



# JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Feb 11, 2020

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We have arrived at our mid-term after a very eventful first term. We have returned to the challenge of online learning, and I congratulate both teachers and students on how learning and teaching have continued seamlessly. I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their tremendous engagement and dedication during these past few weeks.

Here are just a few notices I would like to share with you.

### **Monday, Feb 22 – School Closed for Junior Cycle Teacher Training**

Please note that on Monday, Feb 22, all our teachers will be attending training on the new Junior Cycle curriculum and assessment methodologies. Hence, there will be no online classes taking place on this day. Thank you for your support in this important professional development event for teachers.

We have received no notification on when schools will resume face to face teaching, and therefore we are currently planning to continue with online learning on Tuesday, Feb 23. We will keep you informed if we hear any developments on the resumption of face-to-face learning.

### **Philosophy Themes**

Whole school assemblies have continued online for the past month. In addition to regular updates on school events, we have explored various questions such as:

Is my speech true, useful or uplifting?

How can you empower your inner greatness?

Can I put myself in the shoes of someone who thinks differently to me?

Do good habits bring me freedom and happiness?

### **Fun Quiz for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> years**

On Friday, during the last class, our 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years will participate in a fun quiz organised by Mr Telford. We recognise that physical distancing restrictions and online learning can be very challenging. We hope this event finishes the half-term with students in high spirits.

### **Run and Raise**

Our Transition Year Team and Physical Education department jointly launched the Run & Raise, JSS 1000km lockdown Challenge on Thursday, Feb 4. From Thursday, Feb 4 to Thursday, Feb 11 they challenged our 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> years and our teachers to run, walk or move as many kilometres as possible over the week and together to pass 1,000km. Students logged their daily distance using Microsoft Teams.

While doing so, they encouraged every participant to get sponsored €1 per km to raise some much-needed funds for our partner school in Kathmandu – Shwet Bharahi school. This school does incredible work and is supported by the organisation 'Indreni', an NGO founded in Ireland in 2012 with whom John Scottus has a partnership. You can watch a video on the school and Indreni [here](#) made by our very own alumnus, Zach O'Sullivan. I am delighted to say over 1000km were clocked up and we thank all for their generous support to this very worthwhile cause. This morning, we are pleased to say that students have covered 1488km and have raised €534. If you wish to donate, please go to [gf.me/u/zhx4up](https://gf.me/u/zhx4up)

### **Resilience and relationships during Covid-19**

Trish Murphy([trishmurphy-psychotherapy.com](https://trishmurphy-psychotherapy.com)) gave a talk on Wednesday, Jan 26, at 10.45 am. She is a psychotherapist, teacher and trainer specialising in giving teenagers mental health support and direction. Trish gave a talk on the topics of resilience and relationships during Covid-19. She also addressed issues such as stress, anxiety, negative thinking and lack of motivation. There were very high engagement levels from our students, and we hope it gave some insights into how to manage and increase our well-being at this time.

### **Study Skills**

On Wednesday, Feb 10, Ray Langnan ([www.raysethegame.com](http://www.raysethegame.com)) gave a workshop exploring topics such as raising school and exam performance, dealing with anxiety around exams and how to become more motivated to study. We hope you enjoyed the parent talk in the evening. The feedback from students was very positive, and we hope it will help them develop strong study habits.

### **John Lonergan**

John Lonergan, former governor of Mount Joy, gave a fascinating talk to our students today, Thursday, Feb 11. Mr Telford organised the workshop as part of the Transition Year program, but at the last minute, due to interest, we extended it to other year groups. John Lonergan talked about personal responsibility for behaviour and decision making. He discussed the 2001 Children's Act and the dangers involved in the use of drugs and alcohol. He also explored the importance of young people minding themselves mentally, emotionally and physically.

### **Past pupil, Robert Mulhall**

Robert Mulhall is a former student of John Scottus School who attended from 1986 to 1998. He is now living in New York with his wife and family and is the acting CEO of a Yoga and Health Centre there. He will briefly speak about his school days and how he ended up in New York and how he manages during the Covid-19 era. The talk takes place on Tuesday, Feb 23, at 12.00.

We are looking forward to meeting up with him again, and I am sure our students will enjoy listening to him.

### **February Assessment**

Instead of the regular in-school exams held in February, various forms of class-based assessments have been taking place in the past weeks. More will occur in the coming weeks. Teachers will assess the quality of work produced and provide feedback to students. Using this feedback, the school will send reports to parents before the end of

the term in March. We hope that these reports will show what learning has taken place in the previous two months.

### **Catering**

The school has researched options to supply hot meals to the school while the current restrictions are in place. The company SLUNCHBOX ([www.slunchbox.com](http://www.slunchbox.com)) can deliver food to the school. The cost is €4.50 per meal. Students would bring their cutlery. A minimum number of 50 is required to sign up. If this is something you would like to avail of, please complete the survey [here](#).

As stated in our previous newsletter, the Board of Management will review the situation later in the school year to see if a fee refund for catering is feasible; any potential refund will be dependent on the school's financial situation.

### **Transport Credit for school year 20/21**

The Board of Management has decided to reimburse parents for transport fees paid for bus transport during the period where distance learning was in operation. If you have paid such transport fees, the school will refund you on a pro-rata basis for the number of school days closed. This refund will appear as a credit note in your statement.

### **Open Morning and Enrolment**

We are delighted to announce that we will be enrolling 44 students in 1<sup>st</sup> year next August 2021. Instead of one class in 1<sup>st</sup> year, we will now have two. Over the past few years, our intake into 1<sup>st</sup> year has increased, and next year our 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year classes will be full. We moved to our new location in Old Conna in 2017, and our profile in the area has dramatically increased. The increase in the school's profile is mostly due to word of mouth. Thank you for sharing your experiences of John Scottus.

We held an online Open Morning on Thursday, Jan 28, for parents enrolling children for August 2022. We had an excellent turnout, and we also expect to have very strong enrolment into 1<sup>st</sup> year August 2022.

### **Leaving Certificate Results Analysis**

At the recent Board of Management meeting, the Board analysed the Leaving Certificate results from 2020. This analysis compared the grades in each subject against the national average. It was great to see that a much higher percentage of students in John Scottus sit higher-level subjects than the national average. Well done to all students on achieving a high-quality standard of work.

### **World Sanskrit Award**

We are delighted to share the news that the Indian Council of Cultural Relations has awarded Rutger Kortenhorst the World Sanskrit Award 2020. This award is a very prestigious award which recognises eminent Sanskrit scholars who have made outstanding contributions to the study, teaching and research in Sanskrit language and literature. This award was based on his commitment and dedication to the teaching of Sanskrit to children and adults over the last twenty years. In particular, the award was in recognition of his efforts toward the teaching and promotion of Sanskrit at the John Scottus Schools. The council will present Rutger Kortenhorst with a Citation, a gold plated

medallion and USD 20,000 in an award ceremony organised in Delphi when possible. To see some of his work, please visit his website at [sanskrit.ie](http://sanskrit.ie). Well done, Mr Kortenhorst.

**Summary of Events coming up**

Monday, Feb 22 – Junior Cycle Professional Day for Teachers, no classes

Tuesday, Feb 23 - Online classes resume

Friday, Mar 26 – End of Term

**Philosophical thought for the day**

"Afflictive emotions— our jealousy, anger, hatred, fear—can be put to an end when you realise that these emotions are only temporary, that they always pass on like clouds in the sky." – Dalai Lama

Yours warmly,



Dr. Declan Kelly

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