



Dear Parent/Guardian,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a peaceful Christmas. I express my sympathies at this time to all families who have lost loved ones and may find this time of year particularly difficult. I and all the staff in the Coláiste would like to thank you for your continued support throughout 2018.

Management Changes:

Teachers listed below have been appointed to take responsibility for the following:

1st Year Head

Ger O'Connor

2nd Year Head

John McCarthy

3rd Year Head

Ann Marie Quinn

5th Year Head

Stephen O'Brien

6th Year Head

Norma Barry Hurley

After School Study Year Head

Ann Lohan

All of the above are responsible for the academic progress of students under their care and also for ensuring that students behave in an appropriate manner. All Year Heads meet weekly with the Principal and Deputy Principal where particular attention is paid to students who may require extra pastoral care supports. If you have any concern with regard to your son/daughters progress you can contact or make an appointment to meet the relevant Year Head.

Ann Lohan can be contacted about afterschool study. Over 100 students are now signed up for afterschool study. Saturday study may start after Christmas if the demand is there. All students are marked present or absent for study on VShare and notes may be asked for to explain absences from study.

Transition Year

Ann Mulcahy is responsible for co-ordinating TY. This year the TY students will be assessed at the end of the year under three headings:

- Gold (above 80 points)
- Silver (50 to 80 points)
- Bronze (0 to 50 points)

Points will be awarded as follows:

- 50 from subject teachers
- 10 for attendance
- 20 for oral presentation
- 20 from TY planning team

I wish to thank all our TY students for their good work to date with the:

- School Musical
- Sports Council
- Open Night
- Volunteering (Josephine Wade)
- Day Care Christmas Party
- Primary School Shared Reading Group
- Fundraising
- Helping at Parent/Teacher meetings
- Assisting in setting up the school hall for events
- St Vincent de Paul
- Students Charter

Work Placement:

Students who are under the age of 16 will be covered by our insurance for work experience as long as it takes place during our approved dates and a risk assessment is completed. The school can not grant permission for work experience outside of our approved dates.

Trips:

Along with regular class our students have been engaging in trips and activities such as:

- Microsoft Ireland headquarters
- Military Museum
- Junk Kouture
- Delphi
- Zeminar
- Eportfolios
- Coding
- Architecture
- Sports Council
- Green schools

Early in the New Year I will be asking TY students to start the process of selecting subjects for 5th year. Elaine O'Leary has issued all TY students with a detailed form to help with the process of selecting subjects. Students have no choice with regard to Maths, English and Irish but they have four free picks from a huge choice of subjects in the Coláiste. If in doubt pick the subjects you feel you can achieve high points in at higher level.

Career Guidance:

Elaine O'Leary and Sean Landers are both available to discuss any matters relating to career advice or college progression. All 4th, 5th and 6th year students receive one class of careers guidance each week. Students can also make individual appointments with their respective career guidance teachers. Study skills seminars have been held for 2nd and 5th year students.

Special Educational Needs:

Mary Little can be contacted with regard to special education. Our SEN team meets weekly to review and plan for the development of special education within the school. Many of our teachers are now specifically trained in special education.

ASD Classes:

The Coláiste will have three classes to support students with autism next September. Rachel Burke and Judith Shortall will be the lead teachers.

EAL

Fiona Green can be contacted if you require any information with regard to English as an additional language. Last year we had 10 students who scored H2's or H1's in Leaving Certificate Polish and the school may again run Polish classes after school in January. The year before last the school ran Russian classes after school. Our EAL students each year are among our highest achieving students at Leaving Certificate Level.

Junior Cycle Training Day

The school will be closed on Monday the 4th of February for our second JCT training day. There will be a third closure day but I have yet to receive confirmation of the date.

School Staff

This year the school has:

- 58 Teachers
- 8 Special Needs Assistants
- 2 Office Staff
- 2 Caretaking Staff

Throughout the course of the year trainee teachers on teaching practice will be in our school.

VShare

All parents/guardians should now have access to your son/daughters VShare account. With VShare parents/guardians can access students' timetables, attendance, behaviour records and term reports. We have recently begun issuing positive reports for those students who have received 10 or more points on VShare. It is our intention to award 10 positive points for students who perform above or maintain high expectations in their Christmas exams. At 25 positive points the students will

receive a further reward of a Coláiste Dún Iascaigh bobble hat.

The Christmas Term reports will be available online in January.

Student Emails

All students have now received a Coláiste email address. This allows students access to 5 copies of Microsoft Office. Some of our teachers will be emailing class notes and providing feedback on work completed online so it is important that students remember their passwords and other login details. Over the coming years this form of communication between teachers and students is going to grow.

The new Junior Cycle and project work at Leaving Certificate will require greater use of ICT.

Information Nights

The following have been held:

1. CAO information night
2. Subject options for 1st Year parents/guardians 2019/2020
3. Internet Safety talk for parents/guardians

In the new year an Information Evening for Senior Cycle options will be held. (3rd year & TY students)

Parent Teacher Meetings

2nd, 3rd and 6th year meetings have been held and I wish to thank everyone for attending. The turnout for each was around 80%.

Signing Out Students

These procedures must be followed:

The permission to leave section of the student journal **must be completed** by parent/guardian for permission to leave the school during school hours.

The student must get the note signed by the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head before signing out at the office. Office staff may also request to see signed note to verify this request.

This note is then used to update

attendance section on VShare. Under GDPR guidelines the sign-out book will no longer operate. Students over the age of 18 must sign the permission slip on their own behalf. It is really important that everyone follows these procedures to ensure the safety of all students. All students under the age of 18 must be collected at the front office. Phone calls to school office giving permission for students to leave school grounds will no longer be accepted due to obvious health and safety concerns. During this term the level of disruption to teaching and learning from use of school intercom to call students for collection has been very significant. I understand that emergencies occur and students need to be collected but from January the school intercom will not be used during class time to call students. Students should present a note with permission to leave school (in student journal) to teacher at time they are being collected and then come to school office.

Your co-operation with this will be very much appreciated.

Sickbay:

Students who feel unwell should always report in the first instance to school office. The school office will always contact home if a student is very unwell.

School Journal/Homework

Please keep checking the school journal to ensure homework is being written down. In a survey of 180 students 85% stated that they were very clear on homework assigned, however incomplete or poorly completed homework is the biggest concern that the teachers in the Coláiste have. I understand that some students may feel overwhelmed by homework but in general it is essential in order for teachers to assess students progress.

Pre-Exams

The pre-Leaving Certificate and pre-Junior Certificate exams will begin on Tuesday the

www.colaisteduniascaigh.ie

052 7442828

info@colaisteduniascaigh.ie

5th of February. Students should be in attendance for the full day. If students are not taking an exam at that time they must study in the exam centre.

Mock exams are crucial in preparing for the real event in June. They assist students in time management and exam techniques. They also identify gaps in learning which can then be focused on by the students' and their teachers. .

Academic Progress Review

When the term reports are completed they will be assessed by a team in the school. Students who maintain their already high academic targets or achieve above their targets as determined by the school tracking system will be awarded 10 positive points. Students underperforming will be met to try and determine what the reasons are and can the school offer supports to improve test results at the next set of exams.

Cars

Can I please ask that parents don't drop and collect their son/daughter in the school staff car park. All students except those attending our "An Cuan" class should be dropped and collected outside the school. This is a health and safety concern.

Mobile Phones/Social Media

I want to thank all students for adhering in a very positive way to our mobile phone school policy.

School Uniform/Appearance

There has been slippage by some students in their adherence to certain aspects of the above code.

- Tongue/nose piercings are not allowed
- Only **one** discreet ear stud per ear is allowed (the wearing of black, blue, yellow type button ear rings are not considered discreet and are in breach of the spirit of the code of behaviour)
- Shoes are to be worn which are to be navy black or brown.

Students who fail to adhere to the above will be viewed as taking a deliberate and calculated decision to ignore the rules of the school and sanctions up to and including suspension will be applied.

There can be no exceptions to these rules. If we are not consistent across the whole school community overall standards will drop.

School Website

www.colaisteduniascaigh.ie.

School Musical

I wish to thank everyone who supported this fantastic production. "All shook Up" had audiences standing on their feet at the end of each performance. It was a tremendous week for the school and I very much look forward to next years production already and I thank all staff who assisted in particular Norma Barry Hurley, Judith Shortall and Kate Lineen.

School Sport

Boys:

Our senior boys gaelic football team and senior soccer team are in the last four of their Munster competitions. Colm O'Flaherty, Patrick O'Driscoll, Shane Ronayne, Cormac Crowe and Pat Cunningham are the teachers involved with these teams who won't be far off winning All Ireland competitions.

Our u15 footballers are in the county schools final having lost out in Munster. Colm O'Flaherty, Cormac Crowe and Gavin Berry are the teachers involved.

Thomas Butler, Eoin White and Eanna Heffernan are coaching all our boys hurling teams.

Our senior basketball team has exited their competitions. Roisin Lucey was their coach. Damien Byrne will be working with 1st and 2nd years boys after Christmas.

Jonathan Spillane is involved with our Junior soccer teams and futsal teams.

Girls:

Our football teams are still in contention at both senior and Junior level for Munster honours. Indeed we have a very talented bunch at junior level and it looks like we are going to bring through another group of players who will go onto represent Tipperary. Shane Ronayne is the coach of these teams.

Our camogie teams are still in both Munster competitions and the Juniors have already won a Tipperary County title and finished runners up in a Munster blitz. Keith Morrissey is our camogie coach.

Girls soccer and basketball has also started. Ann Hickey and Gavin Berry are involved with the girls soccer and Josephine Wade and Laura Maher help out with the girls basketball.

Chess Teams:

Our chess teams have played two matches already this year and over 30 students partake daily. Sean Landers takes charge of our chess teams.

Debating:

Our debating teams are still competing in the UCC debates. Caitriona Fennessey and John McCarthy have lead the Coláiste to being one of the top debating schools in Munster.

School Library:

The school library is open every lunch time and students can take books home and participate in different activities throughout the year. Caitriona Fennessey and the Library team are responsible for this initiative.

School Tours:

Our annual trip to Manchester takes place this year in January with 90 students travelling to see Man United play Brighton at Old Trafford. Darius DeLahunty is co-ordinating this trip.

Students Council:

Our Council meet weekly to discuss matters relating to school life and they are a forum for students to voice their opinions on the running of the school.

This year the members of the Council have worked on redesigning the school canteen and have worked hard to fill 47 boxes for St. Vincent De Paul. Earlier this month they also filled over 55 Christmas shoe boxes for children in need abroad. Aoife Ryan is the teacher responsible for supporting and leading our Students Council.

JP2:

Students in 4th year and some 5th years work with Josephine Wade to achieve the John Paul 2nd Awards. The students carry out different voluntary activities to achieve the award and if they wish students can support the local Parish Priest in carrying out parish duties such as altar serving and reading at mass.

Sports Council:

Shane Ronayne and Damien Byrne co-ordinate the members of the sports council who travel to all our sporting fixtures to assist the travelling teacher. They undergo a full weeks training and they also link in with local primary schools if requested to support PE tuition.

Mentors:

Paul Ryan works with our 5th year Mentors who are an invaluable link for our 1st years. They organise events such as secret santa, lunch time games and they are superb role models for our younger students.

Art Club:

Our art teachers Sarah DeLahunty, Ann Ryan Maher and Elaine O'Leary run an after-school Art club for students. At present students are taking part in a graffiti workshop project.

Parents Association:

I would like to thank all members of the Parents Association for supporting the school over the last year. The association is

always looking for new members and your voice on the association would be very much appreciated.

Progression:

The following is the data relating to our class of 2018. 100 students sat the Leaving Certificate Exam.

- 56 have gone to Irish Universities or IT's
- 4 have gone to study in the UK or Europe
- 12 have started apprenticeships
- 4 are repeating the Leaving Certificate
- 10 have started employment or taken a gap year
- 10 are doing PLC courses or other further education routes
- 4 students did not respond to our survey

Finance for third level can be an issue for some families. Please contact the school if you require any information around grants or supports that are available to students.

Facilities:

Over the coming months I will be starting the process of making a million euro application to the Dept. of Education to modernise our school facilities. As our school grows the resources available to the school will also increase. This can then be used to enhance the learning experience for all our students.

Our school astro-pitches should be available to us again in the New Year. They will be essential for afterschool games and training in January and February as with the expected wet weather our regular pitches may not be playable.

Child Protection:

The school's child safeguarding statement is displayed at

the front office and is available for download on our school website.

Junior Cycle:

The classroom based assessments are now becoming part and parcel of the school year. These assessments will challenge students to complete research and present findings. As each CBA takes place during an approved time frame school attendance will be essential to maximise the learning experience from this new form of assessment.

Wellbeing:

All schools take the wellbeing of their students very seriously and the new Junior Cycle is putting a particular focus on schools justifying what actions they are taking in terms of wellbeing and being able to show evidence that it is being linked to the wellbeing indicators.

These Indicators are being:

- Active
- Responsible
- Connected
- Resilient
- Respected
- Aware

I am proud to say that our school hits all of these indicators on a daily basis and opportunities are presented to students to reflect and talk about their wellbeing but also opportunities are presented to participate in activities that develop self confidence and resilience which are essential characteristics to have in this ever changing world

Encouraging values of

- Hard work ,
- Respect,
- Perseverance,
- Honesty,
- Ambition,

are very much part of what I and all who work in the Coláiste want to foster so that

your son/daughter can achieve their potential in state exams and that they are ready for the challenges that life will present.

The school has in the last year started to provide students with access to programs such as:

Alert:

This programme will be running for junior cycle students on a rotation basis for next term. Students will be picked at random to complete this course. The programme takes approximately 3 class periods to complete. It aims to help with students concentration and learning in class. For further information on this go to

<https://www.alertprogram.com/>

The programme is for all students regardless of ability and has been proven by occupational therapist to be very beneficial in improving learning outcomes. Ann Ryan Maher and Josephine Wade lead this.

Check and Connect:

This program will begin in the new year as eight teachers have now completed training. Check and Connect is an evidence-based structured adult mentoring programme that aims to promote student engagement at school and with learning. It is implemented by an adult who is a combination of mentor and advocate. Sonia McCarthy has facilitated this programme. Our full focus is always to promote a positive learning environment for our students.

Pastoral Care Team:

Our care team meets once a week. These team oversees pastoral care structures in our school and the team is made up of:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- SPHE Co-ordinator
- School Chaplain

- Two Guidance Counsellors
- Student Council link teacher

Instructional Leadership Team

Ten teachers have now completed this in-service which looks at supporting teachers in instructional practice in our school. A team of four teachers meets weekly and provide strategies to fellow colleagues that can help with students learning outcomes.

Digital Literacy Team

Twelve teachers completed training with “wriggle” and the PDST over the last year. This training is to help our school progress the effective use of ICT in the classroom. Onenote is a communication forum you will be hearing of much more going forward and your son/daughter would really benefit from having access to a computer and printer at home.

All of our 1st years and TY students are being trained in the use of Microsoft products such as OneNote, PowerPoint, word and Outlook.

SSE Team:

This team are set up to develop and monitor the implementation of our School Improvement Plan

This SIP plan which covers the period from 2017 to 2020 is available on the school website. The school’s main focus is on academic attainment and collaboration among teachers to improve the learning experience for all our students. 180 students were surveyed during December to provide feedback on the process to date. Similar feedback will be sought from parents/guardians in the new year. Over the last number of years the benefits of whole school planning is being seen in an improvement in our students grades at both Junior and Leaving Certificate level.

Thank You:

I wish to thank our staff in the Coláiste for their commitment to the education of all who attend our school. Much of this takes place on a voluntary capacity and shows the desire amongst our school staff to maintain and develop the special atmosphere that exist in our school.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management of the school is made up of the following:

- Representatives of Tipperary ETB
- Community Representatives
- Sister of Mercy Representatives
- Staff Representatives
- Parents Representatives

I am the secretary to the Board and between 5 and 7 meetings are held each year. All members of the Board would like to extend good wishes to all students and their families at this time of the year.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Creedon
Principal