



JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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

TEL: (01) 6680828,

E-MAIL: SECONDARY@JOHNSCOTTUS.IE WEB: WWW.JOHNSCOTTUS.IE

June 2, 2023

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We have arrived at the end of a very eventful academic year. Our 3rd and 6th-year students start exams next week, and I wish all students the strength and stillness to give their full attention to the exams they face.

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

Assembly Themes

The whole school assemblies have continued for the past month. The main feature of these assemblies was the many student contributions, including musical performances and speeches on various topics. We also explored themes such as

What do you practice to calm the mind?
Is our greatest freedom our attitude?
Can we live in harmony with the laws of nature?
Do you give more than you take?

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

Summer Assessment

Students from the 1st, 2nd, and 5th years completed summer assessments last week. In addition, 2nd-year students completed standardised tests in Maths and Literacy. We will share feedback from these assessments with you in the coming weeks.

Graduating 6th Years

We wish our graduating class of 6th year best wishes in their exams and the decisions they will need to make about their future studies. I know they will make a considerable impression and contribution wherever they go.

School Policies

The Board of Management and teaching staff review various policies every year. In the past year, the Board reviewed the Admissions, GDPR, Anti-Bullying, Child Safe-Guarding, Litter and Catering policies. The updated policies and all other school policies can be found on the school website [here](#).

Board of Management

The school Board of Management consist of two parents, two staff members and four nominations from the Board of Trustees. The Board meet approximately every six weeks to discuss and review various aspects of the school. The Board creates "Agreed Reports"

from these meetings to summarise topics discussed, and for dissemination to the school community. These agreed reports can be found on the school website [here](#).

School Fee increase

The school does receive a grant from the Department of Education and Skills based on the number of students enrolled, which covers the costs of several teachers. However, all other costs are covered by the school fee. These fees are used to pay for teacher salaries, catering costs, administration costs, building and maintenance costs and transport costs. In the past few years, costs have risen with inflation, so there is now the need to increase the fee. At the recent Board of Management meeting on May 22, the Board agreed to increase the school fee for John Scottus School to €5,775 for the 2023/24 year – an increase of €275 (5%). The catering charge will increase to €630 – an increase of €30 (5%). There is no change in the transport fees. These increases have been kept to the minimum while maintaining the school's high standard of service. For your information, a letter from the treasurer of the Board of Management is being sent along with this newsletter.

Transition Year Update

The Transition Year students had an eventful summer term this year. It started with a new Wednesday module run by Weightlifting Ireland. The fantastic instructors taught our students Olympic power movements using training weights for six weeks.

The TYs have gone to Powerscourt Gardens, Zipit, Emerald Park and Belmont for the Friday modules. The students also worked very hard to create a TY showcase, and they did a fantastic job with everyone playing a part. As part of it, they made a couple of excellent videos summarising what they did over the year.

On the second last week of school, students partook in a social outreach week where they volunteered with a charity for the week. In addition, two of our students stayed in school to create a beautiful mural in the canteen to raise awareness of the UN's sustainable goals, mainly focusing on the goal of life below water.

Uniform Sale

Our Parents Association organised a second-hand uniform sale on May 31. It was a very successful event, particularly for the incoming 1st-year students. The plan is to have another uniform sale somewhere between Halloween and Christmas. I thank all parents who contributed items for the sale and who volunteered to organise the sale.

Wicklow Bus

A parent of an incoming 1st year is looking to organise school transport for students coming from Wicklow. If you are interested in exploring this opportunity, please get in touch with Oona Frawley at oonafrawley@gmail.com.

1st-year enrollment, August 2024

We expect our 1st year enrolment starting August 2024, to be oversubscribed. Our admissions policy does give preference to siblings. If there are siblings interested in enrolling, please let us know before October 1, 2023.

Outdoor classroom

Our Transition Year students have continued working on this classroom over the last couple of months, building on previous years' work. They have cut down a good chunk of the invasive laurel trees/shrubs allowing more sunlight and space for picnic benches. They have also moved five picnic benches into the area, which should accommodate most class sizes. The outdoor classroom is behind the Transition Year garden/Polly tunnel in the forest. You can access it by going through the old glasshouse in the garden. To see a picture, please click [here](#).

School Events

Sponsored Walk and Activity Day

Our Parents Association organised a fantastic sponsored walk and activity day on Wednesday, May 10. We are delighted that parents raised €2970 for the JSS sports department. I thank you all for your generous contributions. To see some pictures of the event, please follow the link [here](#).

School Events

There have been many school events during the year, including Founders Day, parent meetings, Open Days, Halloween, Dress up, Christmas Talent Show, House Activity Day, Sports Day, Speech competition, and Prize Giving. There are many posts on the website illustrating these events, and I hope you get the chance to read some of them.

Our school leadership team was instrumental in organising many of these events, and I must congratulate all involved for demonstrating such great leadership qualities in uniting the school and lifting the school spirit.

Celebration and Prize Giving Event

Graduation and Prize Giving took place on Tuesday, May 16. It was an excellent opportunity to celebrate quality learning in the past year. To see the prize winners for each category, please click [here](#).

Speech Competition

The Annual Speech Competition and The JSS Writing Competition 2023

In the past few weeks, our students have been working hard to write and create pieces for our two important competitions: The Annual Speech Competition and the Writing Competition.

The Annual Whole School Speech Competition

John Scottus School prides itself on the ability to express ourselves to engender reflection and the possibility for change and development in our lives. This was seen in abundance when our students presented their heartfelt and reflective speeches at our Annual Speech Competition.

On Thursday, May 18, we all gathered, united in the warm glow of the summer sun, to be entertained and delighted by the thoughts, ruminations and observations of our great and brave students. The speeches were diverse and gave us an insight into issues

and concerns the students had in many areas. To read more about the event, please click [here](#).

The JSS Annual Writing Competition:

The annual writing competition is significant in the school calendar, allowing students to delve deep into their imaginations and take time to reflect and create. All genres were welcome, and the theme for this year was '*Being Surprised*'. Students took pen to paper and created beautiful essays, poems, rap flows and short stories. The winner Elijah Allen (6th year) for his short story '*Just the Beginning*' was announced at our Speech and Prize Giving event on Tuesday, May 16. Thanks to all the students for their participation and well done to Elijah! Overall, creativity, reflection and standard of expression is thriving amongst our student body. Well done! Keep writing, keep reflecting and continue creating!

Well done to Ms Maguire Timmins and Ms Franklin for their great work in co-ordinating these events.

Minister Visit

Minister Jennifer O'Carroll, the Latvian Ambassador and the local councillor Jim Gildea came to the school on Monday, May 8, to talk to our Transition Year and 2nd-year students ahead of Europe Day on May 9. They facilitated a fascinating discussion on local, national and International politics.

School Trips

Our 1st year, 2nd year, Transition Years and 5th years went on an end of year class trip to Carlingford and Munich. The feedback from the trips was that all students and teachers thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. Thank you to all the teachers involved, Mr Kortenhorst, Ms Franklin, Mr Telford, Ms Williams, Mr Bourke, Mr Burns, Ms Mhic Chionnaith, Ms Harte, Ms Swan and Ms Sweeney.

3rd year class trip

This trip was a welcome change from exam study for the third-year students. However, it also provided some clever, experiential revision of History, Geography and Irish through an immersive visit to The Wicklow Gaol, and of Maths and Science in a visit to the spectacularly structured tree top walk in Avondale, giving 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside.

Students caught a close sense of freefall through the hair-raising slide that wound its way down from about 34 metres to near ground level. Some students, who we will not mention by name, managed to emit such resounding screams that there was no doubt among the facilitators of the good physical health of the John Scottus students. One facilitator, who retrieved the mats of those who came out of the tube, commented on how well-behaved and good-mannered our students were, how they took time to thank him and left the slide swiftly to allow the next student dispatch.

This group's close-knit and respectful bonding was in evident as they engaged with each other throughout the day, from sharing lunches to sharing fun conversations. There was

also the gentle coaxing of some shy members when it came to such scary events as going down to the dark dungeon to see the miserable head of the perpetual prisoner, who peered back at you through the bars on the dropping of a flap.

Theme weeks

During the year, many theme weeks have focused on particular academic, personal, and social development aspects. These have included: Science Week, Maths Week, Stand-up Week, Literacy Week, Philosophy Week, Green Schools Week, Music Week and Seachtain na Gaeilge. Thank you to all the respective teachers and students for organising and engaging in the various theme weeks

Global Citizen Education

One theme we explore is becoming a global citizen, understanding the harmony between all people, and working from the principle of "May all be Happy". I was very impressed with the many significant fundraising initiatives organised throughout the year. These fundraisers raised money for charities such as Five Loaves, Focus Ireland, Purple House and Ukarine and are great examples of young people taking a stand and practising giving and helping. I take this opportunity to thank all students involved for demonstrating outstanding leadership and enthusiasm.

I must also mention the Schools Climate Change conference organised by the Global Citizen Education Club. Last week, representatives from various schools came to John Scottus to debate the future of Climate Change. Thank you for all our students involved in organising a fantastic conference.

Extra-Curricular

School Newsletter - Pause Magazine

The student lead school newspaper, the PAUSE, came freshly out in print in the last few weeks. Many students have worked tirelessly in the school to bring this to fruition. Primarily junior cycle journalists have written fantastic articles alongside two exceptional senior students. The articles include philosophical reflections about education and sport, book reviews, art in politics, and key moments of school life, like the ski trip and the power of kindness. There is also a special interview with an inspiring student. Our students also displayed fantastic editing and designing skills to give a professional look and cover for these thought-provoking and well-written articles. Well done to Ms Khaled for her great work in co-ordinating the magazine.

Extra-curricular clubs and activities

John Scottus school considers extra-curricular clubs essential to well-being and a sense of belonging. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities was organised this year by various teachers.

The clubs included: Basketball games with Ms Scott, Hockey with Ms Broader, Soccer, Athletics with Ultimate Frisbee with Ms Pender, Choir and Instrumental music with Ms Williams, Board games with Mr Burns, Drama with Ms Maguire Timmins, Debating with

Mr Bourke, Golf with Ms Shanahan, Green Schools with Ms Mc Goldrick, Global Citizen Education with Mr Telford, French club with Ms Khaled, David Attenborough Appreciation club with Ms Swan, Irish club with Ms Mhic Chionnaith, Art club with Ms Sweeney, and Horse Riding with Ms Williams. Well done to all students and teachers for getting involved in the various clubs and bringing great energy and enthusiasm.

Physical Education and Sports

Mr Pender and Ms Broaders led a great Sports and PE program during the year. The year culminated in a brilliant Sports day on Friday, May 5, the event took place on our Old Conna grounds in glorious sunshine. The day was a great success, with great individual and team performances. There was a great spirit and engagement as students competed in various competitions throughout the day. Well done to the House Team of Aphrodite, who won the overall joint first prize, and all students who won ice creams for their fantastic participation.

Sport

With the 2022/2023 school year ending, so has our extra-curricular club activities. Our Soccer, Frisbee, and Hockey clubs have finished training after long and fulfilling seasons. It has been great to see an increase in the numbers participating in our clubs throughout the year.

It has been a joy to watch so many of our students get outside and participate in various sports throughout the year. Our junior girls and junior soccer teams competed in the Leinster schools league for the first time this year and enjoyed many days out playing against schools from all around Dublin.

Our school's frisbee teams trained on Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the year and competed in many events. We regularly had 40 students travelling to tournaments and had teams entered in all categories, and the year finished with the All Ireland schools final in Abbotstown, where our Senior Boys team finished 5th.

Our athletics team, led by one of our outstanding 4th-year students Gina Papadimitropoulos trained every Thursday from 3:40pm - 4:40 pm. They competed in various activities throughout the year including cross country races in winter and various track and field events in the Spring and Summer term.

It was another first for our boy's basketball team as they entered the Post Primary School Basketball league for the first time. The boys trained on Thursday lunchtime with Ms Scott. The boys managed to advance from their group and get a big win in the playoff, qualifying them for a quarter-final. Unfortunately, it was not to be on the day, and they lost out by the narrowest of margins.

Our junior girl's hockey club trained every Wednesday after school from 1:15 pm to 2:15 pm. With the addition of several 1st years, a very young JSS team took to the field for many of our Leinster School League matches. The team had great fun and gained much experience from the many outings. They are already looking forward to getting back to it next year.

Throughout April and May, we made the most of the good weather and got out onto the grass pitch for our PE lessons. Our two main sports this term were Gaelic Football and Rounders. It was great to see students from all years out enjoying themselves in the sun.

Music

It's been an exciting term for music! A massive congratulations to the two 2nd year classes who performed for their Continuous Based Assessment. They created, rehearsed and performed in the JSS talent show and a "Music of the Ages' concert. The event was a great success and was thoroughly enjoyed by all the junior students who attended. We also had our first music week this year in school with some fantastic performances from our 1st to 6th years in a series of performances throughout the week. Well done to all involved. Students also entertained the school community with their musical talents during the speech competition.

These performances showed all the hard work, effort and practice our music students have done over the last term.

Horse Riding

The horse riding club resumed in May for a few full-filled weeks. On a few sunny Wednesday afternoons, some of our students got to try horse riding for the first time at Brennenstown Stables.

School Management

Parents Association

We are grateful to have the support of a vibrant parent community who raised funds for a defibrillator and sports equipment during the year. We are thankful for the trust and partnership that underpins our community, and we look forward to continuing to work together to nurture the growth of our students and our school.

Management

The daily management of the school involves a variety of activities, from refining the school's ethos to improving learning and teaching. To help manage all these activities, we had a Senior Management Team comprising Ms Swan, Ms Emma Maguire Timmins, Mr Pender, Mr Telford, Mr Bourke and myself. Ms Creaney also contributed enormously to managing our learning support provision. In addition, we have our Premises Manager and Bursar, Ms Madden, who looks after finance, transport and buildings maintenance. I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Senior Management Team for all their hard work, enthusiasm and creativity throughout the year.

Teaching Staff

I must thank our teachers in John Scottus for their commitment and dedication. Our teachers in John Scottus are dedicated to empowering the greatness in our students. Indeed we are very fortunate to have fantastic, enthusiastic, caring teachers who work tirelessly to support every student.

Communications

We endeavour to ensure good communication through the school community using parent meetings, the website, parent newsletters, class representative meetings, Board of Management meetings and staff meetings. Your input is greatly appreciated, and we greatly encourage parents to participate in the various structures in place.

Administration and support staff.

We are very fortunate to have excellent support staff in Ms Telford and Ms Griffin as administrative support, Mr Mc Guirk as caretaker and Ms Salmon and Ms Flynn in cleaning. Thank you

Catering

A special thanks must be given to the Catering team of Ann, Niamh and Tracy for their creativity in producing tasty food. As part of the ongoing process to refine the service, a student food committee meets regularly, and surveys on food are conducted on an annual basis. We look forward to getting more feedback next year as we endeavour to enhance the menu.

Summary of Events coming up

Start of school – Monday, August 28, finish at 12.50 pm

Start of year meeting with Principal and Class Teachers- Thursday, August 31

Open Day – Wednesday, Sept 20 and Saturday, Sept 23

Founders Day – Friday, September 29

Philosophical thought for the day

Finally, a philosophical thought for the day:

“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in Man” – Vivekananda

Yours warmly,



Dr Declan Kelly

Principal

Phone: 01-6680828

Email: dkelly@johnscottusoldconna.ie