



# Coláiste Dún Iascaigh

Bothar Caisil, An Chathair, Co. Thiobraid Árann

Cashel Road, Cahir, Co. Tipperary

Guthán: 052 74 42828 / 74 42906. Facs: 052 74 42233

Ríomhphost: [info@colaisteduniascaigh.ie](mailto:info@colaisteduniascaigh.ie)



Dear Parent/Guardian,

As we approach our midterm break, I wish to bring the following to your attention:

## **VShare:**

Please take time to download the VShare parent/guardian App and check it on a regular basis. Progress reports, behaviour reports, attendance data and other notifications will be sent to you through this medium.

The feature we really want to encourage is the absence request and the unexplained absence feature. These ensure that our data about attendance in school is regularly updated and is accurate before the school makes annual returns to the Educational Welfare Board for students who miss more than 20 days which are unexplained. All requests will be approved by the appropriate Year Head as soon as they have time to process them during their working day.

If a mistake in a roll call has been made by us in school, please email your son/daughters Year Head or ask your son/daughter to say it to their teacher at their next class.

The VShare App will also keep you informed of positive/negative behaviour reports as based on our school code of Code of Behaviour.

[Letter issued 10th October with Information about setting up App](#)

## **Attendance:**

Mr. Brian Looney will be monitoring school attendance and will be following up on students who have ***unexplained absences***. He will also link with the Educational Welfare Officer for our region in dealing with cases where students have a poor attendance record. It is therefore important that parents/guardians inform school of reason for absences which can be done through the VShare parent App.

Schools must keep a register of the students attending the school. The Coláiste must also maintain attendance records for all students and inform the Child and Family Agency's Educational Welfare Services if a child is absent for more than 20 days in a school year.

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## Online School Guidelines:

Below is a link to our guidelines if the school must move to our online learning platforms. It is comprehensive and should ensure continuity of education for all in challenging times. There is still the possibility that the mid-term break may be extended by a week if Covid-19 infection rates do not drop in the next 7 days.

[Coláiste Dún Iascaigh Online School Guidelines](#)

## Homework/Study:

A common question from parents/guardians is the length of time students should spend at homework. There is no definitive answer to the length of time a student should spend at homework as factors such as:

- Time of year
- Year group
- Opportunities to complete homework within class time/day
- Demands of certain subjects
- Level of study higher/ordinary
- Classroom Based Assessment timetables and ongoing class project work
- Student ability level
- Student motivation/wellbeing
- Parental/guardian support
- Quality of homework assigned

will determine time spent at homework and time required.

Homework is not just written assignments but should also focus on study of material completed each day in class. Homework should not seem like a punishment but as an effective process to improve learning. A consistent routine will help in this regard, but the following guidelines may help:



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## 1<sup>st</sup> Years:

1 hour per night should be sufficient as in year one the focus is on settling students into secondary education. As we have moved to 1-hour classes many of our teachers are completing homework with their students within class time as part of the overall teaching and learning goals for the year group.

Time should be given each night to recapping and revising new knowledge introduced daily in subject lessons. This will help with retention of knowledge and is good practice in preparation for the Leaving Certificate in particular.

It is important to remember that many students are tired at the end of a school day with the present protocols in place and our 1<sup>st</sup> year students are adjusting to having numerous new teachers and a longer school timetable.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Years:

1 to 2 hours per night should be completed by 2<sup>nd</sup> years as the pace of learning increases in second year. Classroom Based Assessments become part of the norm for students in second year and students will notice that teachers start increasing the student's workload as they now have clearer expectations of students' academic potential. Introduction of good habits in 1<sup>st</sup> year help with the progression to 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Years:

Students should be aiming for 2 hours plus during 3<sup>rd</sup> Year. Teachers will be completing Classroom Based Assessments and completing course content. It is worth remembering that students will be taking common exams in all subjects except for Irish, English, and Maths. Some of our students in third year could be doing upwards of 3 hours plus. In these circumstances it may be worth exploring the application of effective and efficient study skills and time management.

All through the Junior Certificate years our SPHE teachers will be doing study skills lessons with their students and at appropriate times all subject teachers advise on how to effectively prepare for state exams.

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## 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Years:

The Leaving Certificate is very much a test of knowledge acquisition applied to exam questions. Students who want to achieve their academic potential in this points competition will need to commit anything from 2 to 4 hours to homework and study 6 days a week for two years.

Students who select subjects where there can be up to 50% of marks awarded for portfolio/project work must be in school every day and adhere to teachers' deadlines to get top marks here. One of the Coláiste's main strength is the depth of subject choice for Leaving Certificate students. Selecting the correct option subjects is crucial along with setting clear and realistic goals.

Our career guidance team provide very good advice on study skills in both a collective and individual manner. Our career guidance team also support students in setting targets and offer them a wealth of advice on progression routes after secondary school. Senior students should be making good use of studyclix

## Transition Year:

The focus of TY is the opportunity to sample new subjects and to use this time to ensure that the correct subjects are selected for Leaving Certificate. Project work given should be completed on time as this is good preparation for future assignments at Leaving certificate level and in Third Level.

## Progress Reporting and Parent Teacher Meetings:

At present there will be no parent/teacher meetings this year, which is disappointing. These meetings were a great opportunity to cement the partnership between student, parents'/guardians', and our school staff. To keep parents/guardians informed of your son/daughter's progress the following reports will be issued through the VSware parent/guardian app. However, if at any time you have concerns about progress please contact the appropriate Year Head.

## 1st Years:

- Report issued after October midterm. The main purpose will be to comment on how students have settled in, how classwork is going.
- Academic report issued at end of January
- Academic report issued in June.

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## 2nd Years:

- Report issued on the 16th of November
- Academic report issued at end of January
- Academic report issued in June

## 3rd Years:

- Academic progress report issued by 21st December following exams sat the week of 16th of November.
- Mock exam report issued at Easter time

## 4th Years

- Progress report issued by 21st December
- Grading report issued start of May in advance of graduation to include their gold/silver/bronze award

## 5th Years:

- Report issued on the 16th of November
- Academic report issued at end of January
- Academic report issued in June

## 6th Years:

- Academic progress report issued by 21st December following exams sat the week of 16th of November.
- Mock report issued at Easter time

## QQI Groups:

- Progress report issued in January (not set exams all portfolio based)
- Portfolio assessment in May



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## Covid-19

Everyone in the Coláiste wishes to thank all parents/guardians for supporting the school during this period. As guidelines keep changing weekly, I wish to answer some queries relating to Covid-19 that we are receiving:

- **If someone in the student's household is sent for a Covid-19 test the student cannot attend school until negative test result is received by that person.**
- **If your son/daughter is sent for a Covid-19 test and receives a negative test result but is still showing flu/Covid-19 type symptoms they should not attend school until they are symptom free for 48 hours. If symptom free they can return to school.**
- **Students in households where parents are being serially tested can attend school if no Covid-19 symptoms are being displayed by the person taking the test. (HSE Advice)**
- **If someone in the student's household has received a positive test result, students attending the Coláiste cannot attend for a minimum of 14 days and should also have received a negative test result and be symptom free. Same applies if student has tested positive.**
- **If a student presents with symptoms in school, they will be brought to our isolation room and parent/guardian will be contacted. It is essential that all our phone numbers for parents/guardians are correct and these can be checked by downloading the VShare parent App and checking the information on it.**
- **The HSE will decide on who is a close contact if we have a confirmed case within the school study body or staff. To date the school has been informed of no confirmed case among our school community.**



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## Code of Behaviour:

Below is a link to our school Code of Behaviour which applies to all students who attend the Coláiste. After midterm, the school will be placing a greater emphasis on compliance with school uniform and on issues relating to the use of mobile phones. Unfortunately, some students are getting casual with adherence to aspects of the code and these need to be addressed. During the first eight weeks our main priorities were settling students back into school and ensuring that everyone became familiar with our new routines.

Everyone will not agree with all aspects of any Code of Behaviour but attendance at the Coláiste implies acceptance of the Code of Behaviour by all parties.

Our Code of Behaviour is fair and does state clearly the standards of behaviour that are expected of students who attend the Coláiste and the measures that may be taken when a student fails or refuses to observe these standards.

**Please read through the code of behaviour in detail with your son/daughter.**

[Code of Behaviour 2020 2021](#)

## Procedures for signing in/out:

On the rare occasions that your son/daughter does not arrive to school before 8.50am they should go directly to the class they are timetabled for. They will be marked present by their teacher. A very small minority of students are late on a regular basis and this needs to stop as it is disrupting the teaching and learning for others. By checking on our VSware parent App you will see if patterns are emerging with your son/daughter especially if they walk to school each day.

If you wish to take your son/daughter from school for a pre-arranged appointment, please submit an absent request through the VSware parent app. Please note that 11am and 1pm are the preferential sign out times. The school office must be contacted in advance of collection and your son/daughter must inform the front office that they are leaving the school building.

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*The practice of some parents/guardians texting/ringing their son/daughters in school during the school day **must stop** as students mobile phones must be switched off at all times during the school day accept when requested to be used by teachers during class.*

If you need to speak with your son/daughter urgently, please ring the school office 052/7442828.

## **Canteen:**

Our canteen providers are no longer operating in the school as it was proving difficult to provide a profitable service in the present climate. This will be reviewed later in the school year.

## **School Bag:**

To help with issues relating to the weight of school bags teachers have been telling students what textbooks are required and which ones are not required each day. On checking bags during SPHE classes it is still apparent that some students are bringing all books to school. It is therefore important to organise the school bag each night in preparation for the following day. Student timetables can be accessed on the VShare parent/app. It would be great if we could return to using lockers or even boxes in classrooms but there just is not the space to do it in a safe manner.

While not perceived as being “cool” some students are now bringing trolley bags to school as are many of our teaching staff. This main be a good option for many.

## **Open Night:**

The Coláiste will be holding a Virtual Open Night on the 26<sup>th</sup> of November this year. Applications forms for next year are available on the school website and the closing date for receipt of applications is the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2020. In advance of our Virtual Open Night the school will producing a promotional video which will feature many of our wonderful students. Our students are also featuring on a Tipp FM radio campaign promoting the importance of complying with Covid-19 guidelines.

[Application form for Admission 2021 2022](#)

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## School Twitter/Facebook page:

For day to day updates on school activities and news please follow and like us on Twitter.

[Coláiste Twitter feed](#)

Finally, I want to wish you and your family a safe and healthy mid-term as the country moves into Level 5 restrictions. I again want to compliment the staff of the Coláiste who to a person have been tremendous in their commitment to education in the Coláiste. They have embraced new technologies, new teaching strategies and new work practices without a single complaint. They are a pleasure to work with each day but all your efforts in reducing the potential for Covid-19 to spread in our communities is now needed.

Peter Creedon

Principal

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