



JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

OLD CONNA, FERNDALE ROAD, RATHMICHAEL, CO. DUBLIN.

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13th February, 2019

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

As the mid-term break approaches I would like to take this time to share a few notices with you about the past few weeks in school.

Philosophy Themes

To provoke discussion and thought, some of the themes for the past few weeks have been: How do I speak? What are you free to choose? What is good food for development? Do we know right from wrong? and What is your Why?

For more information about the assembly themes please click [here](#).

Literacy Week and Speech Competition

Literacy week took place the week beginning December 12th. As part of the week students participated in the "Dress up as your favourite literary character" and listened to a talk from Sarah Clarke a lawyer from Pen International. The highlight of the week was the annual speech competition and again this year the speeches by students were of an exceptionally high standard. To read more about the week and the winners of the speech competition please click [here](#).

Philosophy and Self-Discovery Week

Philosophy week took place the week beginning Monday January 7th. The theme of Philosophy week was "Have you the bouncebackability factor? The week started with an inspirational talk on resilience and potential by Jack Kavanagh. Different events took place during the week including debates and a Philosophy Discovery Day in Townley Hall by our Senior Cycle students. To read more about the Philosophy Discovery Day please click [here](#).

Green Schools

Our green schools committee have been very active in the past few weeks in the lead up to the Green Schools inspection that took place on Tuesday February 5th.

Well done to our green schools committee who have been very success in introducing a policy on reusing drinking bottles, reducing the amount of non-recyclable waste and organising a [Spring Cleaning Session](#).

Transition Year Students in Nepal

Our Transition year students are currently in Nepal helping to build a school and teach English. By all accounts, they are having a once-in-a-lifetime trip. For pictures of the trip, please see their blog [here](#).

To read about other Transition Year events prior to the Nepal trip please follow the

links:

[Transition Year visit National Gallery](#)

[Transition Year Mid-Way Showcase](#)

[Localize Volunteer Project](#)

[Volleyball coaching at Rathmichael National School](#)

[Making Christmas Wreaths for Nepal](#)

[TY go ice-skating](#)

[TY trip to the Science Gallery](#)

Art Junk Kouture Competition

Well done to our team of students from Transition Year who will be competing in the finals of the Junk Kouture competition on March 5th in the Helix, Dublin.

Sports Update

Throughout the winter, our soccer team have been training and playing games in all kinds of weather conditions. To see a report on the latest soccer game, which John Scottus drew 4-4, please see [here](#). Our Junior Frisbee team have also competed strongly, for a report of their most recent game please click [here](#).

Extra-curricular Club Activities

Our school's extra-curricular activities continue during lunchtime and after school. The clubs this year include: Hockey, Soccer, Athletics, Sailing, Hiking, Golf, Swimming, Frisbee, Yoga, Green Schools, Chess, Choir, Socrates, School Magazine, Art, Film, Cars, Computers, Socrates and Gardening. As the days get longer and brighter we expect the outdoor clubs to resume more fully after mid-term.

Erasmus Plus Cultural Exchange - Sicily

As part of the Erasmus Cultural Exchange programme, six lucky students will be travelling to Katania in Sicily in March. The 5th year students have been in touch with their exchange students and are now looking forward to flying to Catania on March 2nd. In addition to attending school, the group will also make excursions climbing Mt Etna and studying architecture in Syracuse. The school has received a grant for this program and as a result, there is no cost to the students as the cost of travel and accommodation

Business Update

Our Business students are busy working to ensure that John Scottus retains the Ambassador Schools for Europe Status. The students have organised a European Food and will participate in the Model Council of Europe Debate in Dublin Castle on March 1st. In March, a representative from the European Commission will visit the school in March to examine their coursework and other credentials to retain this plaque.

Some links of interest:

Here are some web posts that you have missed:

[5th and 6th years girls outing](#)

[Leaving Certificate Music Workshop](#)

Junior Cycle Training Day March 5th

Please note the school closes on March 5th to facilitate professional development for teachers in the new Junior Cycle. The Department of Education and Skills allocates two

days of training for each school and the first of these days took place on Friday February 1st.

February Exams

The February exams for all students have just finished. Reports on progress will be ready for most students by the beginning of March. However, the 3rd and 6th year students may have to wait a little longer as exam scripts have been sent out to be externally marked.

Transport Fees for 2019/2020

For the past two years, in acknowledgement of the parents who have supported the school's move to Old Conna, free buses have been provided to transport students to and from school. This is obviously not sustainable in the long term and as indicated in correspondence in December, transport fees would be introduced for the academic year 2019/2020. Please note that after the mid-term we be asking if parents and students are interested in signing up to the various routes.

Buildings Update

This winter, we have organized all P.E classes to take place in Old Conna using the various rooms available. This has been very beneficial to our students as more time as it gives more time for the actual P.E classes. Future plans for the campus include the development of the swimming pool and external lightning. Work is also been done on how it may be possible to connect the school to public transport. The Local Area Development Plans provides for a footpath on Ferndale road, and a parent group is looking at how to accelerate this process. If you are interested in being part of the parent committee looking at this please let me know.

School Improvement Plan

After an extensive self-evaluation process involving students, teachers, parents and members of the Board of Management and Boards of Trustees a School Improvement Plan has been drafted. The plan identifies a number of key areas that the school will focus on over the next few years. Four areas relate to learning and teaching: Feedback, Questioning, Literacy and Numeracy; and two relate to well-being: Extra-curricular activities and the Mentoring Programme. Please find attached to this email a summary of our School Improvement Plan. We hope that this plan will refine our educational offering throughout the school.

Summary of Events coming up

February Mid Term, Monday February 18th to 22nd

French exchange programme – Sunday February 14th

School Re-opens – Monday Feb 25th

1st year trip to New Grange – Friday March 1st

Erasmus trip to Katania, Sicily – Sunday March 3rd

School close for Junior Cycle Training day - Tuesday March 5th

Seachtain na Gaeilge – Monday March 11th

Green Schools week – Monday April 1st

End of School Term – Friday April 12th

A philosophical thought for the day

“Our greatest freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude.” - Victor Frankl

Yours warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Declan Kelly". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and contact information.

Dr. Declan Kelly

Principal

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