



JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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September 30, 2023

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

I hope you and yours have settled back into the routine of school. We are delighted to see all of our students again and welcome all new students to our school. Here are some notices that may be of interest:

Philosophy Themes

To provoke discussion and thought, some of the themes for the past few weeks have been:

How do I develop good habits?
Can I achieve more than I expect?
Is it in giving that I receive?
Am I this body?
What will I devote myself to?
Where does my attention go?

For more information about the assembly themes, please click [here](#).

Parent Association AGM

The Parents Association AGM took place on Thursday, September 14. It is great to see so many parents involved in helping the school. For your information, the following parents were elected as the Parents Association Executive officers.

Chairperson – Mary Mc Cabe

Secretary – Sharon Sheerin

Treasurer – Jilly Clarkin

PA Committee – Ciara O'Connor, Aengus Nolan, Heidi Bouz, Dan Merryweather, Niamh Van den Bergh, Sheila Donelon, Ricque Porter, Alan Johnston.

The Parent Association have set up various committees for catering, uniform, sports, communication and building development. I look forward to working with the PA and the various committees in developing the school.

Parent-Teacher Meetings

Parent-teacher meetings will start shortly. All meetings will take place online using Teams. Please note the schedule for meetings:

1A – Thursday, October 19

1B - Thursday, October 26
2A – Tuesday, November 7
2B – Thursday, November 9
3A – Thursday, October 12
3B – Tuesday, October 17
5th and 6th year (except 5th year English and Biology) – Tues October 24
5th year (English and Biology) – Thurs October 26

Traffic

The one-way system we use at the moment is as follows:

- Cars park in the parent car park if a space is available.
- If the car park is full, park on the left-hand side of the avenue behind the car in front, facing the school.
- When a place becomes available in the car park, please move into the car park.
- All cars must exit the school by driving through the car park and down the avenue.
- No car should turn on the avenue.
- Cars at the school entrance must yield to traffic from the main road.

It is essential that no car turns on the avenue and all cars exit via the school car park to minimise delays.

We will observe the situation closely and make further changes accordingly. I appreciate your support with this.

Road Closure

From October 16, Irish Water will carry out road works on Ferndale Road until November 17, and Ferndale Road users will have to take diversions. We will pass on information from Irish Water as we receive it.

Lost and Found

Mr Telford is operating a lost and found service. To help return items to students, we ask that all uniform items be clearly labelled. Labelling water bottles and lunchboxes would also be helpful.

After-school Supervised Study

The after-school supervised study occurs on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm. On Wednesday, it takes place from 1.30 to 4.00 pm. Parents can make payments for supervised study using the school website.

School Events

1st-year enrollment August 2024

Our Open Days on Wednesday, September 20, and Saturday, September 23, were very well attended, with over 300 people attending over the two days. We thank all the student volunteers who acted as tour guides, parents and teachers for helping.

We will be enrolling two 1st year classes again in August 2024. The window for applications for enrollment into the 1st year of August 2024 is between October 2 and October 23. Our admissions policy gives preference to siblings and children coming from the John Scottus Primary schools. If you are interested in enrolling a sibling, please submit an application form by October 23, as we expect the number of applications to exceed the number of places available.

Social Media Workshop

On September 9, all 1st year students attended a social media workshop run by Sarann Wood, a parent in the school who runs a company specialising in online marketing. During the seminar, students explored topics such as cyberbullying, netiquette, creating a positive digital footprint and applying critical thinking skills to online information. We hope your child found the workshop to be of benefit and thank Sarann for running the workshop.

Study Skills Workshop

A study skills workshop will take place for 3rd, 5th and 6th-year students on Tuesday, October 3. The workshop was very beneficial in the past, and we hope it will help students learn the required skills to succeed academically.

Academic

Leaving Certificate Results 2023

I congratulate our graduating class of 2023 on their excellent results. 48% of students achieved 450 points or higher. These are impressive results, and we congratulate the tremendous work of our students in the challenging circumstances of the past two years.

93% of students were offered Level 8 degree courses, with the remaining going on to further education courses. The destinations are varied, with students moving on to study Art and Design, Science, Engineering, Music, Business, Health Sciences and Humanities.

Student Council

A student council has been elected with representatives from each class. Each class group has been asked to nominate three representatives from the students that wish to be on the student council. One student is elected by popular vote, one is chosen randomly from students who want to be on the council, and the class tutor selects one. We look forward to many constructive meetings with the student council over the coming year.

1st-year assessments

All 1st-year students completed CAT4 aptitude testing and NGRT reading tests in recent weeks. These are used as a baseline to monitor academic progress over the next few years. The results will be sent to parents shortly.

6th year Higher Options

Our 6th-year students visited the Higher Options on Wednesday, September 20. This is an excellent event for our 6th-year students to explore what careers and college courses they wish to pursue.

Monday, September 25/December 5 - School Closed.

You may have a question about why the school closed on September 25. The school opens for the mandatory 166 days. The school year started on Monday, August 28 and will finish on Friday, May 3. There is one day to allocate as a holiday, and we decided to break up the first half-term with a long weekend.

Please note that the school will close on Tuesday, December 5, to facilitate Junior Cycle Professional Development for all teachers. Each year, the school is allocated two days for teacher professional development. The first of the two days will take place on December 5.

Extra-Curricular

1st year Bonding Day - Hell & Back in Kilruddery

On Monday, September 4, the 1st years had a fantastic day at Kilruddery house in Wicklow, all based around their theme for the year: "BRING YOUR **KIT** to SCHOOL, KIT standing for Kindness, Inclusivity & Tolerance. Having just joined the school, they spent the day getting to know each other while taking on the famous Hell & Back course in Kilruddery House in Wicklow. It is the same course used in the well known RTE Series 'Ireland's fittest family'. Needless to say all the 1st years tackled the course extremely well and had a great day.

Founders Day

Our Founders Day celebrated the school's founding values of Stillness, Enquiry, Attention and Unity, on Friday, September 29. The event was organised and led by our 6th-year leadership team. It was an excellent occasion for building school spirit and provided great opportunities for discovering more about each other. We must commend all 6th year students and supporting teachers for such a well-organised and inspiring event. To see some pictures of the event, please click [here](#).

Club Fair

Our Clubs Fair took place on Thursday, September 21. During the fair, students can sign up for various clubs and extra-curricular activities. The clubs on offer this year include Green Schools, Music/Jam club, Global Citizen Education, Chess and Board games, Golf, School Newspaper, Book Club, Irish Movie Club, Christmas Card Making, Film Club, Soccer, Hockey, Ultimate Frisbee, Athletics, Basketball, Horse Riding, Computer Coding, Socrate Debating Club, Collage Club and Origami club.

These clubs will take place during lunch and after school. It was great to see such interest from students in the various clubs.

Sports Update

Now that we are all settling into the new academic year, sport in John Scottus is starting to kick into gear. Our teams have been busy starting back training and preparing for leagues and competitions that will be happening over the coming months.

Below is an update on some of the sports that started in September.

Athletics

Our after-school athletics began on week two of school, and students are training now every Thursday after school from 3:40 pm to 4:40 pm. We are currently in cross-country season, mixing some distance running with some games for fun and general fitness. Our first event will be taking place in Avondale on Tuesday, October 24. Any interested students can come along on Thursday and join the club.

Basketball

Our u16 (3rd year) basketball team have had a busy start to the year. After a successful 2nd year league last year, the boys, now 3rd year, are back playing in the under-16 East Dublin Boys league. There was no time for rest with our first games played recently. Unfortunately, we didn't get off to the best of starts, with two losses by the narrowest of margins. Both games were very competitive, and only lost by one basket. The boys played well and were just very unlucky to miss a few chances to win both games, but with a bit more practice, we are confident they will get there. Although the boys are understandably disappointed, there is still lots to play for, with three games left in the group stages. I'm sure a win will come very soon. Our next game will be played next week against Blackrock Educate Together.

Our 1st and 2nd year girls and boys training will begin shortly. Their games do not commence until closer to Christmas.

Soccer

Training has begun for our girls' and boys' soccer teams. With leagues starting in October, these are a valuable few weeks to get some practice in and work as a team to try and start as best as possible for our league and cup fixtures. Training for Soccer happens on Wednesday after school, and all students are welcome.

Hockey

Similar to our Soccer teams, our Hockey teams have been training on Wednesday after school in preparation for their leagues. The first of these games happened on Thursday, September 28 when our Minor girls took on Loreto Rathfarnham. This is a new team, and was their first game together. Despite being on the wrong side of a 2-0 defeat, the team brought amazing energy, enthusiasm and spirit to the game. There were plenty of shots on goal and great movement of the ball around the pitch. We look forward to building on these skills over the coming weeks in preparation for our next game against Our Ladys Terenure.

PE Lessons

The main focus of our PE lessons for September has been Ultimate Frisbee. Ultimate Frisbee is a fun invasion game which we play a lot of in the school. We also compete in Frisbee tournaments. Training for this will commence shortly, and competitions will

follow. Any student who has not signed up for our Frisbee club can speak to Mr Pender during PE to join the club.

Music

There are lots of opportunities this term to make music in JSS. We have 'Jam Sessions' on Thursday lunchtime, and any musician or singers from any year can come and jam. The TY band are busy rehearsing at lunchtime, and we look forward to a live performance from them later in the year. We also offer instrumental lessons, including piano, guitar, recorder, and flute. Please contact Ms Williams if you would like your child to sign up.

Transition Year Update

Lough Dan Trip

The Transition Year students have had a busy but exciting start to the school year. Firstly, they partook in the two-night camping trip to Lough Dan to Complete their 25km Hike for their Gaisce. As part of the camping experience, they also participated in kayaking on Lough Dan, cooking in challenging circumstances, pitching and sleeping in tents, swimming and singing around a campfire. To see some pictures, please click [here](#).

Focus Ireland Charity Event

In preparation for our TY sleepout on the 6th of October, Focus Ireland came to our school to share information about homelessness in Ireland and how fundraising for the sleepout will help.

Donations for the "Shine a Light" sleepout can be made online here:
<https://joinus.focusireland.ie/fundraisers/johnscottussecondaryschool>

Friday Trips

Our Friday trips have also begun, including a hike up Djouce, Scarr, Devils Glen and a self-guided tour around the Collins Barracks in Dublin.

TY Modules

We have also had a few fascinating speakers come in, including John O Shea from GOAL, who shared his lifetime experience of the 'forgotten world'. The talk will help focus our student's minds for their trip to India in the new year.

Stephen Kiernan ran an engaging poetry slam workshop focusing on misogyny. It will be very interesting to see the finished pomes.

The TY photography module has begun, and Mr Bourke has taken the lead in running it for the first time. Some fantastic photos have been taken, and students are taking all the different techniques on board.

In other subjects, students have begun work on their Junk kouture projects in Art and some very creative design concepts are starting to emerge and we look forward to seeing how they progress over the year.

Some of our students have also begun outdoor projects around the school grounds, including a fairy trail for the primary school, a student outdoor hangout and further improvements in the outdoor classroom. If anyone had any outdoor tables, benches, chairs, plants or bulbs they are looking to get rid of, our students would be interested in upcycling them for their projects. Just contact Mr Bourke.

TY Musical

This year's TY Musical is Grease, and students have already impressed the music director with their creativity and energy. The Musical will take place in the Mermaid Theatre, Bray, on May 8th and 9th, and tickets will go on sale later in the year.

Philosophical thought for the day

"Look within. Within is the fountain of good, ready always to well forth if thou wilt always delve" - Marcus Aurelius

Summary of Events coming up

Study Skills workshop for 3rd, 5th and 6th years: Tuesday, Oct 2

Numeracy Week: October 16 to October 20

Midterm Break: Monday, October 30 to Friday, Nov 3

Yours warmly,



Dr Declan Kelly

Principal

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