



8th December 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,



Northern Ireland Assembly

Congratulations to one of our pupils, Donal in Yr. 11, who is now a member of the newly elected Northern Ireland Youth Assembly. Donal's post will run up until 2025.

Best of luck, Donal!

'This is Me' Poetry Competition

Congratulations to members of our 10B class with their winning entries to the 'This is Me' poetry competition. All the poems will be published across the United Kingdom in a book in 2024.



Pawsitive Pets Team

Best wishes to the Pawsitive Pets Team, Casey and Sophia, as they travel to Belfast on Thursday to sell Christmas Pet Hampers at a Christmas Market.

Pet Hampers for those who completed an application form will be distributed next week starting on Monday 11th December 2023.

Silver Rookie Lifeguard Award

Congratulations to one of our pupils, Liza in Yr. 8, on achieving her Silver Rookie Lifeguard Award.

Yr. 11 & Yr. 12 Parent/Teacher Day on Tuesday 12th December: College closed for pupils.

Tuesday 12th December is Parent/Teacher Day for Yr. 11 (12.45-3.15) and Year 12 (9.30-12.00) so the **college will be closed for all year groups**. Yr. 11 and Yr. 12 pupils are asked to attend with their parents/guardians to meet their teachers but do not have to be in uniform. All other year groups will be at home working on school related tasks. The morning session will be for Yr.12 and the afternoon session will be for Yr.11. Meetings will run on a first come, first served basis.

Festive Doors: Wednesday 13th December

Form groups are currently participating in a 'Festive Doors' competition. The inside of their Form class door are being decorated in a festive manner. An external judging panel will choose a winning Form class chosen from each year group. The deadline for completion is **Wednesday 13th December**. Judging will take place on Thursday 14th December. Pupils are asked to take in decorations to support with this competition.





Free Christmas Lunch for pupils – Thursday 14th December

This year's Christmas lunch will take place on Thursday 14th December. No pupil in the college will have to pay for their Christmas lunch.

This is a gesture to thank all of our pupils who make our college the special community that it is.

Christmas Jumper Day Fundraiser (Zambia School Appeal) - minimum £1.00 per family

On Thursday 14th December pupils can pay to wear a Christmas jumper rather than their normal jumper. The funds raised will be donated to Granaghan Outreach who are local charity attempting to construct a school in Zambia. The cost is a minimum of £1.00 per family and pupils are asked to give their donation to their Form tutor on the morning of Thursday 14th December. Pupils should have some additional loose change on this day as no pupil has to pay for their Christmas lunch. Please encourage your son/daughter to donate!



Public Transport – Industrial Strike action – Friday 15th December

You will probably be aware from the national media that there will be further disruption to public transport with three further strike days planned. One of these three days will be a school day on Friday 15th December. We will share further information on this closer to the day should any new information become available.

Advent Reflection morning: Friday 15th December

Thank you to the pupils who attended our Advent reflection this morning. The next Advent reflection will be on Friday 15th December in Room 9. All pupils and staff are welcome!

Christmas Raffle: Tuesday 19th December

Yr. 11 and Yr.12 Prince's Trust classes are running a raffle for a 'Christmas Treat Hamper'. The hamper will include a tin of Quality Street, a tin of Heroes, a Cadbury's Selection Box, McVities Chocolate Bar Cakes, Mince Pies, Walkers Crisps, Shloer, 2 x bottles of C&C Lemonade, 3 x Packet of Pringles and 3 x vouchers for O'Kane's Butchers. All prizes have been kindly donated by O'Kane's Butchers, Spar and Centra in Claudy! Pupils distributed the raffle tickets today to all Form Teachers and Support staff. Tickets are **50p for two tickets or £1.00 for a strip of five tickets!** The Draw will be made on Tuesday 19th December.

All money raised will be going to one of the college's chosen charities.

End of Term Arrangements – Thursday 21st December

This term finishes on Thursday 21st December with pupils being dismissed at the earlier time of 12.00 midday. Please note that the college will be closed from Friday 22nd December until Tuesday 2nd January inclusive. The college re-opens again for all staff and pupils on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.



The James Kane Foundation

Thank you to The James Kane Foundation for their generous donation of £3,672.00 to our college. We are one of several schools to receive financial support for food programmes which will help alleviate increasing pressures faced by families due to the increasing cost of living demands. We are hoping to be able to use some of this donation to provide pupils with a lunch each Friday during the month of January.

Soccer

Good luck to our U14 Soccer team who play Limavady Grammar in the NIFSA Cup on Monday. The U12 Soccer team are also in action in Cup football against St. Brigid's on Wednesday.

Our U16 Boys team play St. Pius X College (Magherafelt) on Wednesday 20th December in the second round of the Northern Ireland School's plate competition.

Important privacy update for iPhone users

If you have an iPhone and have completed the recent iOS 17 update, they have installed a feature called NameDrop. This feature allows you to easily share contact information and photographs to another iPhone by just holding the phones close together. This feature is defaulted to 'ON'. To shut this feature off, go to Settings, General, AirDrop, Bringing Devices Together and change to 'OFF'.

Reconstitution of School Boards of Governors

The Department of Education (DE) and Education Authority (EA) jointly launched a recruitment campaign on Monday 6th November inviting applications for school governor positions in all controlled and maintained schools. School Boards of Governors are normally reconstituted every four years. As the term of office for existing governors is coming to an end this academic year, there is now a need people with a range of skills and experience to support the management of schools across Northern Ireland. Applications are being encouraged from a diverse range of people from various backgrounds with different skills and experiences. Applicants interested in applying to become a school governor can apply at the following:

- for DE governor positions at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-governorappointments>
- for EA positions at <https://www.eani.org.uk/schoolgovernance/becoming-a-school-governor>

Programme for International Assessment (PISA)

On Wednesday there was the publication of the 2022 results of the OECD's Programme for International Assessment (PISA) which our college contributed to last year. Results are given for both the UK as a whole and also for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. I am sceptical about how much schools can learn from this process between different countries over a set of tests. However, here are the key findings:

- *In comparison to other jurisdictions of the UK, results in Northern Ireland were significantly above that of Wales and not significantly different to that of Scotland. However Northern Ireland fell significantly below the average scores in England.*
- *The performance of high achievers (the top 10%) has been maintained since 2018, although the performance of lower achievers (the bottom 10%) has deteriorated.*

- In Northern Ireland and on average across all OECD countries the score for science has not changed significantly since 2018. However, the scores for mathematics and reading have declined both in Northern Ireland and on average across OECD countries.
- Pupils in Northern Ireland reported an average level of life satisfaction which was significantly lower than the OECD average.

Key Dates

Tuesday 12th Dec
Friday 14th Dec
Wednesday 20th Dec

Yr. 11 & Yr. 12 Parent/Teacher Day (college closed for pupils)
Christmas lunch & Christmas jumper Day
Carol Service (2.40pm for all pupils)

Last Day of Term is on Thursday 21st December - 12.00 finish.

Final Prayer

Today, we celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of our Blessed Mary.

*O Most Holy Virgin, immaculate in body and spirit,
look kindly on me as I implore your powerful intercession.
O most Holy Mother, receive my prayers as I present them to God.
O Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, you intercede for us with your Son.
O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.*



Amen.

Yours sincerely,

P. McCullagh

Mr P. McCullagh BSc (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH
College Principal

