



JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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11th December, 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We have arrived at the end of a very eventful first term. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their dedication during the first term: students, parents, teachers, staff and extended school community. Here are just a few notices I would like to share with you.

Philosophy Themes

Whole school assemblies have continued online for past month.

To provoke discussion and thought, some of the themes over the past few weeks have been:

Am I happy in being proved wrong?

Is love the natural in between?

How do you develop good habits?

Are you a giver or taker?

Christmas Events

Our 6th year leadership team have been extremely creative and enthusiastic about organising events for Christmas under the current restrictions in place. The events organised include Candy Cane Santa, Talent Competition, Movie afternoon, Door Competition and Christmas Dress up. A huge congratulations to all involved for raising the spirits of all students during this Christmas period.

Please note school will finish at 12.45 pm on Tuesday Dec 22.

Study Skills

A study skills workshop has been organised with Sean Kelly more information about him can be found at www.mindtraining.biz . During the workshop he will explore success principles, growth mindset, speed reading, improving memory, mind mapping and focussing of attention. The workshops take place on Jan 12 for 3rd years and Jan 25 for 6th years during the school day. To help cover costs, there is a charge of €30 per student.

November Assessment

The November assessment results will be available next week for viewing on the student administration system VS Ware. They are the first of the three main assessments that take place each year. The assessments in each subject are assessing the learning taking place since the start of the year and give an indication of learning progress to date.

CBA Schedules

As part of the new Junior Cycle, students in 2nd year will doing Continuous Based Assessment Tasks. The grades awarded for these tasks will be included in the Junior Cycle

award they received after 3rd year. For you information, I have attached here the current schedule.

Covid-19

The school also recently had a Covid-19 SSPS inspection. The inspection assessed how the school is managing its response to Covid-19 and adhering to various guidelines issued by the Department of Education and Skills and the Health Service Executive. The feedback received was very positive with school meeting all criteria expected. Gratitude must be expressed to our Lead Worker Representative, Sarah Swan, and to all teachers for their diligence in making the school safe all for all.

The Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSE) has recently published reports on weekly school mass testing. For your information it can be found [here](#). It provides information on numbers tested and the % of cases detected.

Attendance at school

Just a gentle reminder to be alert for Covid-19 symptoms and get a test if symptoms include a cough, high temperature, shortness of breath or loss of taste and smell. More information on guidelines can be found on gov.ie.

Winter Ready

To help meet the challenges of preventing the spread of Covid-10 and to ensure proper ventilation of rooms while keeping rooms at a reasonable temperature, air purifiers have been purchased for many of the classrooms. The air purifiers purchased by the school are the Blue Air Blue Pure 221 found [here](#). For more information about air purifiers and their use in schools please read [here](#) and [here](#).

Uniform

With the current requirements for very good ventilation of rooms, it is recognised that the temperature in rooms may be colder than what we would like and students are being impacted by this.

A Uniform sub-committee consisting of parents, teachers, students and representatives from the Board of Management and Trustees is being set up to review uniform before the start of the next academic year.

In the interim period, to ensure students stay warm, we encourage everyone to wear under layers. In addition, black or navy hats, coats, scarves, tights or leggings could be worn. Also, grey trousers instead of the blue skirts may be worn by girls in addition to the regular uniform.

Catering Update

Several parents have raised issues about catering. We appreciate that for most parents the lunch service was an important benefit, and it was with regret that we had to stop it. The current position is:

1) We are looking at the possibility of providing a limited service as soon as possible. This would probably be based around pre-ordering from an external supplier and would have to be paid for by parents. We will get back to you in mid-January if this becomes a possibility.

2) There has been a request from some parents for a fee refund due to not providing lunch. The Board will review the situation later in the school year to see if this is feasible; any potential refund will be dependent on the school's financial situation.

3) As part of next year's budget process, we will be looking at re-introducing lunches next year. Our enrolment into 1st year next year will be 44 students and this will put extreme pressure on the existing catering facilities. Hence, we will be exploring differing options for the provision of catering. Once the budget is finalised, we will update you on this.

Entering and Leaving School Grounds

As discussed at recent parent representative meeting, concern was expressed about cars having to wait on the busy main road to enter the school grounds. To help avoid any unfortunate incidents, we ask that that parents driving out of the school yield to the traffic coming in from the main road. To help remind drivers, a Yield sign will be installed at the bottom of the avenue before the gate. Thank you for your support with helping make the school a safer place.

Transition Year Update

The Transition Years have been very active in the past few weeks.

To find out more please follow the links:

- *The new outdoor classroom* - [Link](#)
- *Going bouldering* - [Link](#)
- *Cooking course* - [Link](#)
- *Wooden snowmen* - [Link](#)
- *Shankill Tidy Towns* - [Link](#)

The students are also working on the Ambassador Schools Programme and plan to have several European events in the coming terms.

TY Midway portfolio presentations took place on 24 November and students produced some really meaningful and reflective portfolio presentations to sum up all they've taken from TY 2020 so far. Well done to both students and teachers.

Stand Up Week 2020

In the week of November 16th to 20th, the school celebrated Stand Up Week. This is a nationwide campaign against LGBTI+ bullying in schools. In assembly we discussed all the many ways that we are different to each other and how important it is to be inclusive of all our differences. Our challenge for the week was: How can we celebrate, not discriminate? How can we include not exclude? To celebrate Stand Up Week, we ran activities about diversity and inclusion during class teacher time, we did an art activity with each year group using different coloured paper and we raised a rainbow flag over the school to celebrate our differences. The week ended with a multi-coloured clothes day which raised funds for BelongTo, a charity that supports LGBTI+ young people in Ireland. Thanks must be given to Ms. Franklin for organising the week.

3rd years visit the Dail

In November, our 3rd years had a virtual tour of the Dáil over Teams. They also participated in a video-call with three politicians: Richard Boyd Barrett, Cormac Devlin and Jennifer Carroll MacNeil. During the call, the students were able to ask the politicians questions about their political views and how they came to have a career in politics. Well done to Ms. Mc Goldrick for organising the event

1st Year Fun Day

Our Transition Years organised a Fun Day for our 1st years on Friday afternoon November 17th. Various games, adhering to physical guidelines were organised. These included an Escape Room, Human Fuseball, a Quiz and Dodgeball. The feedback from 1st years was extremely positive. Well done to the Transition Year students for organising this event.

Clubs and Extra-Curricular Activities

After school sports on Wednesday continues to be extremely popular with large numbers turning up in all kinds of weather. Football will continue after Christmas depending on whether there are interschool competitions or not. It is also planned that hockey and Ultimate Frisbee will also start.

During lunch time, a rota has been set up so different year groups in pods of 15 have the opportunity to play sport on the astro-pitch.

The Golf Club has also started up again. On Thursdays, students travel over to Old Conna to get golf lessons from a Golf Pro. The feedback from students is very positive. Well done to Ms. Shanahan for organising this.

Summary of Events coming up

End of Term – 12.45pm, Tuesday Dec 22

School Re-opens – Wednesday Jan 6

Philosophy Week – Starting Monday Jan 25

Parent-Class Teacher Meetings – Tuesday Jan 26

A philosophical thought for the day

“Millions saw the apple fall, but Newton was the one who asked why”. - Bernard Baruch

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas.

Yours warmly,



Dr. Declan Kelly

Principal

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