

Guidance Counselling Newsletter Easter

Dear Parents/ Students,

I hope you are keeping safe and well during this difficult time. Below are a few resources to help and support you with researching options after the leaving cert- University/ College research through Careers Portal, Apprenticeships, Post Leaving Certificate Options (PLC), SUSI grant application and CAO process.

In addition, I offer some support to help with your mental health during these challenging times. Enjoy the Easter holidays and I look forward to seeing you when the school reopens once again.

Careers Portal

Careers Portal is an excellent Irish website with a variety of resources that can help a student decided a possible course or career that will interest them after graduating from secondary school. If you click on the link below it will bring you to the home page. The website is extremely user friendly to help find information quickly and research a course that you may be interested in studying.

There are two options to research a course. Firstly, you may already know a course that that you would like to study for example; nursing, engineer or business. Type the name of the course into the 'by course title or code' box then click 'search now' button. A list of the courses will appear, you are able to click on the title of each of the courses provided to obtain more information.

The layout of information is the same for all courses once you select one to view. You are given the opportunity to research under the following headings on the left hand side of the page:

course summary- giving a synopsis of the course (many have a Youtube video with a student explaining their experience of the course or a lecturer sharing information on what is taught on a course). The tab below, labelled **entry requirements**, makes a student aware of the grades and passes in subjects they need to achieve, subjects they need to have taken and a graph of points for each year. The **QQI Link tab** shows you various ways to entre the course via a PLC programme of study. The student tab helps link strengths that would be beneficial to completing the course. You may take this free test through the CPIP icon on the website and later compare it to these highlighted strengths. The **career progression tab**, informs students of possible careers once completing the course they are researching. Finally, the **further research tab** links students to Qualifax another website offering information to the course in question. Personally, I would use the link on course summary tab to link to the college website and their explanation of the course.

A second way to explore courses is to select a college from the scroll down option on the homepage and then click search now. Many students prefer this method of research as they select a college/university and view what courses are available to study at it. In Coláiste Rís, I find students tend to study in these five colleges after leaving- DKIT, DCU, Trinity, UCD and NUI Maynooth. Therefore, I would recommend they view the courses available in these colleges to explore if any of them are of interest. If these colleges do not interest them, they are free to browse other ones in the same manner.

Link to Careers Portal Homepage: <https://careersportal.ie/>

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is described as providing an individual with “The “Professional Ability to Act” by equipping the individual with the ability, knowledge and skill to work in an everchanging labour environment (2019, Apprenticeship Toolbox).

The two stage process to the apprenticeship ensures that this “Professional Ability to Act “is based on real work life practices and this is backed up by the theory behind this practice. These stages are referred to as on the job training or company training; this time is spent working and learning with your employer, the second stage is referred to as off the job training which is completed in Training Centers or Institute of Technologies. Within these stages are phases of learning, the duration of each phase depends on the apprenticeship being completed. Most apprenticeships take 4 years to complete while others can now be completed within 2 years. During the duration of the apprenticeship the apprentice has the opportunity to earn as they learn.

In addition to the traditional apprenticeships we are lucky to have in Ireland new sectors offering apprenticeships. Some apprenticeships that are currently popular include, the financial services sector, the insurance and accountancy sector, auctioneering, the hotel industry (duty manager remains popular here), logistics, the computer science industry, engineering and pharma sectors to name just a few. Both the private and public sectors have apprenticeship programs in place. Some apprenticeships offer opportunities to progress onto degree programs or higher level apprenticeship qualifications.

I am glad that this year students are showing a genuine interest in following the apprenticeship route. Many students and indeed the media often refer to an apprenticeship as a back -up plan in case the college place doesn't come through. Due to the opportunities offered through an apprenticeship they should not be seen as a backup plan but the plan. An apprenticeship should be pursued if this is what the student really wants to do and is based on informed decision. So some areas to be taken in to account when considering an apprenticeship;

- Prior knowledge of area of interest.
- Prior experience of area (we often suggest offering oneself for free work experience to gain this valuable experience and to prove oneself worthy of perspective employers investment in you).
- Is the perspective employer registered to provide such an apprenticeship? The employer must be approved by SOLAS in order to register an apprentice.
- Physical ability to do work particularly in the more physically demanding apprenticeships.
- Specific requirements or suggested experience pertinent to securing the apprenticeship.
- Availability and location of apprenticeship of interest including location of the Off the Job Training stage.
- Opportunity for employment after completion with said company or within sector of interest.
- Opportunity for progression to college or climbing the apprenticeship qualification ladder if desired.
- Reflection of genuine level of interest in this apprenticeship.
- Liberate yourself from what your friends are doing; (do it for you).
- **Be proactive** and seek out apprenticeship opportunities ; **review and register with apprenticeship.ie**

- **Preparation of Curriculum Vitae, application forms and practice of any tests pertinent to the specific apprenticeship recruitment process. This is important due to the competitive nature of the apprenticeship recruitment.**

Students must have the motivation to work hard during their apprenticeship. An apprenticeship should not be seen as an easy option. So, if you feel that an apprenticeship is the right choice for you don't hesitate to pursue it as a route into your desired career path. You will not only gain valuable work skills and the 'Professional Ability to Act' but also life skills and a whole new network of colleagues, peers and friends that will be part of your life journey.

Links below to Apprenticeship information:

https://careersportal.ie/careers/index.php?default=1&types_in=2&txt=&sec_inc=&userid=#results

<http://www.apprenticeship.ie/en/SitePages/Home.aspx>

<https://careersportal.ie/apprenticeships/>

<https://www.rstc.ie/>

Post Leaving Certificate Course (PLC)

PLC options are becoming more popular after the leaving cert for several reasons. These courses often give students the chance to taste a degree programme for a year before committing to it fully for a number of years after through a level 7 or 8 degree. It gives the student a chance to become more aware should they continue academically and financially to pursue a degree programme at a university/ college.

PLC options also offer students the opportunity to find employment directly after completing it for example as nurse's assistants, culinary arts, hairdressing, make up artistry, etc.

Finally, PLC courses often link students to third levels if they meet the standards within their college assessments. This takes much stress off students who find it increasingly difficult to gain a course place through the CAO points allocation from Leaving cert exams.

Below are the two most popular PLC colleges Coláiste Rís students apply for:

O Fiaich Institute Dundalk: <https://www.ofi.ie/>

Drogheda Institute of Further Education: <https://dife.ie/>

Video explaining benefits of PLC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2ewkThnhNQ>

CAO

Please view the video below to become aware of the CAO application process and how courses are offered to students. More information can be found in your CAO booklet shared at the Sixth Year Options Night. Alternatively, visit cao.ie for guidelines.

Video explaining CAO system: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOibQyFwrM>

SUSI- Financial Grant

SUSI will open Thursday 23rd April for students enrolling for studies in 2020/21. The priority deadline is **9th July**. Visit the website to become aware of the application process and if you are deemed suitable by the Eligibility Reckoner tab.

Positive Mental Health

COPING WITH COVID-19

With coronavirus (COVID-19) dominating all the news headlines and our social media feeds, it is hard not to get caught up in all the hype, hysteria, worry and concern. At times like this it is vital to remember that taking care of your mental health is as important as looking after your physical health. Good mental health and positive wellbeing can help you to cope better with the COVID-19 threat and the uncertainty it's creating both at home and abroad. Fear not, here are some tips that may help you look after your mental health during these uncertain times:

1. Stay positive and focus on the positive things in your life i.e. getting to spend time with the people you love most in the world.
2. Maintain your daily routine as much as possible i.e. eating healthy meals, getting enough sleep and doing things that you enjoy.
3. Prioritise your wellbeing and positive mental health by engaging in activities i.e. walking/hiking, yoga and meditating.
4. Focus on things you can control i.e. good hygiene, instead of things you can't i.e. stopping the virus.
5. Set boundaries on how much news you read, watch or listen to.
6. Avoid speculation and sensationalising.
7. Ensure your information is from a reliable, accurate and legitimate source.
8. Reach out to others and support people around you while also keeping in touch with your friends and family.
9. Recognise your feelings i.e. feeling overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or upset. These are normal feelings in these uncertain times.
10. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling i.e. writing down your feelings in a journal, talking to others, doing something creative, or practising meditation.

In addition, below are a number of free resources/ articles available to help with stress and staying at home guidelines. Click below to help you find ones that may support you:

Free Online Resources- books, meditations, documentaries etc:

<https://covid19.shanehastings.eu/giveback/>

5 Actions of Wellbeing during these tough times: https://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/five-ways-tough-times/?utm_source=Website+sign+ups&utm_campaign=9438525629-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_27_05_12&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a456043528-9438525629-560682513

Advice for Parents: <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/parenting/leaving-cert-parents-forget-about-points-and-keep-focus-on-daily-tasks-1.4210053?mode=amp>



Kind Regards,

James Mc Nicholas.

Guidance Counsellor