



St. Dominic's Newsletter – November 2019.

Message from the Principal

Dear Parent(s)/Guardians,

I am very happy to be writing to you as the new Principal of St Dominic's College. It is an honor to be working with the students, teachers, staff and parents of St Dominic's College. I look forward to many successful happy years for all of us.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ann Donnelly for all her contribution to St Dominic's College and to wish her well in the future.

I welcome all new students and especially our first year students and new parents to St Dominic's College. I also extend a special welcome to new teachers and staff. I hope everyone will enjoy teaching, working and learning in our school community.

The year is well underway now as we are well into the second half of term one. We hope that your daughter is settling in well and getting into a healthy work routine. We look forward to working with all parents throughout the year to make sure that each girl reaches her full academic potential under my leadership and under the guidance of the deputy principals, all her teachers, tutor and year head.

Academic achievement and happiness are a central part of our Mission Statement at St. Dominic's College and we work to ensure that each girl is supported in being the best student that she can be. We cannot do this alone and we greatly need your support in the journey. We want to work as a great partnership and collaborate with you to look after your daughters.



RESPECT

We value respect and inclusivity in all we do here in St Dominic's College. We ask all members of our school community to respect themselves, their families, each other, our Dominican tradition, other traditions and our school campus.

ATTENDANCE

I cannot adequately stress the importance of a full attendance in school. Every class missed can impact on your daughter's performance in school and we greatly discourage any absences that are not absolutely necessary. All appointments that your daughter might require should be made **out of school hours**. We ask that you support us by not requesting to withdraw your daughter at short notice. This is highly disruptive to the school, to classroom learning and teaching and to your daughter's learning. Please also ensure that your daughter arrives to school on time.

THE SHÓNA PROJECT

The second years attended a talk by the Shóna Project on respect around student relationships. This was an excellent talk and it was very much enjoyed by all.

SUPERVISED STUDY

Supervised Study is available to all students at a small cost. It runs each day and is an excellent way for students to focus on their homework and study. We encourage **ALL** students to participate as this leads to better results. Further information is available from Ms McGowan.

VACCINATIONS – 1ST YEAR GIRLS

The HSE were in the school in September to make vaccinations available to students.

CAO NIGHT FOR SIXTH YEAR PARENTS

The importance of filling out the CAO application form correctly cannot be over emphasized. Sixth year parents and students attended a very informative evening on Thursday 24th October in the school Library to hear all about third level options. Speakers that evening included the three Guidance Counsellors, representatives from some universities and also some past pupils who shared their experiences with parents. We were delighted to see so many people there that night for this very important meeting.



JUNIOR CYCLE

As you may be aware, we are in a transition period with regard to changes to Junior Cycle. All year groups at Junior Cycle now are involved in some elements of the new curriculum. To facilitate parents to become familiar with the type of learning and requirements of Junior Cycle the school hosted an information evening on Thursday 14th November 7-8pm in the school library for second and third year parents/guardians to explain about assessment and reporting including the various CBAs (Classroom Based Assessments) that the students do in second and third year.

HIGHER OPTIONS

All sixth years attended the Higher Options exhibition in the RDS with their teachers. This was a great opportunity for sixth years to see exhibitions by universities and other third level institutions.

STATE EXAMINATION RESULTS 2019

Congratulations to all our Leaving Certificate and Junior Cycle students 2019 on their excellent results in the State Examinations. A huge thanks to their teachers, tutors, year heads, special needs assistants, chaplains and parents on the preparation they put in to ensuring that each girl maximised her achievement as a student at St. Dominic's College. We wish our students who have progressed to third level education every success and fulfilment in their chosen course of study. We thank our Guidance Department for all the work they do to provide information and advice to students about the broad range of options available to students progressing from St. Dominic's College.

In particular we would like to congratulate Lara Donnelly in TY who achieved the highest results in the Junior Cycle in our school. She achieved **Three Distinctions** and **Eight Grade A** results. Lara was in the top 19 highest achieving students in the country. Lara we are very proud of your achievements and want to congratulate you. You put lots of work and effort into achieving these results and this is the real key to success. Well done!

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers have been attending Junior Cycle continuous professional development over the last two months. New Junior Cycle practices continue to be embedded in classroom teaching and learning. A whole school training day took place on Tuesday 8th October.

SIXTH AND FIRST YEAR START OF YEAR MASS

Fr Michael O Grady celebrated a mass for the sixth years to mark the start of the academic year. The first year mass was also celebrated recently. Thanks is owed to everyone who worked hard to make these happen, including Fr Micheal, the RE department, readers, singers and musicians. Well done to all.

3RD YEAR STUDY SEMINAR



60 third year students attended a study skills seminar by *Student Enrichment Services* on Saturday 21st September. This seminar was arranged by their year head and was a most worthwhile day. Well done to all the third years who attended the seminar.

6TH & 3RD YEAR PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS

The 6th year PTM and 3rd year PTM took place in October. Please use the feedback the teachers gave you about your daughters to help her reflect on her work and to improve going forward.

HEALTHY EATING

Help us to promote healthy eating by encouraging your daughter not to bring sugary drinks to school and to avoid crisps and other unhealthy snacks. We have a selection of healthy option foods for all students on arrival in the school each morning. Foods such as bananas, apples, oranges, scones, crackers, granola etc. are available free of charge to all students. We have a canteen facility which is available to third, fourth fifth and sixth year students.



5TH YEAR TRIP

Our fifth years spent a fantastic day in Causey Farm in the lovely sunshine in September. This was a wonderful occasion where they got the opportunity to spend time outside of the classroom together.



SOCIAL MEDIA

We are active on Twitter to communicate news items and to celebrate the success of our students in the different areas of school life. We like to share all the good news stories that happen in our school community with you.

Please discuss with your daughter the correct protocols and etiquette around respecting other people's privacy when they are posting material on social media. There should be a general understanding that nothing should be posted about another person without their permission. No student should post anything that may hurt another person. Please respect each other.

OFFICE HOURS

Parents should contact the school office if they wish to speak to a Teacher, Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal. Your call will be directed to your daughter's year head.

OPEN EVENING

Our Open Night was held on Wednesday 23rd October for parents and students of 4th, 5th and 6th year primary school students. Our fifth year students acted as guides on the night for the visitors and quite a number of other students were involved in Open Night. We have such a lovely school that we wanted to show it to people who might not know St Dominic's College. Information packs and application forms were available on the night for prospective students. This is the first Open Night we have held for many years and we were quite excited about it. Word had spread very well because we were inundated on the night with lots of visiting families and it was a great success. Thank you to the whole school community for all the hard work that went in to the night.

SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION

We will continue to work on targets previously set in the school. We will continue to promote literacy and numeracy at every opportunity. Wellbeing is central to what we do throughout the school. This year one of our SSE targets is to improve feedback to students and to parents through reporting. We also encourage students to communicate with teachers about teaching methodologies that help them learn.

THE STUDENT COUNCIL

The Student Council have elected their student officers for 2019-2020. They are collaborating with teachers, Principal and Deputy Principals regarding the year ahead. They will receive training from the Secondary School Students Union. At present they are working on decorating the student entrance with posters and inspirational sayings. Student leadership is a very important part of how we run St Dominic's College. The student voice has much to contribute to our school community. Best wishes to you on the year ahead.



SIXTH YEAR PREFECT SYSTEM

The sixth year prefects are working hard in student leadership positions. They contribute a lot to the school community. These leadership positions provide great experience to students who volunteer for these positions. Prefects received an excellent training session in August before they took up their positions. We thank them for all they contribute to the school.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

A new Board of Management will come into operation this term. We wish the new Board all the best for the new three-year term ahead and thank the outgoing Board for all their commitment to the school which they did on a voluntary basis.

POLICIES

Please familiarise yourself with our policies which can be accessed on our website at <http://www.stdominics.ie>. We are making changes over the next few months to our website so there will be lots of information there for you to read.

LIBRARY

We have a wonderful facility in our school library which is run very efficiently. The library is well stocked and very up to date with reference books and other reading material. Please encourage your daughter to use it to supplement her learning.

PHONES

For health and safety reasons we have a strict mobile phone policy. Mobile phones are **NOT** permitted to be used inside the school building.

Students who wish to contact home in the course of the school day can do so via the main office in the school. Students found using a phone will have it confiscated. The phone will be returned only when collected by a parent/guardian at the end of the school day. We really don't want to confiscate anyone's phone and we would urge cooperation with this.



PROPERTY

Please assist us in ensuring that every item of property: books, uniforms, tracksuits etc. are clearly labelled with your daughter's name. In the event of an item being lost or misplaced it is much easier to source it when a name has been marked clearly. Please also be advised not to bring expensive technology such as iPhone, iPod and iPads to school as no responsibility can be taken in the event of one of these items being lost or stolen.



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

The AGM of the Parents' Association took place on 8th October. New representatives were elected onto the Parents' Association. A guest speaker from Student Enrichment Services spoke to parents about study skills for our students. If any parent/guardian wishes to get involved, please let us know as we would be delighted to have your help and support.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CALENDAR

We are committed to the holistic development of all our students and encourage students to get actively involved. We have a range of sports after school and a Club Gaelach. Encourage your daughter to talk to the three sports teachers if they have not already joined one of the sports teams. The Club Gaelach runs each Monday after school, *'Beatha Teanga í a labhairt'*

CALENDAR

A calendar outlining key dates for the year ahead has been posted on the website. Included you will see the dates for school holidays/closures as well as for parent teacher meetings. We ask that parents do not arrange holidays outside the designated official holidays as provided by the Department of Education and Science.

THE ENVIRONMENT

One of our aims this year is to cut down on the use of paper. When possible we will send messages to you by text instead of sending out letters. On occasion we will send letters out when needed. We also intend to cut down on single use of plastic bottles. The Student Council have designed and produced a school water bottle. We ask parents to encourage their daughters to support the Student Council by buying one of these water bottles for €4. The school is looking into installing more water fountains for students.



WELLBEING

Wellbeing is a major priority in the school and we employ a multifaceted approach to supporting the wellbeing of all our girls. We have a wellbeing curriculum in first year, a pastoral care structure, Student Council, a prefect leadership team, regular policy review and a positive classroom climate which supports each girl to engage fully with their learning and to have a sense of wellbeing in school where they spend at least six hours of each day.

SAFETY

We ask parents to leave students at the Ratoath gate instead of driving into the school. This means that students only have a short walk to the student entrance. Parents are asked not to drive in and park on the school grounds as this is causing congestion for all especially at school finishing time. Parents may NOT drive up to the main school entrance. Please observe the driving and parking guidelines. Safety for students and school personal is very important.



THE CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

I am looking forward very much to meeting you at the Carol Service on Wednesday 11th December. There are limited tickets available for the Carol service which will run for one night only.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INSPECTION

The Department of Education visited St Dominic's on Monday 7th and Thursday 11th October to carry out an inspection on our Leaving Certificate Applied Course. The report was of a very high standard and we congratulate all our LCA students and teachers. We look forward to implementing recommendations made. The report will be available in a few weeks' time on the Department of Education and Skills website under inspection reports.

DOMINICAN SISTERS 200 YEARS IN CABRA

As the month of December approaches we look back at all the celebrations of the 200 year anniversary of the Dominican Sisters in Cabra. We congratulate and thank them on their wonderful contribution to education and society in general.



ATHLETICS

St Dominic's Athletics Team have won the 'Brother' *best school competition for the fourth year in a row*. This is a great honour and the sponsoring company **Brother** presented the girls with a Brother printer as their school prize. Congratulations to all the students on the team under the guidance of their coach Mary McKenna. It was a super team effort and great enjoyment for all. Well done. We are all very proud of you.



TRANSITION YEAR:

So far transition Year 2019-2020 has been a very action-packed and busy year with many valuable and exciting experiences! In September the girls headed to **Carlingford Adventure Centre** for an overnight team-building trip. Everyone got to make new friends while learning new skills of zip-lining, lizar and canoeing (and for some, swimming!) in freezing waters. Well done to all the girls for getting involved in all of the activities! They returned home very tired but having really enjoyed their time together.

The students also had the opportunity to visit the Ploughing Championships in Carlow and browse over 1700 exhibition stalls.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Through the promotion and organization of various charitable events students develop a social conscience and a desire to help others.

A coffee morning was held in September for St. Francis Hospice.

The annual school hamper appeal for the local St. Vincent de Paul will take place on Friday 22nd of November. All students are asked to give their support for bringing in a particular food item and donating €2. All students should accessorize their uniform with yellow.

SPONSORED WALK

Thank you to all students and teachers who participated in the Sponsored Walk. A sum

of €6,000 was raised on the day. A special word of thanks to the PE Department for organising the event and to the Parents' Association.



ACHIEVEMENTS:

A number of our students have had great achievements over the last few weeks and these include:

- ❖ Sarah Hagemenn was selected to represent the 'The Flying Ducks' Hockey team in Vancouver, Canada, for a training camp and exhibition games. Well done Sarah.



- ❖ Demi Atoyebi was selected to be a delegate in *Dáil Éireann* at the **RTÉ Youth Assembly on Climate** on Friday 15th November. Classes in school took part in the day by watching the debate on climate on **RTÉ 2, RTÉ News now and on Oireachtas TV**. Congratulations Demi.



- ❖ Congratulations to our TY student Lara Donnelly 4P who has been accepted onto the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (**RCSI**) TY Mini-Med Programme in March 2020. This exciting programme is available to a student who has an interest in a medical career and who has the skills to work in a collaborate manner in a team setting. Well done Lara for this great achievement. We wish you all the best with this exciting course.



- ❖ Transition year students, Yasmeen Elamin and Ashley Macaspac won first prize and second prize in the Art Competition "**Draw Your Way to Mental Wellbeing**" run by the CYPSC. Their entries will be exhibited in CAHMS Grange Gorman. Well done girls!

- ❖ Tiya Marian Tijo has been selected as a new member of **Cór na nÓG** which is the leading children's choir. They are often invite to sing at high profile concerts and charity performances. They recently sang in the National Concert Hall for Culture Night. Congratulations Tiya.

❖ Peer2Peer TY Programme:

Four TY students have been accepted to take part in our TY '**Peer2Peer**' Drug Education Programme. The students, Ellie Landers Donegan, Kate Scanlon, Riya Blessy Ajit and Lucy Downes, are trained as assistants to deliver the Peer2Peer programme to 1st year students in St Dominic's College and to pass on information about avoiding drug and alcohol abuse and so impact positively on the whole community. They will also learn valuable teaching skills, and gain confidence through delivering the programme. Well done girls.



FINALLY

Thank you to all our students who contribute so much to the school.

I also thank all the teachers and the school staff for the work they do for our students.

We thank you as parents for your support and contribution to the school. The parents association will send out their newsletter next week.

Our next newsletter will be in March. So for now, I wish you a very Happy Christmas. May 2020 be a happy and healthy year for you and your families.



Ann Conboy

Principal



SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 2019