as we are allowed to. I hope this goes some way to addressing the confused messages that are out there.

Please feel free to contact the school if you want clarity on any of the information provided

Kind Regards

Pauline Dempsey
Principal