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Welcome

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Sandford Park School.

Founded in 1922, Sandford Park is a small and distinctive, private co-educational day school. There are approximately 250 students aged between 12 and 18 years. It is situated on six acres of secluded and beautiful wooded grounds, close to Dublin's city centre.

The non-denominational nature of the school is central to its unique character and draws students from a wide variety of backgrounds, countries and cultures, together in a secure and intellectually stimulating environment.

The school is administered by a Board



of Governors, mainly former Sandford students, whose children have either attended or currently attend the school. It is evident from our alumni network how much former students cherish their Sandford Park School experience as a formative part of their development. I would be delighted if you were to visit the school and appreciate it for yourself.

Edith Byrne - Principal.

Our Mission

Sandford Park School's mission is to educate its Irish and international students in a safe, disciplined and caring environment. Our aim is to prepare them to be responsible citizens. We equip our students with the skills to enable them to think creatively, reason critically and communicate effectively. We accomplish this by fostering a love of learning, respect for cultural diversity and a strong

home/school partnership. Our emphasis is on outstanding teaching which is at the core of Sandford Park School's philosophy. We focus on the needs of each individual student and encourage them to fulfil their potential, both inside and outside the classroom, so that they will acquire the self-confidence and personal attributes necessary to succeed in whatever walk of life they may pursue.



A unique learning environment

The fully-rounded nature of the educational experience at Sandford Park is what sets our school apart. The meticulous, student-centred nature of our academic approach is complemented by a comprehensive range of co-curricular activities, designed to equip students with the social and creative skills needed for a successful and fulfilling adult life.

A Sandford Park education provides:

- a strong focus on Pastoral Care and individual well-being.
- a highly regarded, well planned and structured Transition Year.
- high levels of engagement, and notable successes, in a range of co-curricular activities, including sport, debating and music.
- state-of-the-art facilities, including a multi-purpose hall, a library and a world class music centre.
- an education highly commended by the Department of Education and Skills 'Whole-School Evaluation' - which can be seen at www.sandfordparkschool.ie
- smaller sized classes to facilitate individual attention.
- a broad-based, liberal education centred on academic achievement.
- expert, motivated and progressive teaching staff, who are committed to ongoing professional development.

“Our son had six very happy and fulfilling years at Sandford Park. We now look forward to the same positive experience for our daughter.”

Bill and Catherine Harte, parents of Hannah, Form 3 and Harry, Class of 2013.

Excellent teachers

As a school founded by teachers, Sandford Park is truly committed to progressive teaching methods and continuous professional development. As well as being passionate and committed to the full and rounded education of their students, our highly

experienced teachers continue to explore their particular subjects and interests. The ambience of a small class allows staff to interact individually with each student, addressing their difficulties and feeding their curiosity as appropriate.

Committed mentors

Ours is an environment in which the teacher's role goes far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. In addition to their involvement in pastoral care, teachers bring their own individual interests, skills and expertise to bear on co-curricular activities, thereby enhancing each student's

holistic educational development. Their consistent flexibility and willingness ensures they are available to parents and students for advice, support or discussion throughout the term, and not just at parent teacher conferences.



Curriculum

Sandford Park School offers a broadly-based, challenging and liberal education. There are two class groups per year and high priority is given to academic excellence as we prepare our students for the Irish state examinations 'Junior Certificate' and 'Leaving Certificate'. We are experienced in helping students from all over the world make a successful transition into the Irish education system.

Junior Cycle

While the Junior Certificate syllabus is important in its own right, it is also the point in a student's development where he/she is exploring their options and opportunities for the future. To facilitate this, Form I exposes students to a wide range of subjects, allowing them to make an informed choice

about those they wish to carry forward to the Junior Certificate exams. This is where the seeds of academic excellence are sown, where ambition and interest in a subject take root. The overwhelming majority of subjects sat by Sandford Park students in the Junior Certificate are taken at higher level.

Senior Cycle

Transition Year

Transition Year is a compulsory element in the curriculum of Sandford Park, forming an essential part of each student's education. The programme is built around a range of academic, personal, vocational, social and cultural activities. These activities draw on the wealth of skills and talents available among teachers, providing students with challenging and stimulating experiences. Excellent resources and effective co-ordination result in a superb learning atmosphere and foster a sense of enjoyment and engagement in learning. Throughout Transition

Year, students continue their regular studies in the core subjects: English, Irish, Maths and French, so as to maintain the momentum towards the Leaving Certificate. In addition, they sample options outside the standard curriculum. In recent years these have included architectural studies, debating, film studies and Russian. Then there are the activities which promote active citizenship and involvement in the local community: participation in the Sandford Social Innovator programme; fund-raising and working with a nominated charity; work experience placements; and

participation in the President's/Gáisce Award - to bronze level. We encourage students to pursue this to gold level. Continuous assessment is a key component of Transition Year and reporting to parents is comprehensive. The programme is continually evaluated so that changes can be made to further enhance the learning experience in subsequent years.

Leaving Certificate

The Leaving Certificate is a two year programme. From the outset, teachers, students, guidance counsellor and parents/guardians, work together as a team on subject options, career guidance and ongoing progress, to ensure each student is best placed to achieve their maximum potential. Teachers are available to parents

throughout the year, for discussion or advice. The majority of Leaving Certificate exam papers are taken at higher level. As our goal is a fully rounded education, a careful balance is struck between the rigours of academic study that leads to a career and the co-curricular activities that equip a student for life. As the Leaving Certificate is recognised by universities worldwide, Sandford Park attracts a strong international contingent, further broadening the experience and perspective of students and teachers alike. We consistently have pupils from the USA, Canada, Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Africa, whose parents have chosen Sandford Park because of the options it opens up for their sons and daughters.



“There is a real sense of community at Sandford Park. I made great friends there. I was free to pursue all of my passions in Sport, Music and Drama. The teachers really care and are dedicated to the student as a whole person.”

James Orr, Class of 2013

Sport

Sport and physical activity play a significant role in the life of the school. We encourage all students to participate in team sports and to embody the Corinthian spirit: *Mens sana in corpore sano*. A sports council, composed of students, staff, parents and board members meets regularly to manage policy and further enhance the performance and enjoyment of sport within the school.

Sandford Park offers a number of representative team sports: rugby, hockey, basketball, cricket, tennis and badminton, led and trained by

experienced coaches who have played at high levels themselves. Students also have access to volleyball, a running club and keep fit classes.

In recent years, Sandford Park has won the Senior Leinster Schools Development Cup in Hockey, the Senior Alf O'Connell Cricket Cup and reached the final of the JCT Rugby 'Leinster Shield' and U13 Harry Risk Cricket Cup Final. We have links with a number of institutions, including YMCA Cricket Club, Wanderers RFC and UCD, whose first-class facilities are available to the school.



Music

Music is at the heart of the Sandford Park School experience. We are proud of our outstanding reputation for music in the curriculum, choral work and instrumental tuition. In Form I, all students have the opportunity to study music. They can also choose from a wide range of instruments, all taught on a one-to-one basis. Facilities are world class and include acoustically engineered practice rooms and a state-of-the-art music centre. Senior, Junior

and Girls' choirs, Samba Club, Orchestra and other instrumental and vocal ensembles give students many opportunities to perform and to compete, locally, nationally and internationally.

Music Department trips abroad have been a feature of recent years. These have included choral projects in Calgary, Chicago, Washington D.C. and Boston.

My sister and I were very excited to join my brother in Sandford. I like the size of the school and the individual attention from my teachers

Alannah Donohoe, Form 1.



Debating

Structured debate is an entertaining and highly effective way of developing articulacy, oration and communication skills, and is an activity close to the heart of the school.

There are both Junior and Senior debating teams. In 2013 the senior and junior teams reached the All Ireland semi-final of the Gael Linn competition. In 2011 the senior team had the unique distinction of winning both the National Concern debating title and the Gael Linn debating title. In 2010 the senior debating team reached the Concern All Ireland semi-final and won the All Ireland title in 2009. In the same year the junior debaters reached the semi-final of the UCD L&H competition.

We have also been successful in the International Observer Mace competition, the Mental Health competition, the European Council invitation event, the Model European Parliament and the Model United Nations. In their determination to do so, Sandford's panel of speakers commits an extraordinary amount of time and energy to research, rehearsal and debate.



Drama

While drama is an integral part of the English curriculum, it is the annual school production that gives many students the opportunity to be part of one of the truly special events of the school year. The school has an outstanding reputation for its highly professional and entertaining productions. Traditionally, Transition Year students provide the nucleus of the cast and support crew, but auditions are also open to Forms 1, 2 and 5.

Past productions have included Broadway show-stoppers *West Side Story* and *Guys and Dolls*, Hollywood classics *The Wizard of Oz*, *Twelve Angry Men* and *A Man for All Seasons*, and Shakespeare masterworks *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *King Lear* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Students are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of the productions, from on-stage acting parts to production design, costuming, set building, lighting and sound.

The school also provides on-going support for students working towards accredited drama examinations



including the Leinster School of Music and Drama, the Royal Irish Academy and the Irish Board of Speech and Drama.

The Whole-School Evaluation

In January 2008, the Department of Education and Skills conducted a whole-school evaluation of Sandford Park School. This in-depth process, undertaken every 5 to 7 years, provides a thorough critique of a school, from both a holistic and a specific perspective. We encourage parents and prospective parents to view the whole evaluation, which can be seen at www.sandfordparkschool.ie the following is a precis of the Inspectorate's conclusions:

- “Sandford Park School is an inclusive educational community, which embraces diversity and where all partners become involved in the many areas of school activity and in promoting the values of the school.”

- “Clear systems are in place for the effective management of students who were respectful and cordial in all their interactions, and whose conduct is informed by an exemplary code of behaviour.”

- “Teachers are appropriately deployed according to their qualifications and skills. There is a strong commitment and belief in continuing professional development which is fully promoted and supported by the school.”

- “Whole-school planning is well established in the school and an exemplary school plan has been developed. All members of the school community are appropriately engaged in the planning process of development, implementation and review.”



- “All students are encouraged and supported to reach their highest attainable level. There is an exemplary guidance programme in place in the school that ensures students are provided with educational, vocational and personal guidance if required.”
- “The pastoral care of students is exemplary and reflects the supportive and caring environment in which students are educated.”
- “The school has an active and articulate students’ council which is

- appropriately representative of the general student body.”
- “There is a dynamic and proactive parent teacher association, which makes a valuable contribution towards supporting the school. Communication with the wider parent body is of a very high quality.”
- “All buildings and facilities are very well maintained and there are excellent resources, including ICT, available in the school to support teaching and learning.”

“As a former Sandford Park student, I wanted my sons to have the same positive experiences that I had in Sandford. These included, forging lifelong friendships, a love of sport, an enthusiasm for learning, the ambition to succeed in life and having a true sense of belonging and identity to its collegiate environment. When Judi and I learned that access to Sandford was available to our daughter we enrolled her immediately and now, as one of its pioneering female students, we are delighted that she too is experiencing this unique school, its ethos and highly committed faculty”.

Simon and Judi Pleass, parents of India Form 1, Max Form 6 and Jack (Class of 2012).



Admissions and registration

Students usually join the first year of the school at the age of 12 but applications are accepted for other years, providing places are available. To apply formally for a place at the school, parents should complete the

application form enclosed, or download a copy from the school website, and return it to the School Administrator. Please be sure to specify which year you would like your son/daughter to join.

Location

Prospective parents and students are encouraged to visit Sandford Park and to experience the grounds, the facilities and the vitality of the school itself. Please don't hesitate to contact us to make an appointment with the Principal.

We operate a minibus pick-up and drop-off service for students, morning and afternoon, from Lansdowne Road DART station during term time.

