



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

As usual, it has been a very busy and productive term in our school. As we come to the end of the year, I would like to thank all members of the school community for their dedicated and enthusiastic engagement with all school activities, both academic and extracurricular.

Some highlights from this term include the publication of the first edition of XLCG Times, the First-Year student newspaper. Well done to the editorial team on this endeavour. The resumption of a full extra-curricular programme, the Retreats programme including a successful Kairos retreat for the 6th years and of course, the welcome return of lockers for all students.

Parent-Teacher meetings have been run online over the past number of weeks. As outlined below, these meetings have been run very successfully. Christmas tests have been completed and reports are now available via Compass. A huge thank you to all our staff who have implemented the new regimes so that your daughters and sons can have as near to normal a school experience as possible. It has to be recognised that the wearing of masks and the change of conditions due to Covid have been difficult for all concerned. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to parents and guardians for your understanding and adherence to these changes. As a consequence of changing guidelines, it has been necessary to update our Stay-at-Home Policy. For the safety of the entire community, please adhere to the guidelines contained in this updated document which will be shared in Compass in the New Year.

Transition Year students have engaged fully in a comprehensive curriculum of events this term. Students are following an innovative programme of core and modular subjects as well as weekly Social Outreach. While trips have been curtailed, the Wednesday afternoon activities have been a great success and students who are attending have enjoyed the opportunities presented. See the short article below which outlines the feedback from the Mindfulness/Yoga module. It is our hope that we will have at least one trip per month after the Christmas break. Details will be forwarded to parents in early January.

After an extremely challenging 2021, we look forward with optimism to the New Year. As you are aware, we are getting new windows installed in the Griffin building during March & April. We are also engaging with architects and construction companies with a view to developing our covered walkways and outdoor terrace (See image below). Subject to funding, we aim to begin works during the summer of 2022.

Finally, I would like to thank all our hard-working staff, Teaching, SNAs, Office, Cleaning and Caretaking, who have gone above and beyond to make sure that Teaching and Learning continues. We are looking forward to welcoming students back on Thursday, January 6th. Please God the new restrictions will work and the school year will continue uninterrupted in 2022.

Nollaig shona a chairde agus gach sonas agus sláinte oraibh don bhliain nua,

David O Sullivan

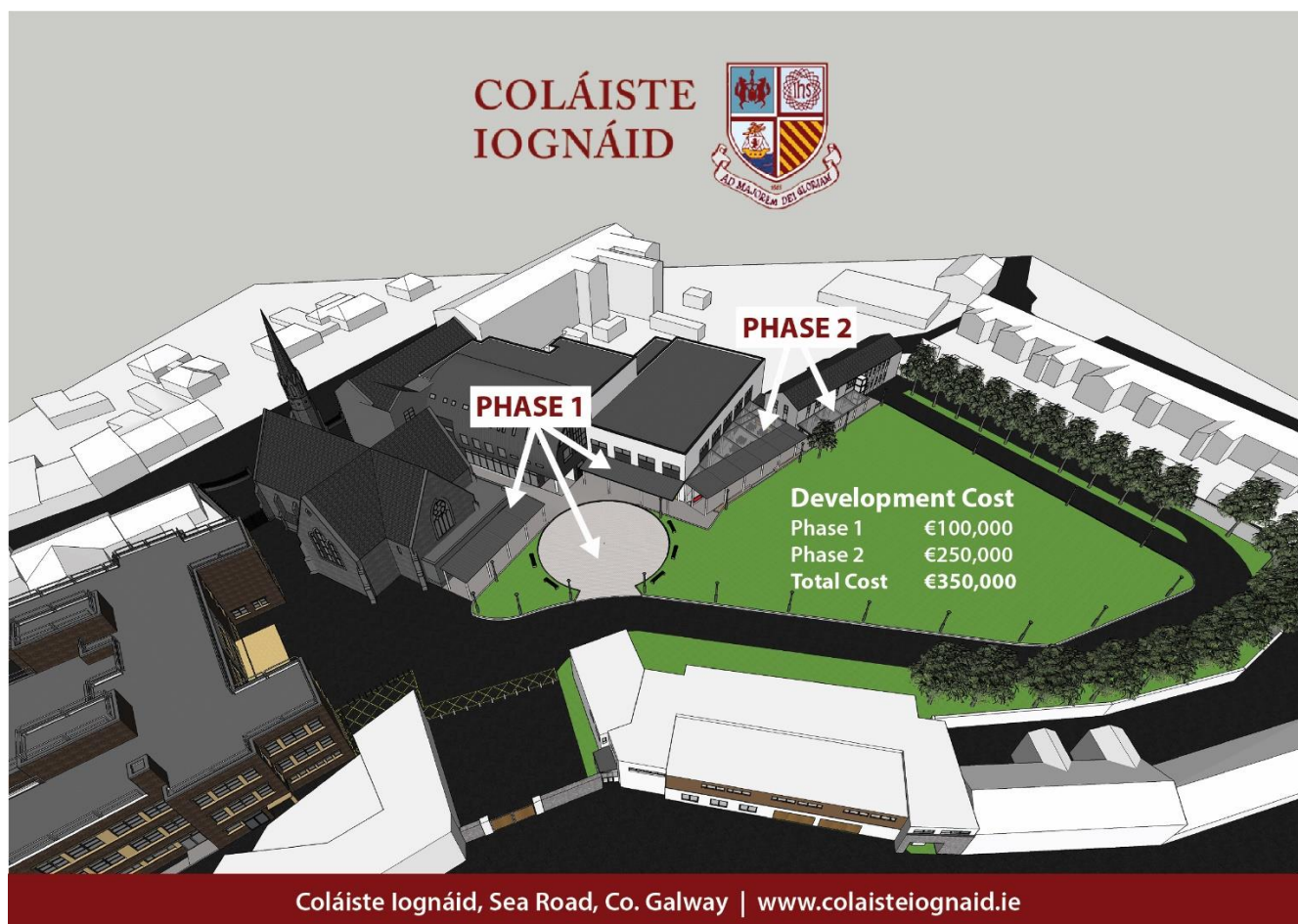
DEVELOPMENT PLANS

As outlined in my recent letter, we hope to begin works on the development of our covered walkways during 2022. With an estimated cost of €350,000, significant funds will need to be raised.

We have had an excellent response to our recent Covenant Fund appeal. If you are in a position to support our school financially, please complete the survey at this link <https://forms.office.com/r/geBjBNufwE>

It is important to note that funds raised for capital projects are separate from the Voluntary Contributions. We still need the Voluntary Contributions in order to meet the day-to-day running costs of the school. I am delighted to report that the majority of parents have now paid the contribution for this academic year. Thank you most sincerely for your support. To pay the Voluntary Contribution please follow the link on your Compass profile.

As always, if you cannot afford to pay the contribution, please email voluntarycontribution@colaisteiognaid.ie in complete confidence.



PARENT – TEACHER MEETING PARENT SURVEY

We would like to thank the parents / guardians who took the time to complete the survey on the 6th and 3rd year parent-teacher meetings and would like to take this opportunity to share some of the feedback.

Overall the response was very positive. Out of the 91 response 63 people were very satisfied, 16 somewhat satisfied, 3 neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 3 were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Nine respondents were dissatisfied with the process.

How satisfied were you with the overall experience of the meetings?

Very satisfied	63
Somewhat satisfied	16
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Somewhat dissatisfied	5
Very dissatisfied	4



Some parents did feel that 5 minutes was not enough time for these meetings. The reality is that we are trying to hold circa 900 meetings in a 2.5 hour window, extending the time would make the process unworkable.

There were a significant number of people who experienced technical issues. This is a concern which we need to address before the next meetings. Issues arose mainly from parents/guardians not being familiar with MS Teams and the fact that some meetings were not set up correctly. We will work to iron out issues identified and clarify communications prior to the 5th year PT meeting in January.

Did you experience any technical difficulties in accessing meetings?

Yes	40
No	51



Finally, we would like to share a sample of the very many positive comments we received, as part of the survey.

"It all went very well, easy to book times and meet online. "

"I think this online version was much easier and more efficient. Well done Thanks"

"I personally think it was brilliant I had no issues and would do it again."

"I found it very handy and would love this to continue going forward."

"That was my last PT and definitely the easiest, did not miss the hours waiting in line in the hall, so definitely the way forward in my opinion."

"Thank you for everything the school have done for student and parents over the past 20 months. It has been much appreciated. Happy Christmas :) "

"I actually think it was more successful and fruitful than in person meetings....maybe Covid has done some good."

"Overall though, a great idea in such a challenging time...keeps communication between parents and teachers open whilst keeping everyone safe...well done!"

SCIFEST NATIONAL FINALS 2021

Well done to Diarmuid Hayes who competed in the National SciFest finals 2021 with his project “Real or Fake? A study of the use of Benford’s Law” and received the “Excellence in STEM Award” as a recognition of his achievement in having qualified as a SciFest 2021 National Finalist. He also had the opportunity to speak to “Irish Tech News” about his project on their technology podcast.



CANSAT COMPETITION 2022

CanSat is an initiative of the European Space Agency that challenges students from all over Europe to build and launch a mini satellite. The challenge for the students is to fit all the major subsystems found in a satellite, such as power, sensors and a communication system, into the volume and shape of a soft drinks can. Both Jes teams spent a day in TUS working on their primary mission where they built their circuits and programmed their Arduinos. Best of luck to all the students involved: Daniel Ryan, Caoilte Murray, Cian Carr, Oisín O'Callaghan, Michael Young, Leon Schofield, Colm O' hEocha, Mary Flannery and Daniel Carey. Both teams will post updates on their progress through their CanSat social media accounts over the coming weeks.



TY WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

The transition year students have been very busy on Wednesday afternoons with a diverse and rich program of activities. Among the activities they have engaged in are physical health and fitness and mental health and wellbeing. The physical health module is facilitated by Setanta college and the mental health and well-being module by An Seomra Yoga Wellbeing Center. Pupils who attended and passed these courses will be certified. So far half of the year group have taken the courses and the pupil evaluations have come back very well. An average score of 7.5/10 was

reported in relation to learning on both modules and enjoyment registered on average 7.75/10. Mr. Leonard continues to work with the course facilitators in improving the pupils' learning experience and some of the feedback has been very useful to this end. The courses provide the pupils a starting point in managing both their physical and mental health both now and into the future. The coping and management skills garnered are invaluable and contribute massively to the holistic education at Coláiste Iognáid



TY SOCIAL OUTREACH

Transition Year students are doing an Art Class for Social Outreach with St Joseph's special school every Thursday.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR NOTES

DEBATING

After having assassinated several dictators, proved that the pandemic was necessary, prevented fourteen-year-olds from voting and happily reintroducing the cane to schools, clearly the debating house is a conservative sect of radicals. The society even admitted publicly that generation Z are a hopeless bunch of phone-addicted drones who will make an even greater mess of our future than Boris and Donald did...

The society seems to be in a very healthy condition with a regular forum of at least fifty students verbally sparring each Thursday after school. Much of this is due to the hard work of the society's co-auditors Emily Rooney and Clara O'Gorman whose positive leadership has meant a constant and enthusiastic audience.

Matei Ghita (1C) has risen to dominate the First Year league just above **Arthur O'Malley** (1x) and **Marcus Kruzel** (1X). Second Year sees **Isaac McCoy** (2L) regularly claiming awards with newbie **Mark Egan** (2G) regularly jostling for position with **Mactire Tighe** (2L). **Third Year Sarah O'Sullivan** (3L) is clearly destined for the legal profession with her tightly structured speeches, and **Thomas Godfrey's** devastating rhetoric is always powerful and witty: he's the society's resident Stephen Fry. TY speaker **Isabelle Carey** followed her excellent maiden speech with a series of strong debates and fifth years, led by **Oisín**



Isaac McCoy wins best point from the floor

O'Callaghan and featuring **Matthew Fogarty, Emmet O'Reilly, Noah Finneran** and **Joe Kelly**, have learnt gravitas and social awareness to meetings. Finally, veterans **Clara O'Gorman, Emily Rooney, Niall Martin, Tara** and **Felix O'Neill** lead by excellent and eloquent example.

Whilst there seem to be no national competitions on the horizon due to Covid, we look forward to continuing our work next term, with the feature debate before Easter being the '*Maidens Debate*' for Sixth Years who have never debated before. Adjudication for that debate is provide by First Years.



The Christmas debate...



Auditors Clara O'Gorman and Emily Rooney

HOCKEY



The 2nd Years dressed up in Christmas style for the last training session in Dangan. Thanks to their coach Ger McManamon.

Transition years have been helping after school every Monday with hockey training the 1st and 2nd Years. Thanks to Katie Clifford, Tara Costello, Grace Marshall, Siobhan McManamon, Kate Thompson, Rachel Kelly, Leana NicDhonnacha, Ailbhe Tarpey and Aoife Nash.

First year hockey training takes place in Dangan every Monday after school. Photo with our coaches Donal and Katie Dempsey.

First years will take part in the Cahill and Blackmore competitions in the New Year.



GAELIC FOOTBALL - FIRST YEAR

Mr. Sheehan and Mr. Silke are very pleased with the progress being made by the current first year football squad and the entire panel are looking forward with anticipation to the Connacht Championship which kicks off in February.

The 2022 competition will be on a “knock-out” basis and contains twenty-seven teams in our Division, so it will be a real challenge to come out on top.

Nonetheless, it is one which the entire panel is really keen to take on.

Our first-year footballers have had a very productive term and have played The Bish at both the swamp, and the Prairie, and they recently had a very competitive outing with St. Endas up on Threadneedle road that ended in a draw.

Super panel of 32 players

With a panel of thirty-two boys it was important to have a few trial games so that the team management could decide on what positions suited different lads.

Many players have caught the eye during our three games and at training this term, with some lads such as Alban Harte, JJ Phillips, Luke Bradley, Luca MacGiolla Rí, Ryan Mannion, Eoghan O’ Connell, Jack Barry, Daniel Clifford, Conn Sweeney, Daniel Duignan, Charlie Kavanagh, Stephen Long, Conor O’ Donnell, David Faherty, Micheál Walsh, David Cafferky, Barry Gavin, Callum Kavanagh and Conor Faherty having had some very good moments.

It has also been very rewarding to see players such as Jim Hearne, Darragh Loftus, John Holland, James Murphy and Marcus Kruzel who are new to Gaelic Football

enjoying the weekly training sessions and their days wearing the school colours.

Another pleasing aspect for both the coaches and the players themselves, is the incremental improvement in skills that has occurred since we kicked off in September.

Practice during Christmas please

We would ask the parents and the boys themselves to keep getting out and practicing their skills over the Yuletide Period.

The more times you practice a skill - the better you get at it.

Every player on our panel needs to work on the key skills of kicking, catching, pick-ups and hand-passes over the holidays.

Real skill improvement is done away from training. And to practice all your son needs is a ball and a wall.

With many of our panel from the Salthill/Knocknacarra club – there is no excuse for those guys not to go down to the Arus and do thirty or forty minutes every second day during the holidays.

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and hopefully 2022 will be a good year both academically and on the field of play.

Le Meas,

Mr. Ray Silke and Mr. Jerry Sheehan.

“Practice doesn’t make perfect. Perfect practice makes perfect”.

Vince Lombardi – Green Bay Packers



U16 AND U19 GIRL'S BASKETBALL

Both Under 16 and Under 19 girls teams finally got back playing again this year after a two year break from Basketball due to the Covid 19 Restrictions on indoor sports. With a short 4 week training window the girls were straight into their two pool games. Their first game was against a strong Claregalway side where they played Colaiste Bhaile Chlair. Both teams played well but lack of game practice went against the girls as they were defeated against the Claregalway side. Gloria Silke, Aoife Bundschu, Georgia Costello, Aisling Dempsey and Mary Biggins made some great scores for the Under 16 squad and Aoife Waldron, Aoibhe Briscoe and Maeve Mc Hugh from the Under 19 squad.

The girls had their second game the following day against Castlerea. Both teams played well but unfortunately, they were not a match for the Castlerea side. The Under 16 team achieved their highest score tally to date against the Castlerea team. The Under 19 team made a triumphant comeback to narrow the margin to a one basket game but unfortunately time was against them and this was not enough to beat the Castlerea girls. Impressive three pointers were made by Aoife Bundschu on the Under 16 team and Aoife Waldron on the Under 19 team.



Under 16 Team: Mary Biggins, Aoife Bunschu, Tara Clancy, Georgia Costello, Aisling Dempsey, Lorna Donnelly, Siofra Dooley, Rachel Duignan, Alina Ferrie, Gloria Silke, Rachel Kelly, Riona Mannion, Eva Mc Guinness, Ciara Maloney, Ana Ni Riada, Katie O' Riordan, Sarah O' Sullivan, Nicole O' Toole, Alyce Rooney



Under 19 Team: Aoibhe Briscoe, Shauna Keenan, Alannah Kelly, Maeve Mc Hugh, Blathnaid Molloy, Freya O' Toole, Caoimhe Nic Aodha, Sarah Parkinson, Abbie Somers, Aoife

UNDER-19 BOYS' BASKETBALL

The Senior Team had a relatively successful league campaign. Despite losing out to The Bish and Coláiste Éinde in the group stage they pulled off a bit of an upset to beat Calasanctius in the Regional Quarter-Final on a scoreline of 52-45, helped by Matthew Thompson's 22 points and the three three-pointers from Ruairí Blanchard.

They once again faced The Bish, this time in the Regional Semi-Final, and although there was a much-improved performance they fell just short. With the full team still eligible next year the future is bright for this Senior Team.



UNDER-16 BOYS' BASKETBALL



Unfortunately for the Under-16 boys, there was no success to be had this year. The league campaign ended in disappointment with a loss to Claregalway College after losses to both The Bish and Coláiste Éinde.

There were players missing for both group games which never allowed the team gain momentum this season. However, when they join forces with the Senior Team next year it could result in a very strong team.

FIRST YEAR AND SECOND YEAR BOYS' BASKETBALL

Both of these teams start their leagues in January. They have been training since October, and the First Years have shown some great potential in their first challenge game against Calasanctius College. They are definitely a team to watch in the coming months.



CHRISTMAS BUSKING IN AID OF SIMON COMMUNITY

A massive thank you to all the students who took part in the Christmas busking in aid of the Simon Community. They raised a whopping €1370 in an hour and a half and lit up Shop Street with their music and good cheer. Check out the school twitter feed to hear them play. We are very proud of you all!

