



St Colmcille's Community School Parents' Association

NEWS
UPDATE
JUNE
2018

Our AGM is on Tuesday 9th October 2018 at 7.30 p.m.



New Sixth Year Common Room



The Parents' Association approached Mr McKennedy with a view to providing a space for the Sixth Years as we felt that it was important for them to have the privilege of a room to call their own, where they can relax at lunchtime or break time and where they can heat food, make hot drinks and socialise together.

Mr McKennedy eagerly endorsed the concept of this Common Room and soon found a suitable location near the Meditation Room.

It was important to Mr McKennedy that students themselves had input into the design, layout and furnishing of the room, so a committee was formed which included some Teachers and a small group of Sixth Year students. The design of this space includes a lovely kitchen area with tables and chairs. The new Common Room will hopefully be an area where future Sixth Years will spend many enjoyable breaks and we were eager to fund a project which every student in the school will benefit from.

We are delighted to announce that the Common room was officially opened on the 22nd of March 2018 by Janet McNamee, Chairperson of the Parents' Association, John McKennedy and Father Martin who blessed the room. It was a very special evening and the first official use of the room as the Sixth Year Music students provided us with a beautiful Music Recital which was organised by Ruth Kelly followed by refreshments to celebrate the occasion.

Student Career Interest Tests

Many thanks to the Parents' Association for your generous funding of our Student Career interest tests. We provide these tests to our fifth years and each student gets a comprehensive career profile outlining their values, personality, skills, aptitudes and interests.

Following the tests we give each student a printed 'Student Career Report' on their test results in a one to one meeting so that we can guide them through their results. The career areas also have links online showing relevant college courses.

Our present sixth years used this test last year and found it extremely helpful. Thank you for your generous support of the Guidance Department.

We know that our students have really appreciated getting the opportunity to do this test and are very grateful that the Parents' Association have funded it.



Guidance Department



Chairperson's Address

As a Parents' Association we have had another very busy year and I would like to thank all the members of the committee for their hard work on your behalf this year. I would also like to thank you, the parents, who make up the Association, for your continued support.

We are fortunate that our young people have had the opportunity to attend such a well-run and progressive school and I would like to thank Mr McKennedy and all his staff for their continuing hard work and dedication.

In this newsletter you will find a flavour of some of the things your contributions are spent on. In choosing projects we are guided by the present needs of the school and we also try to plan for the needs of future students.

This is an important part of our work as the present students are now benefitting from larger projects undertaken by previous committees. We try to ensure that every student will benefit from at least one project regardless of where their interests lie.

Should you have any queries or suggestions for us we can be contacted by email at parents@stcolmcilles.ie, through the post-box in the general office or by consulting our page on the school website.

Finally, as this academic year draws to a close, we wish the Leaving and Junior Certs good luck as they undertake their state exams. For the Leaving Certs, we hope that we have played a small part in supporting you in your journey through St. Colmcille's and wish you all the very best in your future endeavours. **Janet McNamee**

Overview of How your Money was Spent this Year

Student Career Tests	Speaker Programme	IT and Lab Support	Motorised Blinds	Graduation Ceremonies	Sports Kits	Costumes for Musical	Debs Reception
New 6th Year Common Room	Counselling Services	Christmas Lights	Career Guidance Support	Parent Talks	Stress Management Classes	Library Books	Dance Workshops



Thank You!

Many thanks to all the volunteers who generously offered their time and hard work to clear the snow from around the school following Storm Emma – your assistance is greatly appreciated.



Voluntary Subscriptions

Now that the 2017/18 school year is drawing to a close, the Parents' Association would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all the families who paid all, or some, of the suggested €250 voluntary subscription.

Families face lots of financial demands and we would like to reassure parents that every cent received, goes entirely, towards the enhancement of your child's education.

St Colmcille's Community School Parents' Association relies on voluntary subscriptions from its parents to fund its activities. Your contribution is used to finance the many

activities detailed throughout this newsletter. There are many ways to pay the voluntary subscription:

-  Easy Pay through the school website, just click on the link for the Parents' Association
-  Standing order (see www.stcolmcilles.ie to download a form)
-  Cheque (drop envelope in to the office for the attention of the Parents' Association)

Whichever method you use, if you could include your family name and address, it will enable us to send out receipts.



Tax back

The Parents' Association can claim thousands of euro every year thanks to tax refunds given by the Revenue to approved bodies. This is a straightforward and simple process, which allows your subscription to go even further.

Whether you're **PAYE** or **SELF EMPLOYED** and if your donation is €250 you simply fill out a CHY3 Enduring Cert (download from the school website) which lasts for 5 years. The rebate is calculated at 31%.

This means that for every €250 the Parents' Association receive per family the Revenue will refund the school €112.31 making your voluntary subscription worth €362.31.

REMINDER Just a reminder that any family who pay by standing order and no longer have children in the school should contact their bank and cancel future payments.

Speaker Programme



The funding provided by our Parents' Association for our Speaker programme has proved invaluable yet again this year.

This funding has enabled us to provide students with meaningful opportunities to hear from inspirational, gifted and talented people; one such example is Sinead Kane. Sinead joined us for our Christmas Carol Service.

Last January, Sinead completed the World Marathon Challenge, running seven marathons on seven continents over just seven days. In doing so, she became the first visually impaired person to accomplish such a feat.

Sinead's story captivated the school community and we greatly appreciated her making the journey from Youghal, Co. Cork so close to Christmas, when she was also heavily immersed in a new training regime for her next marathon challenge!



The funding also allowed us to invite Accord facilitators to deliver Relationships and Sexuality Education workshops for our 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th Year students. Feedback from students in the form of evaluations indicated a significant level of appreciation for these helpful supports.

Your energy, efforts, contributions and generosity are greatly appreciated and we wish to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to the Parents' Association.

New Motorised Blinds



Once again this year the Parents' Association's commitment to funding ongoing projects has resulted in the replacement of blinds in a further 4 classrooms.

The old vertical blinds had become very shabby and had proved to be impractical and noisy.

This year the blinds have been replaced in rooms 24, 26, 27 and 28. The blinds are motorised and both teachers and students are benefiting from the new modern addition to these classrooms.

Christmas Lights

Bearing in mind the logistical issues that are involved in the acquisition, transportation, installation and decoration of the giant Christmas tree in the school grounds each year it was decided that a "re-think" was required in 2017 - (there won't always be a contractor / builder working nearby who will come to your rescue!). It was decided to put lights on the trees on the way into the school and the Parents' Association agreed to cover the costs involved.

Mr McKennedy set off to acquire the lights and spent part of his weekend decorating the trees. Michael and Peter from our PA were delighted to offer their assistance to help him complete the job. After several hours of work and a bit of craic the job was oxa. Although there were a few "hairy moments" they managed to avoid any serious injuries. The trees look resplendent when lit up, but they are still waiting for the one smart alec to tell them "you missed a bit there".



End of year BBQ

The famous end of year BBQ is a time when our 6th year students come together and have a chance to socialise and relax with food, music and bouncy castles (weather permitting!) before the upcoming state exams in June.

The PA are very happy to be involved with the funding of this school tradition. We would like to wish the Class of 2017/2018 every happiness in their future careers.

Don't Be Mean Behind your Screen

"Helping one person might not change the whole world, but it could change the world for one person."

This was the theme of the talk delivered by Paula O'Connor on the night of February 27th just as the blizzard changed the landscape of Knocklyon, to a white platform transcending us all back to a time when life was perhaps more innocent and easier.

The school has hosted many talks on how to help and protect our children and young people from the perils of the internet. So what was different about Paula O'Connor?

Paula's delivery of the practical elements of day to day interaction with both her students and her own teenagers brought an element to which we could all relate to, what we all endeavour to handle.

She gave practical advice on how to educate and how not to over react or remove devices due to fear and emotional upset when an event happens.

Paula described in detail the implications of the Digital Footprint on an individual's profile - it never goes away. What does Irish Law represent to us as parents governing our children - Anyone under the age of 18 who possesses, creates or distributes explicit images of themselves or other persons under 18 (with or without their permission is breaking the law)!

Setting rules and boundaries is crucial to minding our young people. It is no longer the case that images or content disappears once deleted or when using Snapchat/Instagram/musical.ly. Since 2014 all information is saved forever!

Don't Be Mean Behind Your Screen
Cyberbullying / Internet Safety Workshop
Parents Information Evening



Location information - if not set to privacy or "Ghost Mode - Snapchat" enables unknown people to locate your child directly to home, schools or friends' homes. Paula gave practical information on how to activate these settings.

The Parents' Association hope to invite Paula to deliver her talk to our students in the coming academic year - we would recommend anyone to access Paula's website for guidance and advice.

<https://www.facebook.com/dontbemeanbehindyourscreen/>



Garda John Scully from the Community Policing Unit in Rathfarnham gave a very informative talk at our AGM covering crime prevention and tips on keeping our children safe. Some of the advice he gave on current issues include:

Phone safety: Enter *#06# and you will get your phones serial number. Take a screenshot of this image and email it to yourself.

If you are unlucky enough to have a phone stolen this serial number will be of assistance to the Gardaí.

Bicycle storage: Lock your bikes to something heavy (e.g. garden furniture) in your shed. Ensure you record the serial number of your bike.

Household crime prevention: Don't leave portable devices on view when you leave the house/overnight. Put iPads etc., out of view to remove temptation.

Online safety: Parents should be aware that if your child has and shares inappropriate content /photos (*especially relating to our*

Crime Prevention Talk

underage children) this can lead to them being assigned a Juvenile Liaison Officer. Advise your children to be careful online. All online history is traceable by the Gardaí.

The talk was very well received and Garda John assured us that advice is always available from An Garda Síochána. He also pointed out to parents that groups of young people hanging around attract squad cars - simple as.

Parents need to know where our kids are; open communication in the home helps keep them out of trouble and this is what we all want.

John.p.scully@garda.ie

School Laboratory Technician

A Laboratory Technician is a professional who prepares the practical equipment and makes up solutions in school lab experiments.

This can include assisting Teachers with practical skills and class demonstrations. At the moment it is a particularly busy time in the school lab, as the third year students are completing their Junior Certificate Coursework. This requires designing appropriate experiments according to titles issued by the Department of Education and carrying out an investigative approach to successfully complete the practical's.

Each year these titles change and it is important for the students to have access to the appropriate equipment, this takes planning

and the Lab Technician communicates effectively with the teaching staff in this regard.

The Technician is also an extra pair of hands and eyes in the laboratory on the days that these experiments are being carried out! The supportive role of the Lab Technician helps free up time for the teaching staff to focus more on the curricular development and innovation required in implementing this new course.

On a day to day basis the Laboratory Technician also keeps an eye on the maintenance issues

that may arise e.g. dishwashers needing to be repaired, wall mounted racks needing to be replaced, electrical repairs etc.

The students of St. Colmcille's Community School are indeed very lucky to have such a proactive Parent's Association. The Association has for many years provided the funding required for the support of a Laboratory Technician.

This shows great foresight as so many students study Science for all their years in St. Colmcille's. It is very important for the future as the new Junior Cert Science course moves forward in a different direction and requires more planning.



Sports News

The Parents' Association have always supported both the extra-curricular team and the PE Department. This year the Parents' Association invested in a set of jerseys that were different to the regular school colours.

The intention is to use them on special occasions for semi finals and finals or when there is a clash of colours. Prior to this year there was no "alternative" colour jerseys for any of our teams.



The Parents' Association have been instrumental in helping the PE department deliver a variety of choice to the senior cycle PE curriculum.

All fifth and sixth year groups were given the opportunity to take part in a block of dance classes during their PE classes.

Career Guidance

Many thanks to the Parents' Association for all their support during the past school year. We had a very successful Mock Interview Evening here in November where our fifth and sixth year students got the opportunity to do a practice interview.

The students got tips on how they could improve their interview skills and their Curriculum Vitae. The students really benefited from this experience and we got very positive feedback from them.

Thank you to Janet McNamee and the team of parents who gave up their valuable time to help our students. Mock interviews help students with their LCVP interviews, as well as their job and College applications. Some of our students are applying to Colleges in Europe/ England and the USA this year. Many of our students have to do interviews as part of the entry process.

Our Career Fair was buzzing with enthusiastic fourth, fifth and sixth years doing career

research on 4th December. All the main CAO Universities and Colleges had stands set up in our general purpose hall. Past pupils set up stands and shared their College experiences.

Thanks to the parents who attended and were involved. We had career week in the beginning of February for our TY students. They got the opportunity to visit DCU, UCD, TCD, NUI Maynooth and IT Tallaght. We had a fun filled week!

Guidance Department

ICT Department

The funding allocated by the Parents Association to provide laboratory and ICT support to St. Colmcille's Community School is invaluable.

In September 2018 St. Colmcille's will have 600 students using iPads as our present TY's move into Senior Cycle. Having an ICT Coordinator in place to ease the transition of iPads into the school helps to make the process smooth and efficient. With over 60 stand alone PCs, projectors and surround sound systems in every classroom and practical room the role of ICT Coordinator is a busy one. Ensuring that the Teachers and Students have easy access to technology when they need it is a vital part of the role of ICT Coordinator.

Last year the ICT Coordinator looked at some long term projects that we hoped to put in place in the future:

- We improved our Wi-Fi speeds across the school - high quality "inschool Wi-Fi" is required as the number of computing devices continues to increase in our school.
- Wi-Fi enables new educational practices to emerge because access to the internet becomes ubiquitous.
- We overhauled our comms room and replaced old gigabit switches and upgraded our router.



- Upgrading one of our computer rooms with 31 new PC's, monitors and keyboards.
- Not alone did we manage to upgrade one computer room, we recently managed to upgrade our second computer room with an ICT Equipment grant from the Dept. of Education.
- Print Management system throughout the school.
- We have introduced print management in 5 main areas in the school. The main office, the DP's office, the two art rooms and the DCG room.

In the school year 2018/2019 the goal is to roll out the remainder of the print management system and also to upgrade as much as possible the computers and sound systems in the classrooms.

Another Big Thank You

This year, we staged My Fair Lady in October. It was a resounding success. We had students involved from 1st, 2nd 4th and 5th years.

The Acting and the Singing were second to none. The Band, the scenery and the props were top class. A big thank you to our Parents Association for their help and support with the Raffle as usual and also for their help with our costumes.

This year for the first time, we rented no costumes. Ms. O'Doherty and her band of helpers were able to buy a lot of the costumes that we can use in the future.

There were fabulous hats, dresses, men's suits, skirts, coats, etc. The costumes were outstanding. Thank you so much to our ever supportive Parents Association. We really appreciate you.



Parents! We need a helping hand (or two)

The school would like to compile a database of parents who would be available to help the teachers with school events such as matches, trips, lifts etc.

Should you be in a position to help out in any way please email the school office with your contact details: info@stcolmcilles.ie

Second Hand Uniform Sale



The Parents' Association held their second hand uniform sale in June 2017. It was a fantastic success thanks to the generous donations by parents of redundant uniforms.

We felt June was the perfect time to have the sale in order to give parents an opportunity to grab a bargain and kit out their son or daughter for the next school year.

McMahons Dry Cleaners in Knocklyon Shopping Centre did a fantastic job of cleaning and mending the uniforms to have them in pristine condition for the sale.

Due to the very positive feedback from parents we intend to hold the second hand uniform sale in early June every year.

Yearbook 2018

Once again the Parents' Association were delighted to sponsor the 2018 Yearbook for all of the Sixth Year Graduates.

This impressive publication was created, designed, and written by a group of dedicated Transition Year students under the guidance of Mr O'Hora.

The Yearbook contains a comprehensive overview of the subjects taught in school, as well as year group photos, and articles highlighting all aspects of the school year. As always the Yearbook closes with individual photos of all the Sixth Year Graduates.

We like to think of the Yearbook as a parting gift from the Parents' Association to our Sixth Year Graduates.

School Library

With all the distractions of modern day technology it is important to encourage our children to spend some time reading.

The benefits of reading are not just educational - it also allows students to de-stress and relax.

➤ The school library is open at lunchtime on Wednesdays & Thursdays during which time all students are free to come down and withdraw a book of their choice.

➤ Both the first and second year English classes & TY have an allocated hour time slot in the library each week. During this hour or for part of the lesson students are encouraged to read the book of their choice and exchange their books.

➤ Students are invited to vote for their favourite read of the summer on the on-line voting system and then the school orders in the top recommended reads for the library. The school also consult other sources such as (Eason's Top Reads, Irish Book Awards, Costa, Man Booker etc. and try and choose what books will appeal to the students).

➤ Classics still popular with the junior boys are - Robert Muchamore (Cherub Series) and Derek Landy (Skulduggery Pleasant) but a keen interest in Stephen King this year is probably explained by the success of the movie "It".

➤ Some of the most popular titles amongst the junior female readers include "Ketchup Clouds" & "My Sister Lives on the Mantlepiece" by Annabel Pitcher. Historical Fiction is also popular such as "Between Shades of Gray" by Ruta Sepetys and "Code Name Verity" by Elizabeth Wein.

➤ The school encourages all the seniors to read the classics and some popular books with the senior female readership are "Mister Pip" by Lloyd Jones and "All the Light We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr. Science Fiction & Fantasy books are more popular amongst the senior boys.

The Parents' Association has supported the Vincent Kenny Library in the school from its inception. This year we were delighted to contribute €2000 for the purchase of new library books.

...about the Texting Reminder Service?

Have you received a text from the school to remind you of notes in school bags, important dates, exam payments, parent teacher meetings etc?

If not, it is likely that your most up-to-date mobile number is not in the system! Important messages will be sent by text, usually before it can be posted on the website, so it is important to check that we have your most up-to-date number. This is a service provided by the Parents' Association for you and continues to get very positive feedback from parents.

To ensure we have your correct number, drop your details into our post box in the school office or contact us via either the mobile or email below.

Text on 086 6000 678

or send an email to
parents@stcolmcilles.ie

Parents' Association Contacts



Please visit the Parents' Association page on the school website for updates and information on our upcoming events such as parent talks, PACCS related information etc.

We will be updating regularly so please ensure you are checking in weekly!

Our post box is located in the school office.

We can also be contacted by email:
parents@stcolmcilles.ie

Debs Reception 2017

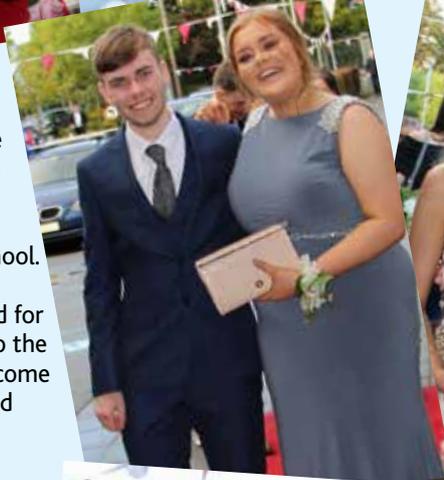


On Friday 15th September the Parents' Association hosted an early evening Debs reception for students and parents in St. Colmille's Community School.

A very large crowd was catered for which provided a great start to the excitement of the evening to come for the students, who all looked amazing.

The students themselves were a credit to the school and thanks to the student's committee who organized the entire event and on that score, required very little input from the Parents' Association.

Ms Coulihan was on hand to take the 'official debs photographs' for the students as they arrived. Linda White a past member of our Parents' Association also took photographs casually on the night.



A huge thanks to students from several year groups who assisted on the night and with the clean up afterwards.

Many thanks to all the staff of the Community School for their assistance to us and allowing us to take over the school for their graduation students of 2017.

Last but not least, a huge thank you to every member of the Parents' Association who all assisted in various ways as this is an 'all hands on deck event'. Plans are already in hand for all the graduating students of 2018 and it is always a great occasion to look forward to.

Here is just a sample of photos taken on the night. We regret we could not include all in this newsletter but copies can be obtained by contacting Linda White on 085 845 0949.

