
COLÁISTE IOGNÁID

AUTUMN TERM NEWSLETTER 2020



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents & Guardians,



As we approach the mid-term break, I would like to thank you for the support you have shown the school community during this period. It has been an extraordinary few months in school. The students have shown maturity beyond their years and have adapted admirably to the new reality. While it has been a challenging time for them, it is clear that they are happy to be back in Coláiste Iognáid. I am reminded of the words of St Ignatius, "If you find you have fallen, do not despair, even falls are an aid to wellbeing."

As a society we are all struggling to make sense of our current situation. Certain sectors are impacted more than others and to my mind teenagers have been dealt a particularly difficult hand. On the radio a few weeks ago, Professor Maureen Gaffney described people as living in a state of 'consistent low-level stress.' A statement, we can all identify with. The students need support, clarity and kindness as do our teachers and all our staff. Teachers, tutors, year heads, learning and pastoral support teams have all worked tirelessly to check-in and reassure students. Compassionate words and expressions of gratitude are more important now than ever before. Ní neart go cur le chéile.

As you are aware, we had our first positive Covid case recently. In my interactions with the HSE mask wearing was repeatedly mentioned as critical. Their definition of a close contact is 'spending over 15 minutes with a positive case when masks are not worn'. This means that the only person in a classroom who can take off their mask is the teacher and only when they are standing at the front of the room. If a student or a teacher is identified as a close contact, they need to restrict their movements for 14 days, necessitating 10 days out of school. As the days and weeks proceed, we are sure to have more positive cases, therefore the importance of wearing masks cannot be overstated. Behave as if you have the virus, seems to be a sound message for us all. By doing the right things, we are limiting our ability to catch and more importantly spread the virus.

This concise bulletin gives a flavour of the different events that are going on in the school even during these restricted times. I hope everyone in our community can enjoy a well-earned break next week. It will be different, but we are fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of the world, with many wonderful walks and exercise opportunities within 5km of the city.

Finally, could I ask you to complete this short survey for school self-evaluation.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=wzghOQ8n_keHjFpaY587uQ3ZIGS9JEtOoiGQYvWf6B9UNihTWT11Szg4TONLMzNTUIIOUFZVMjBHOS4u

Best wishes

D. O'Sullivan

RETIREMENT OF FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE MARGARET GILL

After thirty years of dedicated service to Coláiste Iognáid, our friend and colleague Margaret Gill has decided to move on to the next stage of her life. A stalwart of the Mathematics and Business departments, her quick wit and her love of a good story meant she was well liked by students and teachers alike. Fr Martin Curry SJ celebrated a socially distant Mass for staff on the 2nd October in honour of Margaret. Following mass, we retired for some cake and tea in the Atrium. Margaret will be greatly missed in the school, we wish her a long and happy retirement.



CHAPLAINCY NOTES

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity" Albert Einstein

These words offer a challenge to all. As we start afresh in a new academic year, we are confronted with an obstacle which has turned our "normal" lives upside down. It is certainly a challenging time for our school community, in particular for our pupils. The social aspect of our school environment has changed. Mask wearing, social distancing and one-way systems offer limited opportunity for collaboration and bonding with peers. This can present feelings of isolation, anxiety, helplessness and turmoil. As St. Ignatius teaches, it is in moments of suffering that Jesus is truly present. St. Ignatius of Loyola discovered Christ's overwhelming love and presence during his convalescence from a terrible cannonball injury. His suffering was actually a blessing in disguise. He realised that his life was taking a destructive path and he began to uncover his true direction and meaning in life.

This current crisis gives us all the opportunity to reflect on how we have lived our lives up to this point. It may have revealed a flawed sense of entitlement and sometimes our lack of gratitude. It is a time where we can be guided by St Ignatius' example and try and make a true effort to build a relationship with God and in turn strive to be people for others in our school and the wider community.

Pastoral/Chaplaincy events

- **Mentor programme for first years.** The sixth year mentors are meeting with the first years on regular basis to offer support and guidance
 - Some first year groups have begun to practice the **Daily Examen**. Over the coming weeks all groups will participate
 - The **Kairos** programme started in May and will continue. The date for Kairos is still set for Jan 28th to 31st 2021 Clongowes Wood S.J. We are hoping we can still proceed.
 - **First year retreats** have now started. You will get information on these events via the Compass App.
 - First and second year students have participated in **Ethos Day** and third years will begin after midterm.
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CAREER GUIDANCE

Think Positive!

Put your energy into studying for your exams and try to get the best possible results.

NUIG Virtual Open Day

NUI, Galway **Undergraduate Open Day** is taking place on the 24th October from 12-4pm.

Link to Information page: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/opendays/>

Registration Link: <https://www.emailmeform.com/builder/form/cbh36zLabyN261Un65q27>

Higher Options 2020 Virtual Event

Higher Options will take place on November 4th and 5th from 1pm to 6pm. This will be a virtual event and students will need to register ahead to attend. Further information is available at higheroptions.vfairs.com

HPAT for undergraduate medicine entry

We will be organising a two-day training programme for students looking to enrol on an undergraduate medicine course in 2021. This will take place on Saturdays from 9am to 4.30pm. Date to be confirmed.

Sixth Year Vocational Interviews

All 6th year students will be meeting a Guidance Counsellor for a one-to-one Vocational Interview once the CAO online applications facility opens on November 5th 2020.

Dates for virtual open days for Third Level institutions

NUIG	October 24 th , 12 - 4pm
Athlone IT	November 14 th , 10am - 2pm
UCD	November 14 th , 10am - 2pm
Trinity College	November 7 th , 10am - 4pm
DCU	November 20th and 21st

Study tips for all students

- Give yourself enough time to study
- Organise your study space
- Use flow charts and diagrams
- Practice previous exam questions
- Short 30-minute study periods with a specific focus
- Eat well and take regular exercise

Transition year Guidance

Transition year students will be undertaking aptitude testing with My Future Choice

There are three tests in the bundle: *My First Choices*, *My Career Choices* and *My Aptitude*

For more information on the testing click on www.myfuturechoice.com

The cost per bundle is thirty pounds sterling per student (included in the TY fee)

This is a fantastic addition to the TY programme and will certainly benefit future career and college choices

For guidance advice contact Alan O Loinsigh, Guidance Counsellor - email guidance@colaisteioignaid.ie

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION

School Improvement Plan for 2020-2021

School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is a collaborative, inclusive, and reflective process of internal school review. It is an evidence-based approach which involves gathering information from a range of sources, and then making judgements. This all takes place with a view to bringing about improvements in students' learning.

During the 2019-2020 academic year two surveys were carried out involving all three stakeholders: students, teachers and parents. In total we received 496 responses and we are very grateful to those individuals for their contributions. They provided invaluable insights into the aspects of school life which are running smoothly and those which provide scope for improvement.

Informed by the data gathered, our School Improvement Plan for 2020-2021 has two key areas of focus: (1) strengthening communication in key aspects of daily life and (2) establishing good wellbeing practices.

Specific examples of our focus on communication include:

- the implementation of the new IT system
- ensuring that parents are fully informed of key personnel within the school, e.g. relating to Child Protection Procedures
- ensuring that staff are aware of training and professional development opportunities
- strengthening student voice in relation to both their own learning and their input into school matters.

Specific examples of our focus on wellbeing include:

- formation of a wellbeing group
- survey of all stakeholders to establish how this exceptional return to school has been going for them.

SSE is an ongoing process which is much enhanced by the high levels of engagement that Coláiste Iognáid's stakeholders deliver. In doing so our community honours the Jesuit commitment to striving for excellence.

STUDENT REFLECTION

Who is at the helm of the learning?

“Although the teacher still plays a very important role in the teaching-learning process, the learner is ultimately at the helm of his or her learning”.

(Learning by Refraction, Johnny C. Go, SJ & Rita J. Atienza)

As part of our School Improvement Plan at Coláiste Iognáid, we have committed to encouraging our students to reflect on their learning, and ultimately to initiate this reflection themselves. In order to best achieve this, many students would benefit from support at school and/or at home.

As part of this process students have been invited to reflect on their recent assessments and to record reflections in their student journal. We now invite you to encourage your children to share these insights with you in order to plan for the next period of learning and assessment after midterm.

Reflection and *Action* are crucial ingredients of Ignatian Pedagogy, and these student reflections represent an ideal starting point for action. Satisfactory results provide learners with a successful formula which can be repeated and transferred into other subjects while areas for improvement represent an opportunity for growth and learning.

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

A sincere thank you to all those who have paid their voluntary contribution. I am delighted to report that the percentage of people who have paid has increased significantly and this is great news for the school. It is also a strong vote of confidence in the hard work and dedication of the teaching staff.

If you cannot afford to pay, please send a quick email to voluntarycontribution@colaisteiognaid.ie. This will be treated in the strictest confidence, I know this is a challenging time for many people. It is also possible to request payment plans or direct debits, these can all be arranged by contacting Margaret on bursar@colaisteiognaid.ie.

D. O'Sullivan

TRANSITION YEAR

Transition Year are on a very different journey through fourth year when compared to all other TY classes since the introduction of TY in 1989. However, we will prevail and we are lining up a different type of programme this year.

We have started on some of the Leaving Cert. curriculum and introduced some new subjects.

We have had two outings since September, one to Rusheen Bay and another to Wildlands in Moycullen. The students had a wonderful time even though Covid restrictions meant they could only travel as single class groups. Hopefully, when this latest lockdown is lifted, we will once again be able to resume our many wonderful TY experiences with our students.

4G are getting some social outreach experience in the Fr. Bob classroom. Many thanks to all the team in Fr. Bob's who have made this experience so worthwhile and enjoyable for all. 4B will begin their Social Outreach after mid-term. 4C have just completed the Filming/Movie module with past pupil and mentor Mr. Vincent O Sullivan. All TY students and staff wish Vincent and his fiancée all the best for their forthcoming wedding on the 6th of November.

We will keep all parents informed of forthcoming events during these very difficult times for us all. Ar scátha chéile a mhaireann muid.



EXTRA-CURRICULAR NOTES

Rugby Presentation

The Coláiste Iognáid Rugby club were recently presented with a 10,000 euro cheque by the Connacht Domestic Rugby manager Joe Gorham. This was in recognition of the work put in by the club over recent years in promoting the game in Galway and in particular, the development of former pupils Eoin McKeown and Eoin Griffin who performed so capably for the Connacht team for many years until their recent retirements.

Our picture shows Mr Joe Gorham presenting the cheque to school Principal Mr David O Sullivan. Also present were former captain and coach Morgan Codyre along with teachers Stephen Parkinson, Sinead Anthony, Matthew Harrison and Miles Kennedy, all of whom are currently managing or coaching teams within the school. The money will be used to support the long-term development of the game in the Jes.



Return to Extra-Curricular

Training has resumed for the rugby squads, who are carefully following current health and safety guidelines. Rowing training is ongoing and other extra-curricular activities such as debating, Gaelic and hockey are tentatively starting up again under current health and safety guidelines.
