

26th November 2021



Dear Parent/Guardian,

This has been a much better week for the College in terms of pupils testing positive for Covid. Hopefully we are now over the impact of the recent teen disco. However, we have more staff testing positive and falling very ill. I need your help to **protect our staff**. Please encourage your sons and daughters to wear their masks properly, to sanitise their hands, get vaccinated and not to come to school if symptomatic. It would also be helpful if your sons and daughters did Lateral Flow Testing on a Monday and Friday, as this identifies asymptomatic pupils. In order to allow the virus to move out of classrooms it is important to keep doors and windows open for ventilation. We are coming into colder temperatures therefore I would advise that pupils wear layers, e.g. underarmour style tops under their shirts/blouses, two pairs of tights, longer socks.

We are struggling to get substitute teachers, they are simply not available. Therefore, we must protect our staff at all costs in order to maintain teaching and learning. We are at a critical point and I am trying very hard not to send year groups home as has happened with many other schools.

As a precautionary measure we are sadly having to cancel the audience participation in our Carol Service. I know this will come as a great disappointment to all of you who had booked tickets and indeed to our choir members and the Music Department staff, as it is indeed to me. However, we have to make sacrifices to keep our College family safe. We are currently exploring the best options to do this virtually. I will share the details of this next week.

Our Track 2 Assessments begin on 13th December. Timetables will be shared next week. Years 8, 9 10 and 11 will finish for Christmas on the 17th December. We will have a staggered finish for pupils.

Congratulations to our 3 Camogie All Star recipients -
Eavanne Martin, Doireann Donnelly and Aimee Lennon



I would like to wish Year 11 pupil Lara Scott good luck in the DMT (Double Mini Trampoline) World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan.



Christmas Dinner

Will take place in the College on **Wednesday 8th** and **Thursday 9th of December**.



Years 8, 9 and 11 will have their canteen dinner on **Wednesday 8th December**

ALL pupils in **Years 10** and **12** **MUST** bring a packed lunch if they do not wish to have a Christmas dinner.

Any pupil who is entitled to Free School Meals and who does not want a Christmas dinner can pre-order a sandwich)

Years 10 and 12 will have their canteen dinner on **Thursday 9th December**

(**ALL** pupils in **Years 9** and **11** **MUST** bring a packed lunch if they do not wish to have a Christmas dinner.

Any pupil who is entitled to Free School Meals and who does not want a Christmas dinner can pre-order a sandwich)

Cost: Dinner only £2.80
Dinner and dessert £3.80

Health and Safety Alert: Pupils must not bring glass bottles to school, e.g. bottles of Shloer

Christmas Jumper Days

Our annual **Christmas Jumper Days** will take place on **Wednesday 8th (Years 8, 9 and 11 only)** and **Thursday 9th of December (Years 10, 12, 13 and 14)**. We are asking for a **donation of £1 per pupil** to raise funds for the St Vincent de Paul Society. We know that there is a lot of hardship in our communities at this time and we are very proud of our tradition of generosity.

No jumper – wear tinsel, antlers or anything that reflects Christmas



Hamper Collection

On a similar note, we are collecting for our annual Hamper Appeal. We would appreciate donations of the following items:

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|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Christmas Cake/Pudding | Mince Pies |
| Christmas Selection boxes | Biscuits/Chocolate |
| Crisps/Popcorn | Sweets |
| Box of Christmas crackers | Festive Table napkins |
| Tinned Fruit or vegetables | Custard |
| Packet/ Tinned Soup | Tinned Spaghetti and Baked Beans |
| Tinned fish | Turkey/Ham voucher |
| Tea and Coffee and Sugar | Soft Drinks |
| Breakfast Cereals and Muesli | Noodles, Rice and Pasta |
| Pasta/Rice Sauce | Deodorants |
| Shampoo/Conditioner | Shower gel |



If every pupil in the College brings in one item, it would make a huge difference for needy families. Please have all donated items in school by **Thursday 9th December**. If any family needs a hamper please let our Bursar know. This will be managed with discretion. We know that times are tough.

Our annual Christmas Draw

We had our second lucky winner of £200 today – **Annie Ni Lochlainn 14E**



It is never too late to buy a ticket!!

Week 1	19th November	£200	Winner Sean O’Kane 10Cu	Ticket Seller Liam O’Kane 8Cr
Week 2	26th November	£200	Winner Annie Ni Lochlainn 14E	Ticket Seller A Ni Lochlainn 14E
Week 3	3rd December	£200		
Week 4	10th December	£200		
Week 5	17th December	£1000		

Just in time for Christmas

If you are not in you can’t win!

School Fund



Thank you to all of the families who have paid our School Fund, we really appreciate it.

A gentle reminder to all families to pay this as soon as possible. Envelopes have been distributed to those who haven’t managed to pay thus far. If you wish to pay in installments please contact the Bursar 028 796 42451.

Our School Fund is used to cover the costs of pupil rewards.

School Fund also covers costs such as the two new computer suites that we are currently working on.

It also covers the costs for our extra-curricular activities. As you know the costs for most items has increased significantly. We rely on your financial support so that we can provide fully for all of our pupils. We simply do not get enough financial support from the Department of Education to do all the things that we would like to do.

COVID Update

The number of positive pupil cases this week was **27** - greatly reduced compared to the last 2 weeks.

If your child tests positive you **MUST** inform the College. PHA does not contact us.

If your child is unwell please **do not** send them to school.

Please sign up for **Lateral Flow Tests**. When we sent out letters this week from PHA to do extended testing, several families did not have Lateral Flow kits. We have lots of them, ready and waiting for collection.



New advice around Contact Tracing

The advice around Contact Tracing and what you do if you are a Close Contact has been updated. This will provide an additional safety measure for all staff and pupils in post primary schools.

This additional testing is advised but is not mandatory.

- Daily Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing will be recommended for Post Primary School pupils who are identified by PHA as household close contacts. The tests should be taken before going to school each day in the period following receipt of their initial negative PCR test result (which enables a return to school) up until receipt of a negative Day 8 PCR;
- In the event of an outbreak/cluster in a post primary school setting, and following a risk assessment and advice from the Public Health Agency, pupils and staff in an identified group may be asked to take a one-off LFD test (in addition to their ongoing LFD twice weekly asymptomatic testing) prior to returning to class. This will replace the existing recommendation to undertake a one-off PCR test in such circumstances.

Year 14 Mock Interviews

Our Year 14 Mock Interviews will take place on the 29th November. This is a fantastic opportunity for our pupils to gain interview experience with professionals. See below, key dates in preparation for the interviews. **Please note that this is a compulsory event.**

29th November	Mock Interview Evening: Over 35 interviewers from across a range of career sectors have been organised to conduct a mock interview with our Year 14 pupils: the aim is to better prepare them for future university and job interviews; maximising their overall performance. This will occur onsite through Zoom (between 3.30 and 6 o'clock). All pupils are expected to attend, and all pupils will remain onsite until their interview has been completed.
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Keep safe,

Mrs B. Mussen

Principal

