

ACCS NEWS

ISSUE 2 • 2021/2022



Sustainability...

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• Special Education Needs Sub-Committee – An Overview



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Cumann na Scoilteanna Pobail agus Ciomastheacha

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Submission to the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on the topic of Leaving Certificate Reform

ACCS was requested by the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science to make a brief submission on the topic of Leaving Certificate Reform. An invitation was subsequently extended to John Irwin, along with representatives of JMB, ETBI and the NAPD to attend a Joint Committee hearing on Leaving Certificate reform on Tuesday 28th September. This meeting can be viewed on <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/oireachtas-tv/video-archive/committees/>

Below is an extract from the ACCS Submission on Leaving Certificate Reform:

Since 2016, the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools has been engaged actively in the comprehensive review of senior cycle which has been carried out by the National Council for Curriculum & Assessment. ACCS is represented on the NCCA Council and on the NCCA Board for Senior Cycle. Stakeholders from Community and Comprehensive schools have participated in both school-based reviews and in national seminars on this topic as part of the consultation process facilitated by the NCCA.

ACCS believes there is great scope for change and reform of the assessment model which will meet the needs, aptitudes and abilities of more learners engaged in this journey. ACCS challenges the notion that the current system is a fair one.

Curriculum reform is on the agenda across the globe as countries engage in discussions on climate change, effects of globalisation and migration and an increasing dependence on technology. ACCS appreciates and welcomes the opportunity to engage in these most important deliberations.

A full copy of the Submission can be obtained from ACCS head office.

The hearing was also covered by Katherine Donnelly of the Independent on the 28th September. Speaking about the traditional written exams, Mr Irwin said “the focus on the high impact, intensive, timetable scheduled over the first three weeks in June impacts negatively on students and their wellbeing leading to high levels of stress and anxiety. International research clearly indicates a move away from the ‘one size fits all’ approach to one that provides students with a range of options which enables all students to reach their potential is preferable.”

The full article can be viewed on link <https://bit.ly/3oDizYY>



All paper used in the production of this newsletter is certified by the FSC to come from managed sustainable forests.

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ACCS Convention 2022

The 40th ACCS Convention will take place on the **23rd, 24th & 25th March, 2022** in Slieve Russell Hotel Golf & Country Club, Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

 <p>Nominations for Presidency and motions for Convention to be submitted.</p>	 <p>Latest date for receipt of amendments to the motions.</p>
 <p>Draft agenda of business and nominations for Presidency and motions to be issued to Member Boards and Executive Members. Member Boards will be invited to submit amendments to the motions.</p>	 <p>A final agenda will be issued to Member Boards.</p>



Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Cumann na Scoilanna Poblai agus Comhthreasa

Welcome

Dear Colleagues,

I trust you are well settled into the new academic year and looking forward to the mid-term break. While we still face some challenges arising from the pandemic it is heartening to see so many students getting back to the more enjoyable aspects of academic life including participating in sporting events, art events and academic events in person.

We have decided to focus on *sustainability* as the theme for this newsletter to acknowledge the growing concerns about climate change and the future health of the planet. As you will see throughout the following pages many school communities have found creative ways to implement different “green” initiatives and sustainability programmes.

The word *resilience* has been widely used to describe how school communities coped with the challenges they faced during the pandemic, and we are delighted to see that two of our teachers based in Tallaght Community School recently published a wonderful journal *Resilience and Me* featured on page 8. This publication which was launched in October includes heart-warming stories of strength, adversity and resilience from students, staff and past pupils and is available for use as a resource in schools.

ACCS has several sub-committees and task groups established to support the work of the ACCS Executive Committee. We have decided to feature an overview of the work of the various sub-committees in this year’s newsletters and we commence with Brenda Kelly, Chairperson of the *Special Educational Needs (SEN) Sub-Committee* who features on page 5.

One of the issues arising from the last 18 months and working from home during periods of lockdown is the *employee’s right to disconnect*. A Code of Practice was signed by An Tánaiste in April of this year and ACCS Director of HR, Anne Marie Dillon takes us through the code on page 7.

Finally, a huge thank you to all of you who participated in the different online CPD events during this term. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and as always, we are happy to discuss any ideas or suggestions you might have for future development of the *CPD programme*. We are grateful to our colleagues in the FSSU, the SCA, the NCCA and Dr Joe O’Connell for their support of the programme. We look forward to seeing the In-School Management teams at the ISM Conference in November. This is being organised on a regional basis for the first time and will be the first “*in person*” event organised by ACCS since Convention 2020.

“... it is heartening to see so many students getting back to the more enjoyable aspects of academic life...”

Áine O’Sullivan

Assistant General Secretary, ACCS



Recent and ongoing research which may be interesting for schools:

- 1. One month before Covid-19 and one year after: An assessment of wellbeing of post-primary school leaders in Ireland.** Jolanta Burke and Majella Dempsey
Department of Education
31st May 2021. Link: [O the NAPD report - 31_5_21 draft 2 \(maynoothuniversity.ie\)](#)
- 2. Lessons Learned: The experiences of teachers in Ireland during the 2020 pandemic.** Majella Dempsey & Jolanta Burke February 2021. Link: [Teacher_COVID_Report_Final_21.01.21 \(maynoothuniversity.ie\)](#)
- 3. Exploring the implementation and impact of the Junior Cycle Framework (JCF) in post-primary schools.** Link: [Junior Cycle National Project | UL - University of Limerick](#)
- 4. Anthony Mackay and Michael Fullan, Global Leadership Director of New Pedagogies for Deep Learning and a worldwide authority on educational reform, discuss Fullan’s recently released paper, **The Right Drivers for Whole System Success** February 2021. Link: [The Right Drivers for Whole System Success - Michael Fullan](#)**



SEAI Supports Help Schools Save Energy & Take Climate Action

Register for a free online Energy Management Course!

SEAI Energy Updates, Autumn 2021

The Energy in Education programme offers a range of supports developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in partnership with the Department of Education designed to help schools to improve energy management practices, reduce school operating costs and protect the environment.

Register for a free online energy management course in Spring 2022 and you'll be given access to a range of resources and expert advice over the course of 3 x 2 hour live workshops. You'll also have opportunities to network with other schools and apply for a site assessment and support in identifying and implementing energy saving opportunities. To register your interest go to: http://www.energyineducation.ie/Energy_In_Education/Information_for_Schools/Energy_Management_Courses/index.html.

SEAI has also launched free e-learning courses on the SEAI Energy Academy to help businesses, schools, and farms reduce their energy use. The "Saving Energy in Schools" module introduces the main energy consumers in schools, energy management principles, tips, and advice for saving energy in schools.

Join the SEAI Energy Academy to start learning: <https://www.seai.ie/energyacademy/>

Teaching resources

Post-primary teachers can use a range of online activities. They are designed to support the teaching and learning of energy and sustainability in Junior Cycle. Learning outcomes for various subject specifications are highlighted in each section.

Free teacher CPD and student workshops are available in school, online or outdoors. These hands-on, interactive workshops will help to bring the themes of energy, climate action and sustainability to life. See the SEAI website for full details and how to book.

Monitoring and reporting energy use

Schools can save energy by monitoring and reporting their energy use annually via SEAI's online system. Last year over 77% of schools reported which is a significant growth on previous years and an achievement given the challenges faced. When schools report their

energy use they are provided with a scorecard which identifies any changes in the schools' energy consumption. It can help plan what action might need to be taken to reduce energy and emissions as well as saving money on bills. This data can also be used as a teaching resource e.g., analysing increases or decreases in energy and CO2 consumption for use in maths, science or geography. In order to help schools to complete their annual report, SEAI offers free online workshops every February to show how to use the online system.

School upgrades

Since 2017 SEAI have worked with the Department of Education to select a number of schools to take part in a national building retrofit pathfinder programme. Schools are typically selected from those that have reported their energy use to SEAI and participated in Energy Management training. This year will see 9 schools undergoing deep retrofit to a Building Energy Rating (BER) of B with renewable heating systems. The programme will target energy use and CO2 reductions of 50%. The pathfinder programme aims to demonstrate the best practice for energy efficiency and low carbon investments in schools.



seai SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AUTHORITY OF IRELAND

Saving energy in schools

Special Educational Needs Sub-Committee - An overview

by Chairperson, Brenda Kelly

Why the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Sub-Committee was formed?

The Special Educational Needs (SEN) Sub-Committee was formed by ACCS in response to Community and Comprehensive schools' need for ongoing support with SEN/AEN planning and provision in line with developments in special education provision and with the *Guidelines for Post Primary Schools Supporting Students with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream School*.

What are the aims and goals of the SEN Sub-Committee?

The SEN Sub-Committee aims to ensure that schools are informed of ongoing developments in special education and supported in their implementation. Along with support for mainstream provision, the Sub-Committee aims to provide support for an increasing number of schools that have special classes.

In establishing the SENCO Forum last year, the SEN Sub-Committee aimed to provide SENCOs working in our schools with a support network and a channel through which best practice, experience and resources could be shared.

Queries and feedback from SENCOs and schools help to identify the areas where support is needed and set the agenda of the SEN Sub-Committee and planned webinars during the school year.

Is there support available for schools and SENCOs?

Over the past two years, support for schools and SENCOs has been provided through CPD and sharing of best practice, resources and developments in special education provision via;

- A SEN One Day Seminar in Mount Wolseley Hotel - October 2019
- A SENCO Forum hosted on the Microsoft Teams platform from October 2020
- A series of Webinars
 - Assistive Technology, Wellbeing and SEN Resources - October, 2020
 - Assistive Technology for Students with Physical and Sensory Difficulties - January, 2021
 - Setting up Special Classes - March, 2021
 - Provision Mapping with Dr Johanna Fitzgerald (MIC) - March 2021
 - Exploring strategies for successful transition from primary to second level school - May, 2021
 - Understanding Additional Educational Needs and Data Protection - September, 2021

Who are the members of the SEN Sub-Committee?

The members of the SEN Sub-Committee include James Duignan (President ACCS), John Irwin (General Secretary, ACCS), Áine O'Sullivan (Assistant General Secretary, ACCS), Executive members of ACCS and co-opted SENCOs. During the 2020/2021 academic year the SEN Sub-Committee was delighted to work with Dr. Johanna Fitzgerald, Head of the Department of Educational Psychology, Inclusive and Special Education at Mary Immaculate College (MIC), Limerick, on provision mapping and Deirdre Madden, Assistive Technology Outreach Co-ordinator, UCC, on Assistive Technology. The Sub-Committee is grateful to Hilary Treacy, Data Protection Advisor for ACCS, the SENCOs and schools who have shared their experience and exemplars of best practice.

The experience and expertise of the members of the SEN Sub-Committee inform ACCS representation on the Management Representative Group (MRG) which provides a forum for discussion of the national Issues relating to special education. ACCS also continues to seek the allocation of a stand-alone SENCO position in every school.

Where can I find resources to help in my school?

The recorded Webinars and list of resources and supports can be accessed in the files section of the SENCO Forum.

I am interested in engaging with the SENCO Forum? What do I need to do?

School Principals who wish to nominate a SENCO colleague to participate on the ACCS SENCO Forum can do so by contacting David Cahill, ACCS Web and IT Officer at email (dcahill@accs.ie/office@accs.ie). SENCOs who wish to post documents to the Forum can do so by contacting Áine O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary, at aosullivan@accs.ie

Brenda Kelly
Chairperson,
ACCS SEN Sub-Committee



Your Employee Assistance Service In The Moment Support

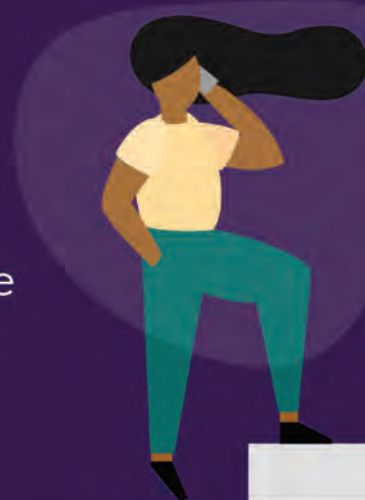
Your EAS is available 24/7, 365 days a year and offers in the moment support to employees. Our team is always there to chat and provide immediate support for multiple concerns and difficulties - in the workplace or at home. EAS support is there for you to process how you are feeling and get advice in the moment, as you need it.

If you are experiencing a crisis or just want someone to talk to urgently, you can access your EAS at any time to speak freely with a Case Manager and they will provide support and guidance.

Calls are not limited in length or frequency. You are free to access

this type of support for an unlimited number of times. (scheduled sessions of counselling may be recommended if there is a recurring issue)

You can also call for advice on supporting another team member or colleague (all calls are confidential).



**You can reach your EAS Service to speak to a Case Manager on: Freephone: 1800 814 243
SMS & WhatsApp: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010**

Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect

In January 2021, the Government published the 'Make Remote Work - National Remote Work Strategy' that sets out a roadmap and range of actions as part of the programme for government over the course of 2021. These actions include legislating for the right to request remote working and developing a Code of Practice for the right to disconnect. In April, the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) developed a Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect, and we await the legislation regarding remote working.

This WRC Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect recognises the significant level of change in workplaces in recent years, with increased access through technology, digital working, and remote working arrangements. These changes were accelerated during the pandemic and have, undoubtedly, brought new challenges in wellbeing, boundaries around work and work-life balance. The new Code seeks to address the perceived blurring of the traditional boundaries between work and home life because of the growing use of technology and new ways of working. It aims to give guidance on best practice to organisations and employees on the Right to Disconnect. Organisation culture and leadership are identified as playing a key role to support an employee's right to disconnect.

Right to Disconnect

The Right to Disconnect refers to an employee's right to be able to disengage from work and refrain from engaging in work-related communications, such as emails, telephone calls or other messages, outside normal working hours.

The Code highlights the employer obligations already in place to:

- Provide information to employees on their working time, normal working hours, and rest periods. The fundamental of the Right to Disconnect is already embedded in the Organisation of Working Time legislation which limits hours of work.
- Ensure a safe workplace, review their risk assessment, and ensure

work activities are managed to prevent any improper conduct or behaviour likely to put the health, safety, and welfare at risk.

It also addresses employees' obligations to:

- Manage their own working time and to take reasonable care to protect their safety, health and welfare and the health and safety of co-workers.
- Fully cooperate with any appropriate mechanism to record working time including when working remotely.
- Be mindful of their colleagues and others right to disconnect (e.g., by not routinely emailing or calling outside normal working hours).
- Notify the employer of any statutory rest period or break which they were not able to avail of on a particular occasion and the reason for not availing of it.
- Be conscious of their work pattern and aware of their work related wellbeing and take action as necessary.

Many workplaces, including schools, have been proactive in this space in recent times, recognising that disconnecting from work is beneficial for mental health and wellbeing. The new Code of Practice helps to continue this trend of ensuring that employees and employers are managing working time in a healthy, balanced manner and respecting a person's working time and a person's time outside of work.

The Right to Disconnect should be seen as a health and wellbeing activity to support the work-life balance of all employees.

The Code is available on the website of the Workplace Relations Commission.

Anne Marie Dillon

Director of Human Resources, ACCS

School Community Mental Health Week

During Mental Health Week from October 11th - 15th, Spectrum.life held mental health seminars each day for the School Community.

Panellists included;

- **Sarah Walsh** - Primary school teacher and wellbeing advocate.
- **Dermot Daly** - Special Needs Assistant and member of the Health and Safety committee of Fórsa Trade Union.
- **Nichola O'Grady** - Special school teacher and wellbeing advocate.
- **Ciara Peelo** - Post primary school teacher and Olympic athlete.

If you were unable to get to hear the seminars you can access recordings through the www.spectrum.life website.

What is the Employee Assistance Service (EAS)?

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) is a confidential clinical support service, with referral to counselling, where clinically appropriate to do so.

It provides support to employees, in addition to their spouse, civil partner or dependent, where the family member can be described as a person over the age of 18 and residing in the family home.

Our EAS is available 24/7, 365 days providing in the moment clinical support, referral to counselling where clinically appropriate and Online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

Resilience and Me



Pictured from left Aidan Lynch, Principal Tallaght Community School, Leah O'Shaughnessy, Melanie Martin and John Irwin, General Secretary ACCS

Resilience and Me by Melanie Martin and Leah O'Shaughnessy was developed in conjunction with students from Tallaght Community School. It is a compilation of raw and authentic stories of resilience from young people in Tallaght. The book provides a space to acknowledge that young people today face many hardships with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression on the rise. The authors wanted to compile a collection of stories that were part of the solution, not the problem. At some point in each story, each student didn't see hope, light or a way out. Yet with support, guidance, self-belief and resilience they all found their way forward.

When you are born and raised in an area that people deem 'disadvantaged' it is important to show that despite economic or social struggles that young people from working class areas face there is one inalienable truth, we are all humans and with that comes many ups and downs. The purpose of the book is to help any young person who may be experiencing a tough time in life. The book boasts of over 50 contributors who range from the ages of 14-33. Contributors include pupils past and present of Tallaght Community School.

The Power of Community by Ellenbeth Morris, Tallaght Community School Past Pupil

I currently work as a project worker for the School Completion Programme in Tallaght Community School and in the surrounding primary schools. Prior to this job, I had the great privilege to work as a SNA for 6 years in Tallaght Community School. I am very proud to be taking part in this book. It really does mean a lot to me that the people of our community both young and old have the opportunity to share experiences about something so important.

'In my experience it sometimes takes a community of people from all walks of life, to see the good in us'

I am a past pupil of Tallaght Community School and an incredibly proud one at that. It served me 6 epic years of laughter, friendship, education, sport and music. Back then it was after all my teenage years and so it wasn't all fun and games. There were plenty of days filled with dramas, heartbreaks, sadness, frustration and generally just trying

to figure out who I was as a person, which at times was tough.

Throughout my time as a student in TCS, I was always aware of the amount of support there was in the school building. No matter what, there was always someone to turn to for support and a wise word, or someone to tell me off and remind me "you are better than that" when I would perhaps make a silly decision.

I realised in second year that the support from my family, fellow students, mentors and staff was what instilled resilience in me. When I didn't believe in myself, my talents, my strengths or in my academic ability, I was always reminded that I was in fact good enough for simply being who I am.

To me, in my eyes, resilience is not just the ability to bounce back or to be happy again after something difficult or bad has happened. I really believe that the definition of resilience is a number of things. It is strength, it is courage and it is community. In my experience it sometimes takes a community of people from

all walks of life to see the good in us, to remind us what we are capable of, to highlight our strengths and talents when we sometimes can't see them ourselves. These are the things about us that make us who we are as individuals and when something knocks us, a gentle reminder from that community of people helps us become more resilient.

Not only have I been a student in TCS and experienced what it's like to spend 6 years in the building, and at times have had to be my most resilient. I have had the great privilege for the last 9 years to work here in TCS as a staff member. I feel like one of the really lucky ones who gets to take what I have learned as a student and try to put into practice every single day. I love hearing nothing more than how that little word "resilience" has had an important role in so many young lives. Now I stand in a very different position, not as my 14-year-old self, but as a professional who bears witness to the endless resilience our young people show every day. It takes different shapes and forms but for some it's getting up, showing up, even when the odds are stacked against us.

To hear more from the authors

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILoozZpLgC8>

"This book authentically grew from our passion as educators. Growing up and being a teenager can be hard and often young people can feel alone in their struggles. Hearing of mental health issues on the rise, we wanted to be part of the positive solution to help. There are lots of resources available to support teenagers but we feel a story told from someone their own age can have an incredible impact. People can often lose sight of the positive influence they can have on their own lives and their innate ability to cope. So, we wanted to produce a book which celebrates the resilience of young people from Tallaght. The stories show different ways to be resilient and we hope that others may be able to use them and apply them to their own lives."



A journey of Resilience from Syria to...

St. Brendan's Community School



Ahmed Al Shahoud arrived in Ireland in 2018 under the Irish Refugee Protection Programme. Al Shahoud was 10 years old when he left his home in Idlib in Syria due to severe conflict. Although he can't remember much, he recalls his house being "bombed" and the deaths of some close relatives that he dearly misses. Ahmed moved from Syria to Lebanon, 2012, where he was educated in schools during the afternoons. Ahmed found this all too easy and decided to go to work to help his Dad pay the bills. He found a job in a Lebanese pharmacy stocktaking medication where he built a strong relationship with his co-workers. In 2018, the Al Shahoud family found their new home in Birr, Co. Offaly after spending three months in the Abbeyfield Hotel Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre in Ballaghaderreen. When Ahmed moved to Ireland, he was eager to get back to education but was worried that Irish schools would not take him in as he had missed out on so much. A warm welcome at St. Brendan's Community School in Birr, Co Offaly, allowed Ahmed to continue his studies as a fifth-year student. However, as Ahmed was settling into the Irish education system, the pandemic forced the closure of schools. He continued to work hard during remote learning and was motivated by his teachers on the return to school. In June 2020, Ahmed sat his Leaving Certificate hoping to get enough points to study nursing at Moate Business College in Co Westmeath. When the results were released on September 3rd, Ahmed discovered he'd scored 313 points, more than what he had aimed for. He is keen to continue in the pharmaceutical sector as he hopes to become a pharmacist one day. Al Shahoud works in the local Haven Pharmacy in Birr during his time off from school. Having featured in the Irish Times, Ahmed is grateful for the support he has received in Ireland to date. "Ireland has given me a new opportunity and way of life thanks to the people who have helped my family here, my Principal and my manager at the pharmacy. My father has also supported me the whole way."

by Ahmed Al Shahoud

ACCS-VET Garda Vetting Online Solution for Schools – Roll out update

ACCS-VET Pilot Project

In February 2020 ACCS introduced a pilot project with six of our schools for a new online vetting solution for schools in collaboration with South Dublin Volunteer Centre. This project was stalled because of Covid-19 and was re-activated in October 2020. A further 15 schools undertook training in May 2021 and are actively using the on-line system.

The project was set up to provide an online vetting solution for schools which would allow the nominated Garda Vetting Officer in the school to submit a Garda Vetting application on behalf of the Garda Vetting Subject. Following the success of the pilot project ACCS are now rolling out this facility to all our schools on a regional basis. Training for schools took place in September and October provided by ACCS and facilitated by Tricia Nolan of the South Dublin Volunteer Centre. Attendees included Principals, Deputy Principals, Nominated Garda Vetting Officer, Clerical Officer, TY/LCA/LCVP Programme Co-ordinator and Further Education Directors. As well as providing training to schools interested in participating and how to access ACCS-VET, Tricia also covered statutory obligations and compliance procedures for schools.

Feedback from schools using the new system has been overwhelmingly positive and we would encourage schools to engage with the process.

If you have not already signed up and wish to register your interest ACCS Garda Vetting Administrator Susan Cunniffe, is available to help you with any queries you might have on 087 2901073 or e-mail scunniffe@accs.ie.

The roll out of the ACCS-VET project is intended to bring greater efficiencies to the garda vetting process and offer the following benefits to schools:

- **The online system will cut down on the time previously required to prepare and post the NVB1/NVB3 forms to ACCS.**
- **The link is very easy to follow and remembers previous details which were input.**
- **The Nominated Garda Vetting Officer can check the status of application at any time using the individual Application ID No and Date of Birth.**
- **Schools will be able to follow up with applicants in a timely manner who have not replied to their garda vetting invitations to ensure that the vetting process is completed.**



The Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS)

It is our aim to support Community and Comprehensive Schools Parent Associations. In doing so we promote the role of parents and guardians as the primary educators of their young people. We ensure that they engage effectively within their school communities and with other partners in education.

To ensure continuity and our future success we are currently on a recruitment drive for the PACCS Executive Committee.

Do you have parents/guardians in your school who will;

- **Promote good relationships and will represent the views of parents at a National level.**
- **Have a positive attitude and a genuine interest in current trends and developments in education.**
- **Are interested in advancing the aims and objectives of parents in ACCS schools.**
- **The commitment required is approximately 5 meetings per year which for the moment is online.**

Please encourage a Parent/Guardian from your school to get involved by asking them to email PACCS with an informal expression of interest info@paccsireland.ie. We will get back to them and take it from there...

Recycling facts

courtesy of **REPAK**

- Recycling 1 aluminium can will help to save enough energy to run your home television for about 3 hours
- 1 recycled glass bottle would save enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes, a TV for 3 hours and a 100 watt light bulb for 4 hours
- Glass placed in landfill will never decompose. Archaeologists are still finding glass used during the Roman age
- 1 recycled plastic bottle would save enough energy to power a 60-watt light bulb for 3 hours
- Plastic can take up to 500 years to decompose
- On average an Irish family uses around 500 glass bottles and jars each year

Kinsale Community School

Kinsale Community School has made a short video for the Climate and Nature Summit which is taking place between November 1st and 5th.

Visit www.climateandnaturesummit.com for more information.



CLEAN AIR WEEK

#BeatAirPollution



Clean Air Week 2021 takes place this year from November 15th to 19th.

For more information visit www.greenschoolsireland.org

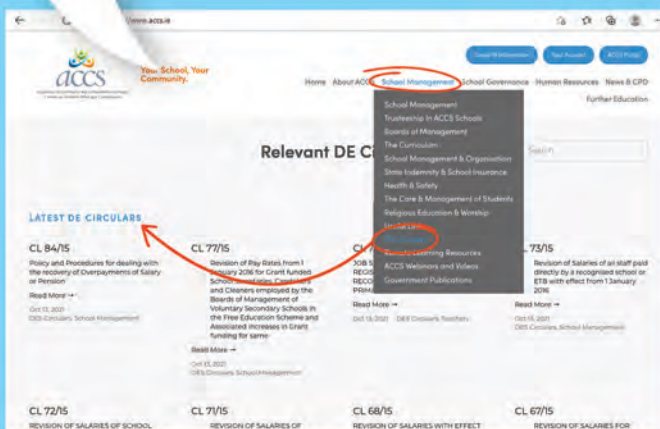




Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Cumann na Scoileanna Pobail agus Cuimsitheacha

I am looking for a recent relevant Department of Education Circular. Where can I find it?

You can find all relevant Department of Education Circulars in the School Management section of our website.

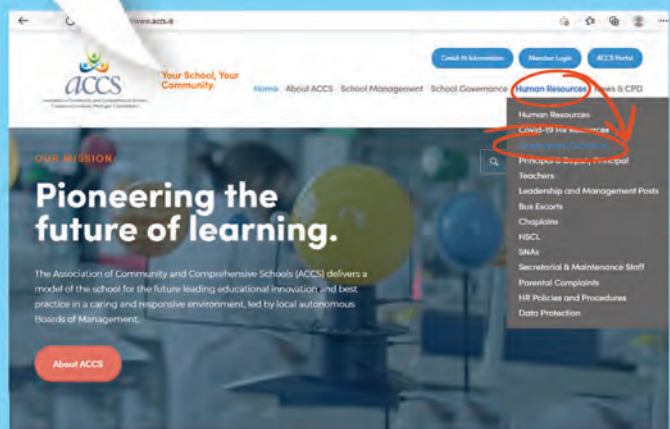


I'm looking for a contract for an SNA post. Can I find it on the ACCS website?

Yes, you can.

You will find an SNA contract and contracts for other positions in the Human Resources section of our website.

To access this information, you will need to have your school username and password.



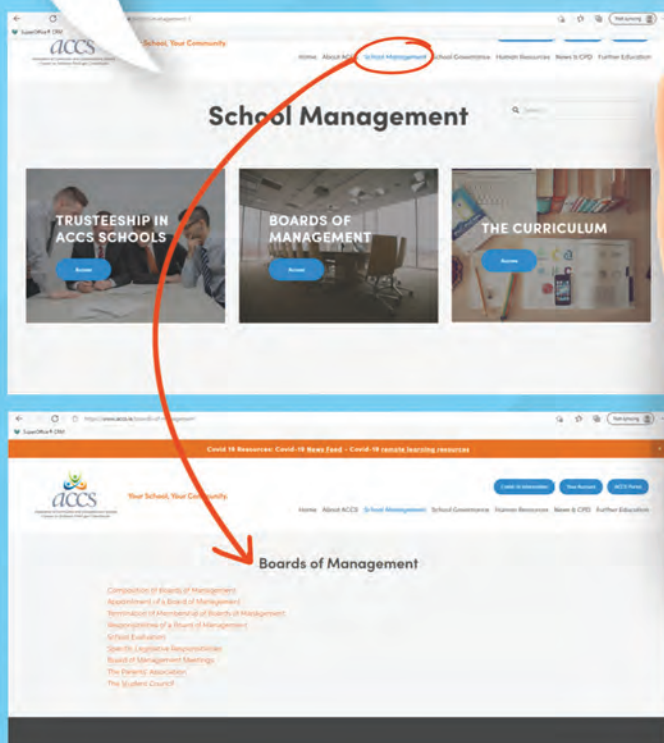
www.accs.ie

I am looking for guidance on nominations and elections to the Board of Management. Where will I find these?

To access this information you will need to have your school username and password. When you have logged in click on School Management.

This section contains information such as Nominations to Board of Management, State Indemnity and School Insurance and Health and Safety.

Our website has recently been revamped to be more user friendly and we hope our Q and A will help you to find some of the documents that we are most frequently asked for.



Ballincollig Community School

Ballincollig Community School is an ever evolving space. Student vision, Staff determination, Managerial endorsement and parental support are the main attributing factors to the continued growth and development of the school building in 2021. All members of the school community have been working and continue to work to ensure the school grounds and facilities remain at the highest standard for current and future generations.

The Student Council under the guidance of Ms. Healy is responsible for the refurbishment of the old library. Students began by creating a mood board to showcase their ideas and vision for the project.

The students formulated a colour scheme, chose furniture and accessories for the space. Specific jigsaw desks were purchased for the area that could join together to form one whole table, students believed these would perfect post-covid times.

Research went into collaborative furniture to assist SEN students in the school. New cubicles have also been installed to help students while studying in the school. A laptop hub is currently being assembled, a space where laptops will be made available for all students. A student centred project from start to finish, students are currently collaborating with the Art Department to produce an art mural to modernise the space further. The Library project spear-headed

by the student council and funded by Tomar Trust has resulted in the transformation of the existing library space into a vibrant, modern space which empowers students to connect with information and each other.

Our 4th Year Construction studies class under the direction of Mr. O'Toole is, as part of their learning, exploring the use of concrete as a building material. With the impact of Covid on our schools and the increased use of schools outdoor spaces, the class has decided to apply their learning to the design and construction of concrete furniture around the school grounds. The class has surveyed the school ground to assess suitable locations and is currently in the research and design phase. Once appropriate designs and locations have been agreed on, the class will then utilise their learning and apply it practically in order to bring their designs to life. It is hoped that with careful research and consideration, the furniture will create outdoor spaces that

promote interaction between students and contribute to the aesthetic and functionality of previously underused spaces. This is not the first time construction study students have applied their learning to create furniture for the student body. Earlier this year, students built wooden furniture to accommodate the large volume of students socialising outdoors. The concrete furniture will be a welcome addition to our ever evolving outdoor recreational areas.



Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine

Polytunneling through Covid

Covid came to the school, the TY class needed a project... the tunnel arrived. The class discussed lots of different options – an outdoor classroom in the clearing; wildflower meadows all around the school and a polytunnel. Different models, sizes and configurations were examined forensically – where would we put it, what size, grades of polythene and who would build it?

A local firm – Kenmare Polytunnels came to our aid and in a matter of a weekend in January we had our tunnel. The raised beds were built with timber and recycled materials by our ever-resourceful caretaker. We got topsoil, seaweed, and branches to fill the beds with TY students sieving the soil and using a wheelbarrow and spades to gradually fill the beds.

Then with the guidance of Sarah O’Brien, a horticulturalist we sowed seeds. We all learned about watering and the whole process of growing food. Eventually we had lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, basil, onions, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, courgettes, sunflowers, and herbs in the space. The pumpkin plant, grown from seed, must be seen to be believed and has two pumpkins which will be huge for Halloween. The seeds from these will be planted for next year.

Summer Wednesdays were School Gardening Club days. Sophie, Eabha, Jessica and Emily tended the tunnel and the outdoor beds in the garden. We harvested lovely fresh lettuce, carrots and courgettes in August. Then the tomatoes started to produce and as of this month we are still gathering kilos of lovely, luscious tomatoes every week.

We sell the produce, and we have a budget for seeds and plants for the winter – this year’s TY students are working every week to ensure the continuation of the project.



#andshecycles 2021

Ashbourne Community School

Laura Bolster, Aoife White and Mollie White give an overview of their success with their #andshecycles 2021 Ambassador Program which aims to encourage young secondary girls to gain more confidence cycling to school and in general.

“Only 1 in 250 teenage girls’ cycle to school.” In the case of our school 60 boys cycle daily but no girls. This shocking statistic awakened our campaigning spirit. We wanted to know why such small numbers of girls cycled and find out could we help change the trend.

We collaborated with other student groups in our school who were working as Climate Ambassadors, Green School’s committee members and students involved with the Pulchra Programme, working on air quality.

There are a total of 24 #andshecycles ambassadors across Ireland. We trained together in January 2021, and we all worked well together even if we have not met in person. Collectively we have been very busy on social media raising awareness around the gender issue. Our team of three have focused on ACS students and our achievement include.

1. A cycle audit of the routes to and from school which is currently with Meath County Council’s road safety officer and area engineer.
2. Approval and setting up of a no idling zone in front of the school which will reduce air pollution around our school.
3. Construction of a pedestrian path and cycle route separated from traffic in front of the school. This safer route is being funded by Meath County Council and will reduce traffic congestion in front of the school.
4. A social media campaign has been set up to address the issues, real and perceived, faced by female cyclists.
5. We acquired a new bike shed from Green School’s which increases our bike parking facilities inline with the increased numbers cycling to school.



6. We have approval to supply lockers to all students who wear helmets when they cycle to school. These will be in the Sport’s Hall, beside our new bike stand.
7. We designed and painted a mural in the school grounds which we hope will empower younger girls to reclaim their bikes.
8. We organized and held a photoshoot with students and their bikes. Our aim here was to highlight the fun and social aspects of cycling.
9. RTE have interviewed and featured us to highlight the issues.
10. We have received a Meath Youth Award from the Gardaí for making the routes around the school safer for all.

As you see, we adapted to our virtual world and continued to get things done. A global pandemic may have changed the TY experience we were planning, but it did not silence our voices.

We think this work is important because we are students campaigning for more choice for other students. Our motto for the year has been “Be the solution” and we have tried. Hopefully the next set of TY students will continue this campaign in the year ahead.



Ballinteer Community School goes Green

Early last year, in conjunction with our Principal, Ms Doherty, the Green School Committee determined that the school was in urgent need of composters to support the vegetable garden we have nurtured for many years.

Capital Credit Union generously sponsored €500 towards composters. The Green Team used most of the funds towards buying six composters and used the remaining funds to buy compost.

We hope to build on the successful transitions we have made over the last few years towards becoming a more sustainable school environment. We have already installed water fountains and students have reusable bottles in order to minimise single use plastic waste. We have areas of our school grounds that are “no mow zones” that our caretaker does not cut back so we can protect the biodiversity of our campus. The composters will help us dispose of our lunch containers from the canteen, which are already 100% compostable, in a symbiotic way so that we can use the compost on our vegetable patch.

All together, our school is making ecologically sound changes that benefit the whole community by preserving wildlife for years to come.

Sean Gaffney Glynn, 5th Year student



Beara Community School Wildflower Wellbeing

2020/21 saw the beginnings of our wildflower garden and borders. Further spaces will be planted this year. Our polytunnel continues to be a great space for growing a variety of vegetables and learning about sustainability and food production. All junior classes visit the tunnel as part of wellbeing and the wildflowers were planted by TY and LCA as part of agriculture and horticulture class. We have had lovely comments from members of the community who are delighted to see a variety of flowers on the grounds.

Transition Year students at Scoil Phobail Bheara are volunteering in their local community every Wednesday as part of their community placement. It is a wonderful opportunity for students to get involved in their community and help out with projects in the locality.

Recently the TY students volunteered with Castletownbere Development Association and brightened up the wall in St Peter's churchyard. It's great to see the students involved in community organisations and even better to have them working outside while doing so.



Blakestown Community School

Transition Year class of 2021 officially gifted their school in May with the microforest which they had worked on since October 2020. Through lockdowns, school closures and ever changing weather conditions Seanchai class showed resilience and determination in establishing this project. The students proudly launched their micro forest of over 450 broadleaf trees on the school grounds. This beautiful concept of planting a forest outside of the art classroom was developed by artist, Gareth Kennedy in partnership with Wood Right, Eoin Donnelly, Education Officer Julie Clarke, Superproject Curator, Rayne Booth and Art Teacher, Mary Quinn.

The art project, co-produced by Fingal County Council Arts Office and Superprojects, involved seasonal art and ecology activities. Superprojects initiative generates possibilities for creative encounters with contemporary art, fostering students as meaning makers and artists. The superproject within BCS included tree planting, wood splitting, turning, mulching and carving while learning about the ecology of our native woodlands and contemporary art in the open air.

The outdoor learning space has been a wonderful new addition to our school grounds and has been of huge benefit to the whole

It has created something of value that will benefit local biodiversity and other students for years to come.

school community in having access to a tranquil setting which has allowed biodiversity on our grounds to flourish. It has created something of value that will benefit local biodiversity and other students for years to come. The project was presented by our Student Council at the World Wide Global Goals Conference alongside 7 other schools nationally on the theme of weaving well being into school life.

The entire process of the project was recorded by Arcade Film and is available to view at www.superprojects.org. We were visited by the Mayor of Fingal, Cllr. David Healy at the private launch who praised students for being part of a global movement of micro forests which can help to restore some of the damage we have caused to nature. We were also joined by RTÉ's Niall Martin from Nationwide as he recorded an episode which aired recently.





A Busy Summer at Holy Family Community School

Our well-being coordinator, Ms. Teide O'Brien has worked with our Development Education Department to construct the first ever Holy Family Community School well-being garden. This wild flower garden contains a series of bee friendly plants, and insect hotels. This sustainable garden also merges into the theme of well-being from the new Junior Cycle. It contains positive recycled signs made by our woodwork students and painted by our art students, including 'bee-lieve in yourself' 'bee-you' and 'bee-calm'. Thanks to Ms. Conneely and Mr. Hassett for all their help on this project. Our SNA team have been fantastic at keeping a close eye on maintaining our sustainable well-being garden.

The background of the garden houses six large signs representing each of the six well-being indicators (Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Respected and Aware) and ways to achieve these. Of course all linked to bees! This project was co-sponsored by World Wise Global Schools, a partner of Irish Aid.

Coolmine Community School's

New Outdoor Classroom

Coolmine Community School constructed an outdoor classroom over the Summer 2021. This initiative has provided our school community with a beautiful outdoor space for the purposes of teaching, learning and connecting with nature. The outdoor classroom, surrounded by our school garden, has provided staff and students with a unique opportunity to connect with each other in nature. It provides a place where physical and mental well-being is at its core and the aim is that this will act as a springboard for our students in making social and academic strides. The use of the outdoor classroom varies, some examples include, our Meitheal meeting our first years during their wellbeing class and our language teachers facilitating conversational group work outdoors. It is a very special environment that brings out the best in our school community.



Kinsale Community School

Sustainability Chaplain

This year Kinsale Community School has made a new appointment of Klaus Harvey as school Sustainability Chaplain. His role is to both teach sustainability and oversee a transition of the school towards a goal in which all stakeholders, staff, students, parents and BoM are engaged in creating a whole school ethos of sustainability. He is currently teaching TY students the Eco-Unesco 'Youth for Sustainable Development' programme which not only gives the students an understanding of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and an awareness of their own impact on the environment, but also builds their confidence and capacity to lead. When they have completed the programme they will be tasked with mentoring the first years in the topic, and after three years every class group should have a good grasp of the challenges we face and the kinds of solutions and actions needed to deal with them.

The role also entails facilitating a Sustainability Advisory Board which will steer the school towards reducing its overall carbon footprint, teaching students about organic food growing in the newly constructed greenhouse and planting hedgerows as wildlife corridors and wild flower patches for pollinators around the school campus.



Klaus will also liaise with members of staff to visit their classes and give talks on best sustainable practices and what changes we can all make to reduce our carbon footprint. He is also organising links to local community groups such as Transition Town Kinsale and Kinsale Tidy Towns.

The new role is ground breaking for a post primary school and it could be seen as a very positive and important step in the direction towards having sustainability as a core subject at all levels of secondary education. Many young people are suffering from climate anxiety and we need to give them the knowledge and tools which will help dispel their fears for the future and empower them to take action. If we want to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises that humanity is facing this is the kind of change we need to see in schools right across the country.

Donahies Community School

Young Social Innovators

Donahies Community School Young Social Innovators students are part of a 'What Matters Now' Virgin Media television advert. The ad highlights some of the big issues facing everyone on both a local and global level. It calls on young people to use their voices and their ideas to help create a more inclusive world through the Young Social Innovators programme.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aym7I-Aeklo>



Sustainability at Millstreet Community School

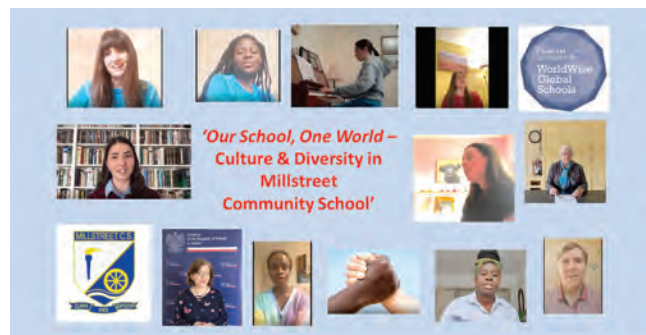
The school's long awaited Green Flag has finally been awarded at a virtual ceremony on October 4th. Ms Power and Ms Tarrant have been working on the project, focusing on litter and waste, as well as cutting down on single use plastics. New school water bottles are planned, and a school competition to design the bottles has been run during covid restrictions. The recent Green Flag Day of Action worked towards reducing the school's carbon footprint by raising awareness of green issues. The Green School Committee organised a photography competition focused on the beauty of nature in the locality, leading to a remarkable exhibition in the school. They also organised a school-wide quiz on green issues, keeping the importance of environmental issues to the fore in the school. MCS is well placed to continue work on a greener school once restrictions are lifted.

Fast Fashion

Another key strand in the school's sustainability efforts comes from the Global Environmental Awareness group, a TY committee that focuses on our response to global issues. Fast Fashion has been the focus of the group for several years, and the latest cohort made a documentary film entitled 'Fast Fashion - the cost for people and the environment.' They also organised a poster competition for Fashion Revolution week. You can view the film on the school website. This all helped us to remember the impact of fast fashion on the people who make our clothes as well as the impact on the environment.

EcoUNESCO

3 projects qualified for the EcoUnesco TY projects finals in 2021, each with an important environmental message. Research was conducted into how all electronic communications, however trivial, have a very significant carbon footprint, and the group revealed how some simple keyboard choices can have a dramatic impact on reducing greenhouse emissions. This subsequently received an award from EcoUNESCO. A group also showed how growing giant sequoiae in Ireland could be the future of carbon sequestration. Fast Fashion was on the agenda also, as another group investigated why people seem slow to react to the clear message of how fast fashion impacts our world. These projects had already seen success at BT Young Scientists and this forum provided for further research and findings.



World Wise Global Schools

Fifteen TY students took part in the annual WWGS (World Wise Global Schools) Annual Student Conference. This conference was online this year. There were contributions from people from different agencies working for justice and equality, sharing their experience and challenges of being members of ethnic minorities in Ireland. Two students were interviewed by Valery Molay (a former UN Youth Delegate for Ireland) about the 'Our School One World' presentation, which can be viewed on the school website. While we usually hold this event in school, this year was a virtual celebration of the many cultures in our school, celebrating the rich diversity through music, song, dance and costume. The presentation featured 'We Are One' – a song created by TY students with Garry McCarthy (GMC Beats) exploring the theme of culture and diversity, with lyrics written by the students. This was part of the WWGS Annual Student Conference, which is a national event. The theme of the day was: Our Journey Towards Racial Justice. This activity was part of the school's commitment to cross curricular global citizenship education, supported by World Wise Global Schools. The school is currently in the process of joining the 'School of Sanctuary' initiative to help continue our school's commitment to celebrating diversity in our school and our community.

TY

TY students hit the ground running, preparing project submissions for the BT Young Scientists, setting up Peer Mentoring for the new First Years and getting involved in a new period poverty initiative spearheaded by local TD, Holly Cairns as part of the school's commitment to Student Voice.



St. Patrick's Comprehensive School

Bláth is a new whole school project for our 2021/2022 school year. The project will be spearheaded by our Transition Year and LCA students who aim to create a space for our school community. We aim to make a garden for all the senses that will promote biodiversity and be a sanctuary to all who go to it. Located next to our astroturf pitch which is currently being refurbished by Ei Electronics, it is a central spot in our school and can be enjoyed by all. We have lots of plans for Bláth and we will keep you updated on it all as we work on it.

Some of our plans include:

Planting of flowers and trees to promote biodiversity, harvesting of rainwater, building of nest boxes and feeders for birds, creation of windchimes and sounds within the garden, an area for meditation and relaxation, growing fruit, vegetables and herbs, creating insect homes, building an outdoor classroom for all to enjoy nature, a space for artists to create.

& so much more!



Loreto Community School, Milford

This year students from Transition Year will work with the local Milford and District Resource Centre on their new Community Health and Wellbeing Garden.

This small space will be converted into an attractive outdoor space which will then be open to use by all the members of the community.

Students will paint, plant and maintain this new garden space over the coming year and will work closely with former student and Head Boy, Declan Meehan, who runs the resource centre. It will be an exciting project to get involved with especially as we have come to realise the value of our local communities/open spaces during the pandemic and lockdowns.

Jo Cotter and TY class



St. Tiernan's Community School

Speak Act Do

"Where do you see yourself in the year 2030?"

Judging by the varied and vibrant answers given by our Transition Year students, it is clear to see that they have goals and the ambition to achieve them. Their answers ranged from being in college studying to be a doctor, training to be a midwife, working as an architect, being rich and famous or just simply... happy. By the year 2030, our now fifteen and sixteen year olds will be 24 and 25 and they can't help but wonder what way the world is going to be by then.

You see, the year 2030 has a very significant meaning for the planet we are living on today. In eight years time we are expected to have achieved all 17 of the Global Goals, literally the world's biggest to-do list. But how does one student, one class, one school, fight global inequality, end extreme poverty and respect our planet? The first step is education.

Our TY students are currently focusing on these goals in their Religion classes, to develop a deeper understanding of what they require and make meaningful connections between the goals and their own lives. It is a fantastic opportunity for them to not only look at the issues close to home but on a national and international level. Our students will participate in Concern's programme Speak Act Do with an introductory Zoom call from around the world. The youth hosts who will be speaking to our students will be located in Kenya, Malawi, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, each with a specific area of focus.

Students will then explore one particular issue further in order to become Active Citizens. They will achieve this by researching and extensively planning a meaningful action to take, in order to make a change in their local community or maybe even beyond. We are very much looking forward to this journey. The students are excited to connect and collaborate with the Concern team, learn more about the fantastic work they are already doing, and begin their own work to make a positive difference. Here's to 2030, and doing something today for which our future selves will thank us.



Looking After Our Planet at Bishopstown Community School

Over the last number of years our school has been steadily making improvements to our school grounds and activities to help with the care of the environment. We have worked to raise awareness on climate change, the importance of being an active citizen and working together to save our planet.

We have taken part in the Climate Change protests, lobbied our local council to take action on climate change, through guest speakers and workshops with the green party we have shared our ideas on the development of our local area.

TY has introduced modules in both World Wise Global Schools and Gardening, both of which have been having an impact on creating a culture of environmental awareness. Through subjects like CSPE, Geography and the Sciences the idea of sustainable living is examined and of course our Green Schools Committee have been working diligently throughout to encourage us to reduce, reuse and recycle.

At present Transition Year Students are studying the negative effects of Fast Fashion on our climate and the lives of the people employed in the industry. As part of their World Wise Global Schools class, they are creating fashionable outfits using clothes sourced from secondhand shops only.

The gardening module has our TYs working on our flower beds and rockery areas at present, they have sourced a number of trees for planting on our grounds later in the year from Trees For The

Land and will be tending to their strawberry patch as the season continues. As well as being immersed in the nature for the classes each week they are learning about horticulture and sustainability.

Our Caretaker, Liam is also very environmentally conscious and when he saw the abundance of wildlife, insects, bugs and the array of colourful butterflies visiting our grounds he set aside an area as a wildflower meadow and earmarked a number of spaces for further development of wildlife habitats.

We are fortunate in our grounds to have plenty of green space and look forward to maintaining a healthy environment where both the wildlife and the humans can co-exist sustainably.



John the Baptist Community School



A special congratulations to students, Peggy Donovan and Katelyn Moloney who won an ESERO Discover Space Award at theSciFest@College 2021 regional STEM fair. With almost 600 project entries, this is a great achievement. Their project researched the supernovas, which to non-scientific ears, means the explosion of stars in space. The hard work and dedication of the girls paid off.

St. Wolstan's Community School

St. Wolstan's students did us proud in the recent Scifest Competition

Congratulations to all the winners and their Science Teachers on their wonderful achievements. Ailbhe MacMahon and Saumya Kothial took the runner up "Best Project Award" in the Intermediate Life Sciences category. They also won the Environmental Award. Ailbhe and Saumya's project was titled "An investigation of the efficiency and sustainability of Atlantic Seaweed species as fertilizer". Niamh Barnes and Abbie Pimlott won the "Fenergo Communication Award" for their project "How effective is the toothpaste you are using?" Sarah Carolan and Allana Calisterio won 1st place in the Intermediate Physical Science section for their project on "How masks degrade speech reception". Well done to all the girls and their Science Teachers Ms. Ward, Mr. Kiely, Ms. Ribbon, Ms. Kirrane and Ms. McKinley.



Rosses Community School

Euronext Blue Economy Innovation Camp - 'Seaweed Based Beauty Products'

Rosses Community School has acted as a Pilot School for Junior Achievement Ireland's involvement with the Euronext Blue Challenge. Starting in February 2021, 175 JA Company Programme students from seven countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) participated in a series of activities providing exposure to the Blue Economy, including the promotion of financial literacy, and culminating in a final European-level competition. The Euronext Blue Challenge included thematic e-mentoring and webinars provided by Euronext Volunteers. Rosses Community School students acted as a Pilot School for JAI to deliver the programme remotely as JAI volunteers couldn't visit schools due to Covid 19. 5th Year Business & Economics students attended the Euronext Blue Economy Webinar with 175 students from 6 countries where they discussed sustainable solutions for the blue economy. Students were partnered with a volunteer from Junior Achievement Ireland. Teams along with guidance of their JAI volunteer completed a product design process to innovate a mini-company idea that embodies a sustainable use of the ocean resources for economic growth. Teams presented their ideas to a panel of JAI volunteers. The winning team went on to represent the RCS and Ireland at the final online challenge on World Oceans Day, 8 June 2021. The school had a number of internal competing projects relating to recycling, waste containers and biodiesel but the winning



one was called 'Seaweed Based Beauty Products' by the 'Beauty Saviours' Kian Greene, Emilly Croke, Edel Carr and Grainne McGlynn. The students' project included a seaweed based product line using seaweed from the local area such as kelp, dulce, wrack and carrageen moss. The team of Kian Greene, Emilly Croke, Edel Carr, Grainne McGlynn and their teacher Deirdre O'Reilly were commended by JAI for their innovative work in May 2021.

St. Louis Community School

Congratulates 2021 Leaving Cert Students Lorena and Hana



Congratulations to Lorena Chierchini who achieved 7 H1s in her Leaving Certificate results and Hana Ueno who achieved 9 H1s in her Leaving Certificate results. Hana is delighted to be studying Engineering in Trinity College, Dublin.

Positive Role Models Leading the Way Student Council Elections

Gorey Community School

The busy corridors of Gorey Community School are even more colourful than usual this week as we see campaign posters popping up, highlighting that Student Council elections are imminent. There's excitement in the air as calls of "are you running for council?" and "will you vote for me?" can be heard across the corridors.

Student Council candidacy is open to every single student in the school, and we are lucky to have an enthusiastic bunch in the running this year. In order to be eligible, students must first be voted into the position of class rep within their tutor class. All of these class reps are then invited to run for Council. This year's cohort have taken on board the many tips offered to them by local politicians, Malcolm Byrne and Anthony Donohoe who agreed to visit the school and speak about running a successful campaign. This event has given us the opportunity to engage in departmental collaboration and cross-curricular sharing; our Politics and Society classes in 5th and 6th year have access to a recording of the advisory session. Some of these students will use this material for their Leaving Cert projects. Senator Malcolm Byrne highlighted the importance of cyber safety while engaging with social media. This will be useful for use within SPHE, CSPE and English classes throughout the school. The influence of speaking to such established politicians can be seen in the thoughtful manifestos and witty slogans composed by each hopeful candidate.

Adam Farrell wants to make Gorey CS great while his fellow first year student, William Egan wants to make a difference. Doireann Wheatley's poster promises "fun for all" and Rory King assures his electorate that he is "confident, relatable and friendly". This year's sixth year students have plenty of eye-catching slogans on display; Harry McGuckin asks that we "vote McGuck in" and Siobhain Fitzpatrick promises us that "Fitz never quits."

More details on candidates can be found on the school's social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Here, Kelly Smyth promises her year group that she will make every effort to voice their thoughts and work hard, Leah Penn writes about giving a voice to 1st years and Molly Hoctor explains how she wants to make school life easier for students who are struggling. She reminds her electorate that their health is their greatest wealth and pledges to make school life easier.

School Principal, Michael Finn remarks that, "the sense of excitement around Student Council election time is palpable and generates a positive energy throughout the school. It is particularly nice to see such a strong interest from our 1st year students who are new to the school and keen to get involved in student politics, while the 5th and 6th year contenders are such positive role models and are seen as leading the way."

Gorey Community School's Student Council meets weekly on Friday mornings and the conversation ranges from the intricacies of the uniform policy, to fundraising for local charities, to musings on five aside soccer tournaments and the possibility of live music at lunchtime.

5th year student, Ryan Klatt is hoping for a second term in office this year and he acknowledges the importance of the organisation in the school, highlighting the value of regular meetings with the principal: "The Student Council has the opportunity to meet with the principal and the Board of Management throughout the year and that is really valuable."

For 3rd year student, Joe Galvin the Council is crucial because "students know that they are being listened to by teachers and the Board of Management." 2nd year student, Freya Cosgrave was on the Council last year and she says that

it "encourages students to speak up about what they feel needs to be changed in the school." She also acknowledges how it "helps to make school a more pleasant environment as students have more control."

The global pandemic has afforded us both challenges and opportunities. In 2019 we re-energised our Student Council and voting took place with the use of ballot boxes, replicating our general and local election process. We now use the adversity of the pandemic to streamline the process and voting will take place online and this approach is far more efficient and sustainable. Voting will take place online this year and each year group will elect two Student Council members. This ensures that our student voice as a whole is represented. A mixture of personalities, interests, ages, backgrounds and academic abilities will inevitably populate our Council. When we succeed in establishing such a diverse group of student representatives our school population (which is in excess of 1,600) suddenly doesn't seem so big.

*Kim Boland and Siobhan Cullen,
Student Council Liaison Teachers and
Helena Jacob, Social Media Team*



St. Caimin's Community School

Our Experience of Academic Tracking and Learning 2 Learn

Background:

Over the last number of years and with the introduction of the new Junior Cycle there has been an emphasis on developing experiences and resources to support students through their learning journey. As a school we have been trialling and finetuning ideas in the area of Academic Tracking and Learning 2 Learn and the following article looks at the destination we have currently reached.

In the various activities we have engaged with we have used the following standards in the Looking at our Schools document as a guide:

Dimension	Domain	Standards
Teaching and Learning	Learner Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage purposefully in meaningful learning activities grow as learners through respectful interactions and experiences that are challenging and supportive reflect on their progress as learners and develop a sense of ownership of and responsibility for their learning experience opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong learning

Our Aim:

In conjunction with classroom teachers, middle management (in particular our year heads, the SEN coordinator and the guidance counsellor) we strive to develop opportunities that will help in developing independent learners who can meet the challenges of life outside of school.

How we are going about achieving this:

Our approach involves linking Academic Tracking and Learning 2 Learn experiences.

Learning to Learn aims to strike a balance between the development of subject knowledge, thinking abilities and key skills enabling students to develop a number of essential learning habits such as:

- Checking and Reflecting (making links, setting targets, questioning and extending their learning)
- Framing Learning (identify learning and make connections)
- Collaboration (Giving and receiving help, listening actively, expressing opinions and being a leader)
- Problem Solving (spotting patterns, taking notes and researching)
- Working Independently (organising information, being accurate, using resources and persisting at a task)

In St. Caimin's Community School we use a continuum of support model in helping students learn to learn. Supports are offered at a whole school and classroom level (for all), in school support (for some) and in school support plus (for a few).

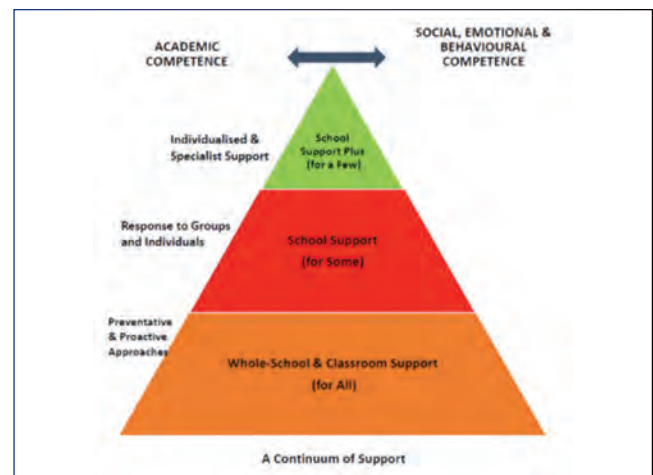


Table 1 outlines the supports offered at each level of the continuum.

Table 1: Supports offered to students at various levels of the continuum

Supports offered to ALL students	Initial supports for SOME Students	Medium term supports for SOME Students	Long term supports plus for a FEW students
Developing study skills and organisational skills during tutor classes in Junior Cycle Unit in SPHE dedicated to learning and studying in Junior Cycle CAT4 testing and PASS Athena Analytics Profile Participation in the Learning to Learn programme, study tips and developing the growth mindset in timetabled classes In class support from subject teachers	Guidance from year head in one to one sessions Practice in using planning templates Support developing a study plan Develop culture of getting students to do their best Award system Learning to learn support and study tips and growth mindset in small groups Allow students have more insight into their Athena profile and their CAT4s	Have a review meeting after a period of time with year head Arrange conversation with parents to coincide with PT meetings Have a group session with others in the year group who are in the same boat and offer support that way Link with guidance counsellor and year heads	Put in place a mentor as a support if student is struggling Link with Guidance Counsellor

The Learning 2 Learn Classroom Programme:

We use this online programme with 3rd, 5th and 6th Year students. At Senior Cycle it is incorporated into the students timetables. This Learning 2 Learn programme is a structured course for second level students equipping them with the essential skills to be successful in their academic life. The programme assists students in understanding themselves better, being more confident as learners along with having a proven study system and assessment approach which will reduce their stress and add to their sense of wellbeing.

The online, self-paced, self-directed learning programme is designed to be completed in two and a half hours. It also allows students to revisit elements of the course in their own time. This online study course is designed to bridge the gap and help students understand how they learn, while giving them a proven study methodology which will help them become more effective learners.

Our teachers have also been trained up in this software as a means of ensuring more meaningful engagement with the process. It is very important teachers help facilitate students using the skills of this programme at classroom level. Learning and study modules covered in the course include:

- The brain and learning
- Fixed versus growth mindset
- Resilience
- Setting my goals
- Motivation
- Memory
- Plan it - POKER system learning

Once the programme is complete there may be a number of students who would benefit more from small group or one to one study clinics with the learning to learn coordinator. Students are invited to take part in these sessions. This involves meeting each student and working through study skills techniques and planning the week ahead. Follow up meetings occur weekly to ensure the students feel supported and plans are tweaked to suit their needs.

Academic Tracking:

St. Caimin's Community School uses the Athena Tracker to help support academic tracking. The Athena Tracker is an academic tracking tool which creates a student's baseline potential in each subject in each exam. This tracker is used to track all students' exam results. The Athena Tracker uses all past results and CAT4 scores to create a student's baseline in each subject.

This allows the school to constantly track where a student is in relation to this baseline to highlight if a student is drifting below their own unique potential and may need additional support. This tracking is carried out after house examinations by the year head. It helps highlights when a student falls below their own predicted potential. Once identified a student will then be offered additional supports outlined above.

Ongoing Review:

In conjunction with the staff and students an annual review of the supports offered is carried out. Our most recent review involved year heads developing and formalising their approach to meeting students who have been identified as underperforming. Table 2 outlines what these sessions could involve:

Table 2: Structure of one to one meetings with students who have been identified as underperforming

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a relationship with student, identify where the successes are, develop trust. • Check in - informal, where are students in relation to their work, where are they behind etc. • Talk about the purpose of the meeting, why they are meeting you and use the visual from Athena as a support. • Highlight that it is a positive support, part of a whole school approach to support students. • Use a Likert Scale ask student to rate how they are working and to explain their score and how they could improve it. • Use Athena to share results with student and ask if they can explain why things are not matching up between their predicted and actual performance. Present student with the facts. • Try and establish motivations. What subjects, careers are they interested in, courses they want to do after school etc.
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check organisation (journal, reports from teachers, outstanding assignments etc.) • Establish the study routine they have at the moment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where do you study/have you a space to study? - Who at home can you ask for help if you get stuck? - Who do you ask for help if you get stuck in school? - How is study structured? (do they do favourite subject first etc.) - What ways do they study? (visuals, notes, organisers, plans?) - How much time are they spending on homework/study?
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an action plan leaving the meeting. • Actions to come from the student and guided by the year head. • Break down big goals into shorter and medium term goals. • Plan next few weeks. • Plan a review meeting.

Clifden Community School

Clifden Community Schools Arts Festival recently celebrated the 44th Clifden Community Schools Arts festival. Albeit it was a lot different than previous years, students and staff were treated to a programme comprising of live zoom, pre-recorded events and limited in person events.



Clockwise from top right:
Artwork by Grace Wolfe, Isobel Joyce and Rahul Joby.

Cashel Community School

look forward to performing in front of a live audience again

Variety Show by Kate O'Shea and Carrie Ann Ryan, Cashel Community School will present a Variety Show this coming November. We are all so delighted to be back on the stage again and are really looking forward to having an audience to witness what we do. Last year most of our performances were of a virtual nature and while this was wonderful, this year we really are looking forward to getting back on the stage and having a live audience. The musical for this year is going to be... Grease!!!

St. Attracta's Community School

Lights, Camera, Action!

TY students recently took part in the Movie Magic experience. First and foremost, we were introduced to the two founders of the workshop: Susan McGrath, who's previously worked as an assistant director in movies such as Bridget Jones Diary and The Medallion, and Lavinia Derby, who has produced TV shows like The Blizzard of Odd and worked on Ear to the Ground.

Having years of experience in these fields, the ladies showed us all the basics of filming, namely opening shots to help set the scene, camera angles to portray the characters emotions or status, and how the greenscreen operates. Then for reference, we got to see mini movies from other schools and that helped build up our confidence and made our creativity flow. For an hour after the introduction, we went around the school campus in small groups; shooting, filming and acting out scenes for our own mini movies. Then we played around with the editing software on the iPads until we had created our masterpieces.

Lastly, we presented our creations to the class, and of course, each of us got a standing ovation! Some of the most noteworthy films present were recreations of familiar tv shows such as the infamous Love Island and X-Factor. Can't wait to see some of our own school's stars on the big screen in the future!

Saoirse Jaago (TY)



Reflective Piece on the Class of 2021 Painting Ashbourne Community School



This piece was created to be a beacon of hope, a reminder of faith and a spark of light in this dire time. In the midst of a pandemic, the class of 2021 persevered. We battled through the struggles of distance learning, confinement and social isolation. However, the various lockdowns did not break our spirit. We rallied and came back stronger, braver, better. The Chinese lanterns in this piece not only reflect the diversity of culture within our year group, but represent the light we carry within us, that determination and hope that drives us. Their ascension into the sky represents our own ascension towards our life goals as we move on towards bigger, better and brighter things following our journey through secondary school. These lanterns are also symbolic of the light of education that has been lit within us by our fantastic teachers. To all the staff of ACS, you have enlightened us and allowed us to shine bright by spreading your flame, your passion for knowledge. We hope that we in turn will spread that light to the world around us as we go our separate ways now and enter the vast world beyond Ashbourne Community School.

Alice McGrath

We wanted to create an image, a concept that conveyed our hope for the future. The lanterns symbolize the beacons of positivity that appear in the darkest of times. They represent our teachers, our family, our friends who have been a reassuring presence throughout the pandemic. They lift us up as we journey onwards and upwards. With everyone's support, Class of 2021 have managed to rise above it all.

Jessie Huang

Turning Waste into Fashion with Junk Kouture and Moate Community School in The Big Apple

Junk Kouture, the world's largest sustainable fashion competition for youth inspiring them to make a difference, announced its entry into the U.S. market as part of its global expansion this year. Taking on New York for the first time, it was a very busy opening week for Junk Kouture in The Big Apple. Partnering with Climate Week NYC for their 'Sustainable Living' program, Junk Kouture designs were showcased at numerous events and in the press.

Junk Kouture were honoured to meet An Taoiseach Micheál Martin in New York with the ingenious 2019 award winning design, Attire from Moate Community School created by Michelle Corcoran out of bicycle tubing. An Taoiseach was in awe of the intricate detail of the sustainable garment and is a big fan of the JK movement as innovation, creativity, education, and youth activism are at the core of the Junk Kouture programme, which are the essential elements in response to driving change, creating the circular engineers of tomorrow.



St. Wolstan's Community School

Canoeing

Éabha Ni Drisceoil, 5th Year Student, was selected by Canoeing Ireland to represent Ireland at the International competitions held in September.

- Junior Canoe Sprint World Championships in Portugal
- Olympic Hopes Sprint Regatta, in the Czech Republic
- Canoe Marathon World Championships in Romania

Éabha has been training for these competitions for a number of years and has worked extremely hard to be selected for the above competitions. All at St. Wolstan's Community School are extremely proud of Éabha's achievements.



Gymnastics

A massive well done to Ella Giglione who was selected to represent Ireland at the Acrobatic Gymnastics European Championships in Pesaro Italy. Ella is a 6th Year student and we are incredibly proud of her achievements.



Crescent College Comprehensive hosts Leahy Cup

Crescent College Comprehensive were delighted to be in a position to once again host the Leahy Cup, an invitation hockey tournament, which marks Jackie Leahy's contribution to hockey in CCC.

Spanning over two days, schools from Dublin, Kilkenny and Galway competed against one another. Crescent were quick off the mark and had the privilege of collecting the trophy after a clean sweep over the two days.

The inaugural O'Callaghan Shield, for player of the tournament, was presented to Ailbhe Folen of Salerno. The shield was introduced to mark Sean O'Callaghans contribution to hockey in the school over the last twenty years. We wish him all the best as he turns his focus to hurling in CCC.



Moyne Community School

Athletes Continue to Shine

Following on from his exploits in the European Indoor Track Athletics Championship held in Turin last March, Moyne Community School Leaving Certificate student Cian McPhillips continued his amazing run of success. In July he won gold for Ireland in the 1500m at the 2021 European Under 20 Athletics Championships held in Tallin. To follow on from this major international success, the following week Cian broke the 1500m Irish Junior record. His time of 3:40:56 surpassed a record held for an amazing 45 years by fellow Longford native Ray Flynn. Despite this heavy schedule Cian managed the small matter of completing his Leaving Certificate and has secured a scholarship to UCD where he will study Maths and Physics.

While one International leaves the school another has made his international debut. James Miney competed for Ireland in the 1500m steeplechase in the SIAB Schools International in Derby on the 25th September. James secured his place on the national team with his victory in the event at the Irish Life Tailteann Games at Morton Stadium in Santry early in September. James became the third Irish International from Moyne in the last four years – a great achievement.



John the Baptist Community School

Well done to Geoffrey Joy O'Regan who recently won the high jump at the Tailteann Games in Morton stadium, equalling the 21 year old Tailteann record with a jump of 2.06m. He also won best male athlete of the day and received the Fr. Lonergan cup. Geoffrey will now go on to represent Ireland at the SIAB's competition in Derbyshire, England next Saturday.

Geoffrey Joy O'Regan also came second in the high jump at the Celtic Games in Derbyshire, England recently with a jump of 2.09m. He was competing for team Ireland and won best male Irish athlete of the competition.



Photo by Sean Rowe

Congratulations to Michael Gammell, 6th Year, who won gold in the Munster Criterium Championships on Sunday August 15th in the Men's Elite Team event. He won bronze in the Provincial Road Race Championship and received another Munster medal in his category on August 29th.

In the National Road Race series, he came third in a stage over a four day event. This took place between July 30th – August 2nd. He also took first place in the Greenmount Limerick Time Trial league. These are fantastic achievements in a highly competitive field. Well done Michael!

Recent **ACCS Info Bulletins**

BULLETIN NO.	DATE	SUMMARY
ACCS/Info Bulletin 38/21	Sep 11, 2021	Industrial action by grant-funded secretaries and caretakers (SSSF funded) who are members of the FÓRSA trade union.
ACCS/Info Bulletin 37/21	Sep 9, 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Circular Letter 0045/2021 Covid Learning and Support Scheme (CLASS) Programme and 2. Covid Learning and Support Scheme (CLASS) Guidance for Post-Primary Schools.
ACCS/Info Bulletin 36/21	Aug 27, 2021	S39/21 Leaving Certificate 2021 – Important Information in advance of the Issue of the Provisional Results.
ACCS/Info Bulletin 35/21	Aug 24, 2021	C/L 0042/2021, C/L 0039/2021, C/L 0040/2021 and upcoming Seminars provided by Spectrum.Life.
ACCS/Info Bulletin 34/21	Aug 16, 2021	Reopening Schools – Letter to School Principals re Resources and Guidance for Schools Reopening.
ACCS/Info Bulletin 33/21	Jul 3, 2021	Arrangements for certain staff to reapply for categorisation as Very High Risk (VHR) for the 2021/22 School Year.

Recent Relevant **DE Circular Letters**

CIRCULAR NO.	SUMMARY
CL 56/21	Revision of Teacher Salaries with effect from 1 October 2021
CL 54/21	Revision of Salaries of School Secretaries and School Maintenance Staff in Community and Comprehensive Schools with effect from 1 October 2021
CL 53/21	Revision of salaries with effect from 1 October 2021 for Clerical Officers and Caretakers employed in National Schools under the 1978/79 Scheme and Clerical Officers employed in Post Primary Schools under the 1978 Scheme
CL 52/21	Revision of salaries of all staff paid directly by a recognised school or ETB with effect from 1 October 2021
CL 49/21	Home Tuition Grant Scheme in respect of Maternity Related Absences
CL 48/21	Home Tuition Grant Scheme for 1. Children without a school place (NSP) – Application Forms are only available from the Educational Welfare Service (EWS), Tusla Education Support Service (TESS) - Application Form HT NSP21 and 2. Children in Care without a school place - (CIC) – Short Term Home Tuition Grant Scheme – Application Form HT CIC21 are only available from a Social Worker
CL 47/21	Guidelines for the use of Reduced School Days in Schools
CL 45/21	Additional measures to support schools and pupils/students to mitigate the impact of disruption to in-school education resulting from Covid-19, to be delivered in the 2021/22 School Year
CL 42/21	Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools
CL 40/21	Partial Return to Work for Special Needs Assistants employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
CL 39/21	Extended Breastfeeding Breaks for Special Needs Assistants
CL 38/21	Home Tuition Grant Scheme 2021/2022 - Special Education Component
CL 37/21	Building Momentum Agreement 2021 - 2022. Revision of 2011 Entrant Teacher Salaries with effect from 1 March 2021 - Application of Additional Incremental Skips
CL 35/21	Parent's Leave Scheme for Special Needs Assistants
CL 34/21	Updated Entry Criteria for the Gaeltacht Entry route to the (English Medium) Primary Bachelor of Education
CL 33/21	Arrangements for Inspectorate engagement with Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education 2021/2022 School Year