



Christmas Newsletter 2020

If someone had said to me this time last year that schools would close in March and not reopen until August, that the Leaving and Junior Certificate exams would not be held, that we would be so restricted in where we could go and what we could do, I probably would have told them to keep writing fiction.

However, as a school community we adapted very quickly. Our on-line teaching was soon up and running, Leaving Certificate students were graded and have moved on to college and now school is open again.

I wish to extend a huge thank you to every member of the school community for all the work you have done to help keep our school open. It is a very different environment for us all but is amazing what we can achieve working together. I acknowledge and hugely appreciate the massive daily effort needed to keep the school going and Covid free. Thank you again.

As we approach Christmas and look forward to a rest, we reflect on this very strange year in which we have missed all the extra-curricular activities and fun that happens in school. Outside of school we have missed meeting friends, going to matches and many other social events. This year has affected people in so many different ways. We acknowledge its difficulties but look forward with hope that we will soon be able to resume our activities and social interactions safely.

May you have a peaceful Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Padraig Nolan



Students Carol Singing outside Hazel Hall Nursing Home.



Christmas Moments

May this Christmas be a time of gratitude

Giving thanks for all that we have

For the love we share, for the love we receive.

May this Christmas be a time of togetherness

Even though we may be apart, closeness of spirit never departs.

May this be a time of peace, peace in our hearts, peace in our homes.

May these days be a time of rest, rest for the mind, body, and spirit.

May the true meaning and spirit of Christmas ring out in our hearts,

As we welcome into our lives, the love of the infant in swaddling clothes.

As we end this year of 2020, let us look forward with hope To brighter days,

To days that are lighter on the mind,

To days of close gatherings once again.

To days of new opportunities and new horizons.

Happy Christmas Everybody!!

Mr. Breslin, Chaplain

CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING

Our 4th & 5th year students brought some festive cheer to the residents of Hazel Hall Nursing Home on Thursday 10th. The students were socially distanced while singing and dancing outside the building to Christmas songs for the residents. It was a thoroughly enjoyable event for everyone involved. A huge thank you to all the singers, dancers, musicians and teachers, Ms. Clifford, Ms. Dunne and Mr. McLoughlin.

Christmas Jumper Day

Next Mon Dec 21st we will have a Christmas Jumper Day in support of the Kevin Bell Repatriation Trust. Students will pay €2 to wear a Christmas jumper. Thank you to all families who have donated through the school app and the tally is over €1,550 already.

Christmas Concert

Ms. Dunne is organising a Virtual Christmas Concert for us next Monday during Christmas Jumper Day showcasing the wonderful talent of our students. There will be singing, dancing and acting to entertain us.

Window Painting

Thank you to Senior art students who have brightened up the corridor windows with Christmas Art – we have Reindeer, Santa and even a Grinch on display.

Christmas Themed Home Economics Projects

Junior Home Economics students have been busy baking Christmas themed cakes and making beautiful Christmas garlands and table runners. Well done to you all.



Gaisce

All TY's are doing Gaisce this year for the first time ever. It is a great initiative for all pupils to get involved in. This year so far, Ms. Bagnall has awarded four students Bronze awards - Ciara Connolly, Aoibheann Healy, Tiernán Ó Rourke & Katie Hawkins. Massive congratulations also to Jessica Crosse who completed her Silver Gaisce this year and is currently working on her Gold award.



Team Hope

Christmas Appeal

As part of this year's Christmas Shoebox Appeal initiative, we asked the students and staff of Scoil Mhuire to donate anything they could to help support Team Hope. Team Hope is an organization that combats oppression and helps foster and develop societies to protect and empower the people within them. Thanks to the generosity of the school community, we collected €5600, and supplied 280 shoeboxes for Team Hope. We would like to thank everyone who contributed. Special thanks to students - 1st year Emma Ferguson, Sorcha Donoghue, Erin Coyle and Ella Woodhouse. 5th year Melissa O Donoghue, Bronwyn Goulding, Hannah Raheem, Aoibheann Healy. 6th year Chloe and Elisha.



Leaving Cert Success

It was a very abrupt and different ending to school life for our Leaving Cert students this year, with none of the usual markers to ending school, however they have all progressed on to new beginnings. Congratulations to all our graduates on their excellent results and we wish them every success in their chosen careers.

Naughton Foundation Winner

Congratulations to Ellie Fitzpatrick who is the Kildare Naughton Scholar for 2020. The Naughton Foundation is a private foundation that encourages learning in the STEM areas. Ellie is studying Engineering at Trinity College and has been awarded a bursary of €5,000 for each year of her university studies. The science department also received a cheque for €1,000 for equipment from the Naughton Foundation.

Maynooth Entrance Scholars

Congratulations also to Hannah O Donohue and Andy Lee Mitchell who received Entrance Scholar Awards in Maynooth University.

Sci-fest Success for Scoil Mhuire Student Adam

Scoil Mhuire 6th year student, Adam McNulty has been doing his school proud with his scientific investigations.

In August of this year, Adam won the Runner-up Best Project Award at the SciFest@College 2020 Online regional STEM fair for his project looking at improving designs around Integrated Constructed Wetlands.

Adam has been awarded the Runner Up Best Project award as well as winning the Institute of Physics Award and the award for Maths in Science. Adam's project also qualified to participate as a finalist in the SciFest 2020 National Final where he received an Excellence in STEM award. Well done Adam!



STAND UP WEEK – LGBTI+ Support

Scoil Mhuire took part in Stand-Up week as a part of their Amber Flag initiative. Stand up week is an awareness and support initiative for LGBTI+ members of the school community. Colourful displays adorned the halls and on Nov.19 each year group was given the option of wearing a different colour to highlight support. Stand Up Awareness Week is supported by the Department of Education and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

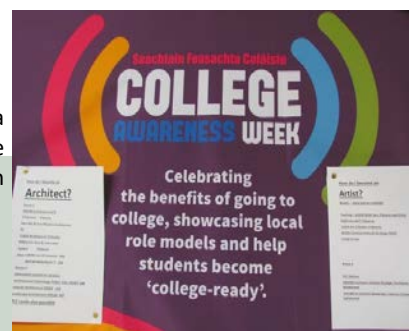
College Awareness Week

College Awareness week was held in late November when routes to college and careers were highlighted around school.

Information on courses and colleges was displayed creating a school-wide awareness of colleges and course access routes.

Dermot Early Youth Leadership Certificates

Congratulations to students Aine O'Gorman, Niamh Little, Ciara Dunne, Aoife Boyling, Aine Maguire & Blaithin Walsh who recently were awarded their Certificates in Youth Leadership in conjunction with NUI Galway.





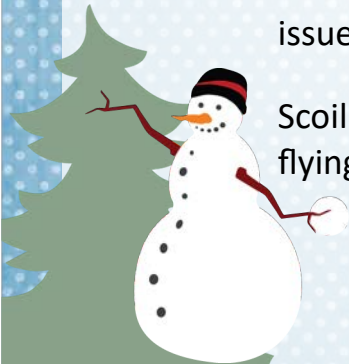
The Amber Flag—Promoting Positive Mental Health

The Amber Flag was awarded to Scoil Mhuire Community school this October. The committee established in September 2019, is comprised of teachers and students between 1st – 6th year. The committee members worked tirelessly throughout the year both in school and online during lockdown, promoting activities and fundraising. Further activities and fundraising initiatives are currently underway in order to retain the flag, these will be communicated via the app and on the school website.

The Pieta Amber Flag Initiative recognises the individual efforts of primary and secondary schools, youth reach, third level institutions, community groups, clubs and companies to create healthy, inclusive environments that support mental well-being.

Uniting these groups in their efforts, working together toward a happier, healthier Ireland and eradicating the stigmas associated with mental health issues is the goal of the project.

Scoil Mhuire is very proud to be one of the recipients of this flag, which is flying beside the gate of the school. Well done to everyone involved.



Leinster Minor Football Team Success

We are very proud of Scoil Mhuire students, Cathal McKennedy, Oisín O’Sullivan, Adam Fanning, Ryan Burke and Darragh Swords who played in the Leinster Minor Football game against Louth last Saturday and won 2-16 to 1-7 to progress on to the Semi Final this Saturday against Offaly. Good luck this week.



Soccer Player Ruadhan Kane 3rd Year gives an overview of his Brighton Trials

This was my second time going on trial to Brighton, after getting scouted by a few scouts at the Kennedy Cup in Limerick in 2019. A few different teams had approached my manager to try get me to go on trial to them in the UK. Brighton were the best team in my opinion. I first went over in August 2019 and played two matches. I trained with the under 16s and 18s even though I was fourteen. This time going over I knew it was going to be



tough, I went from December the 3rd - 8th. I trained with both age groups a few times, this was the hardest part because the u18s are “professional footballers”. I had a match against Oxford Utd on the 5th and we lost 4-3 but we really should’ve won. I was number 6 playing centre back and I loved every minute of it. Then we trained for the next few days. On the day we were coming home I had training with two other trialists from Chelsea FC, I won a few tournaments and challenges which felt so good. Overall, the trial went really well and I would love to get the chance to go back over there or at least sign professionally for a team in the UK when I turn 16.

We hope for your success too Ruadhan, well done.



Social Media Awareness Workshop

All second and third year students attended workshops given by Lisa from Zeeko Internet Safety communications company. Lisa highlighted the dangers of not keeping our social media accounts private, the risks of being groomed on-line and the need for safety awareness at all times while on-line. She also stressed that anything posted on social media is always out there even when we think it is deleted.



APPYNESS ONLINE

Transition Year Activities

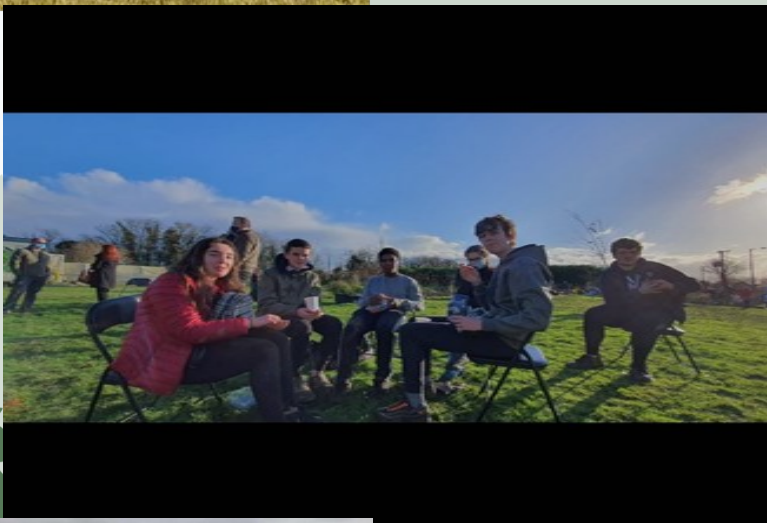
Despite Covid restrictions shelving many activities that Transition year students usually participate in, we have managed to offer them some very interesting projects such as the Red Hill Adventure Activities, Tree Planting with Garda Shane in Rathcoffey, the Keeko Social Media Safety workshop, the Film project for Mental Health, the Walk in My Shoes Initiative, Carol Singing in Hazel Hall, a Poetry workshop, a Hospitality Skills Course and the opportunity to complete numerous on-line certified courses which Ms. Dunne has sourced including First Aid, Fire Safety, Sales Skills, Hospitality skills etc

Make A Wish Leaders

This year transition year students are taking part in the Wish Leaders Programme with Make-A-Wish Ireland. Students are already working on 'Walk for Wishes' and 'Wear Blue for Wishes' fundraisers. Students taking part in the Mini-Company module are also planning on donating funds from their profits. As a thank you Make A Wish is offering talks by inspirational leaders such as Joanne O Riordan, Hazel Chu & Tommy Bowe.

Frame of Mind Film Competition

Best of luck to TY students who are also entering this film making project. We have done very well in the last two years and hope to excel this year also. The €1,000 prize is enticing.



Transition Year Activities.

Our School App

The App is now our principal means of communication with Parents/Guardians - General Notifications, Personal Notifications, Absent Notes, Late Notes, Parent Notes etc. Text messaging is only used to inform parents/guardians when a student has not presented in Tutor for morning roll call. There is now a phased transfer of this service to our App.

WHAT'S IN YOUR APP... Please see our App Explainer on the App and our school website

Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams and other components of Office 365 - is the sole digital platform for sharing notes, submitting homework etc. for all classes. While mostly completed in copybooks - homework and other assignments are being submitted electronically using MS Teams. Parents/Guardians can monitor their student's homework and other school related online activity by using their "student's login". New passwords are available by sending a message to Mr Cahillane on the school App.

School Reports—New Format

The purpose of our new school report is to provide a comprehensive representation of, and to contribute to, the personal development our students and to support learning and teaching. We value the professional opinion of our teachers in providing honest and constructive feedback to convey how our students can learn and improve. These reports will build on the ongoing feedback students receive in class about their learning throughout the school year. Our school reports are now only available electronically using your Progresso (Cloud School) account.



6th Year Careers – CAO

It's been virtual college talks this term with zoom talks from UCD, TUD, Maynooth University, NUI Galway, Carlow IT, St. Patricks Maynooth, NCI, DCU & Dunboyne CFE, as well as virtual attendance at the Higher Options Careers and Colleges exhibition. Guidance Interviews have taken place for all 6th year students. **Students are encouraged to open their CAO account before Feb 1st and list their courses in order of preference. Many PLC courses are also open for application- apply directly on-line to each PLC college**

Expanding Scoil Mhuire Facilities -

ASD unit and replacing old prefabs and new science rooms

The Department of Education and Science has sanctioned an ASD unit, 5 new classrooms to replace the old prefabs and two new science rooms. The Principal met with the design team last week. They are now looking at the most suitable place to situate the new classrooms and science rooms and the ASD unit. It will take about two years from start to finish.



First Year Students in Class



Student Work