

Christmas 2021 Newsletter



Christmas Message

This time last year we all believed that the effect of Covid-19 on our lives at home and in school would come to an end in the spring with the arrival of vaccines. As we now know this has not come to pass. Masks, sanitising, social distancing etc. has remained part of our daily lives. What the year has taught us is how resourceful and resilient our school community is as information and regulations changed with ever increasing regularity. The early part of this school term brought great hope as we were able to have school trips, extra-curricular activities and many of the normal events that play such an important part in the development of our students. This has changed significantly in recent weeks with so many positive cases being reported locally and nationally. All up to date information has been shared with our students via teams and is also available on the school website.

As we near the end of term, my wish is that no more of our school community, families and friends suffer from this disease, or at least have no long-term effects as a consequence. This term has clearly shown the wonderful spirit that exists within our school community with everybody supporting one another. I want to thank all our staff for continuing to present such a positive attitude and the highest possible standard of Education for our students in this challenging environment. I want to thank all our parents for the support they continue to provide us as we strive to maintain the standards of excellence that Knockbeg College is famous for, and our students who continue to impress me with how they have adjusted to the changes this pandemic has caused to so many aspects of their school life.

I want to wish all our Students, Parents, Teachers, Families and Friends a Safe and Peaceful Christmas. While I want us all to enjoy the holidays, please be mindful of the regulations in relation to meeting up. If we all keep our distance, wear our masks where possible and wash our hands regularly, then we have an excellent chance of keeping the virus away from ourselves and those that are important in our lives.

Liturgical Events

In line with our School Ethos, of which we are very proud, we have celebrated some important events in recent weeks. On December 8th, we marked the Feast Day of our Mother Mary, in honour of whom our school is named. This wonderful event was broadcast from Saint Clare's Church in Graiguecullen with Bishop Nulty as chief celebrant. Our Christmas Carol Service will take place on at 1-30 on Thursday December 16th, and will also be broadcast from Saint Clare's Church in Graiguecullen. The following link will gain access <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qoYrGTmfLGU> Please join us if you are available. Both ceremonies are broadcast live to all our classrooms and will help us all prepare for the days ahead. Wonderful work in organising the events was done with the support of Fr. Dunphy by the Religious and Music Departments. A card with our Covid-19 mural which symbolises the resilience

shown by our school community is being given to all students this week. Thanks to Ms. Dawson and the Art department for their wonderful work. A commemorative brochure which was prepared at the time of our official school opening earlier in the term is also being provided to all our students.

Garda Youth Awards

Huge congrats to past pupil Oisín Byrne, winner of a Laois-Offaly Garda Youth Award recently. The award was presented by Laois-Offaly Chief Superintendent, John Scanlan, & sponsor of the event, Supermacs CEO, Pat McDonagh, with Laois intercounty star and past pupil Ross Munnely as guest speaker.



Transition Year

Opportunities to go on trips have been much easier to facilitate this term as restriction had eased for a while. All have gone on historical tours, cinema trips, boating trips on the Barrow and Careers information seminars in IT Carlow to name a few. The highlight of the year so far for the group was the opportunity to ride a Segway for a couple of hours here in school. This provided access to some key driving skills along with valuable training in balance for the boys.



The information seminar for parents and students in third year who may be interested in securing a place in Transition Year next September will take place next week via teams. Information will be sent home shortly.

School Uniform

The Knockbeg College uniform is unique to our school. Wearing it is an essential part of our school philosophy. The Board of Management and the Parents' Association are very clear in their view that they want all students to have equal status, and this includes wearing the correct uniform, including shoes and jacket. These can be purchased from Shaws department store in Carlow or from School Uniforms Direct who are based in Baltinglass. Contact details are available from the school office or online, with purchases also available online with School Uniforms Direct. Most students work well with us, and we ask all parents to ensure compliance to avoid unnecessary difficulties and possible embarrassment for you or your son if we must enforce the rules and send someone home.

Career Choices

Mr. Hoyne, our Guidance Counsellor, meets with all Transition Year, Leaving 1 & Leaving 11 students in groups and individually to provide information in relation to career choice. He is providing important information on the significance of subject choices for Transition Year students and on all matters related to entry requirements for the different Colleges in Ireland and abroad for senior students. Please ensure that you have discussions at home in relation to this with your son to ensure the best possible choices are made in the weeks ahead. CAO applications will have to be submitted early in January and it is helpful if your son has put some thought into the courses and Colleges that he might be interested in attending. Mr. Hoyne can be contacted with any queries related to school and career choice queries using his school email bhoyne@knockbegcollege.ie

Parent Teacher Meetings

We were delighted to be able to facilitate online parent teacher meetings for our Senior Students this term. The initial feedback from staff and parents has been very positive. When the review has been completed, we will see if it is feasible to expand the process to all remaining groups.

Curricular Trips

Despite the restrictions caused this term, certain aspects of school life have gone ahead. Our Leaving 11 Geography students travelled recently to Mahon Falls as part of their Geography field study. This was a most interesting experience for them under the watchful eyes of Mr. McNeill and Mr Murphy.



Our 1st year students also took in the sights on a local tour to the Rock of Dunamaise, Brownshill Dolmen, Round Tower at Timahoe, the romanesque doorway in Killeslin & Carlow Castle, as part of their Junior Cycle History course.



School Environment

We are lucky to have beautiful grounds and a fantastic new school. The only damage being done is by students dropping litter which is a pity. Can each parent please ask your son to use the bins to dispose of their rubbish. There are many bins inside the school and around the grounds. We all have a shared responsibility to ensure that our school and grounds remain in the magnificent condition that they are being returned to us. A clean, bright surrounding is a much nicer area in which to spend time. Having received our Green Flag last year, we would with your support like to keep it upon review. Ms. Hott and her team are currently preparing applications for further green flags.



We are also working with the School Food Company to adjust the utensils being used, bowls, cups, plates, knives, forks etc. to ensure that all are compatible or recyclable. Bins in the ref have been adjusted to facilitate these changes as we attempt to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill.

This beautiful Christmas tree is the work of our environmental change committee and has been made using a small number of the plastic bottles collected in recent months. They will commence the project of building a Green House with the bottles collected in the New Year.



Members of the environmental change committee participating in the setting of trees for our newly arrived bee's orchard. We are grateful to Keppal Data Centre for their involvement in this fantastic project, and in particular Mrs. Brid Saruwatari, a former parent and member of the Board of Management.

Sponsorship

We are lucky to have some very generous supporters in our school community and were delighted to accept a fabulous set of jerseys from Moyadd Transport recently which will be worn with pride. The photograph shows Elva Kelly and Seamus O' Dwyer making the presentation to Mr. Conway and Mr. Carew with some players from our team in the background.



Shoe Box Appeal

Support for those less fortunate than we are is a very rewarding enterprise. It only requires a leader for such a project to realise the enormous generosity of our school community. These pictures show some of the many boxes prepared for delivery recently. Thanks to Ms. Bolger and students for such great work.



Opening Date

Our new term will begin on January 6th. We hope that we will be able to open safely, and we are looking forward to working with all our students and parents in a safe environment as always. Thank you for all your support and understanding during this challenging period for us all. We will provide information seminars on Subject Choices early in the New Year. If you require any information beyond that provided in recent reports, please contact teachers using your son's Teams account or email info@knockbegcollege.ie

Extra-Curricular

Well done and best wishes to our Junior and Senior Basketball teams who have both advanced to the Midlands Regional Finals, which will be played in the National Basketball Arena in Tallaght on Friday 10th of December.



Having qualified for the South Leinster League Final, our Senior footballers opened their Leinster Championship campaign with a victory over Patrician College, Newbridge. In the 2nd round, they were defeated by a strong Clane outfit. We now await the results of the last round of group games which will determine whether we advance to the knockout stages.

Our Junior Footballers have ensured a place in a South Leinster semi final following comprehensive victories over St. Peter's, Good Counsel and Enniscorthy CBS.



Well done to Mackenzie McIvor who took gold at the All Ireland Irish Mountain Running Association Juvenile Boys Race in Wicklow's Sugar Loaf Mountains recently.



Mackenzie also finished top of the podium in the Laois Secondary Schools Pre-Championship Cross country event in Heywood. There were also great runs from Jacob Curran (3rd) and Eolann Maguire (6th) in minor, Finn Craig (1st), Fionn O'Sullivan (3rd) & Pauraic Moore (6th) in junior, Daniel Wall (4th), & Seán O'Sullivan (6th) in intermediate, and Lee Murray (3rd) in senior.



Huge congrats to 6th Year student Adam Deay who has been selected to represent the IRFU U18's Clubs & School's Rugby team in their upcoming camp at the IRFU's High Performance Centre on the National Sports Campus and Carlton Hotel over the Christmas period.



Well done to TY student Jack Kehoe who was named on the Ireland u18 Basketball panel who will be playing in the European Championships in Romania in July. This is a great achievement considering he is only 16. Jack made his National League debut with IT Carlow earlier this season.



