

December 15<sup>th</sup> 2020

Dear parents/guardians,

We are writing to you with some important reminders for sixth year students as they begin the CAO and PLC application process for 2021.

The CAO application process can be daunting, especially for those of you who are experiencing it for the first time so we would advise you to familiarise yourself with the process as much as possible. The CAO website is also an excellent resource with a guide for parents, resources for students and lots of easy to follow presentations and videos which take you through the application process step by step. Your son also has a CAO book with a list of courses and information which is also a very useful and handy resource.

For those of you who have a son applying for DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) or HEAR (Higher Education Access Route) we would also strongly advise you to read all the associated literature which was distributed to students during the year and is also available on the CAO website. In particular, we would like to highlight the deadlines for this process which must be strictly adhered to. This application process takes longer as it requires supplementary information for each student. For DARE this includes a report or form from the relevant psychologist, medical consultant or other relevant professional (in relation to the disability under which they are applying). As each disability requires a different type of report you need to check the guidelines to ensure your son has the report required and if specified, that it is up to date. For HEAR, the supplementary information required includes financial documents in relation to personal finances which can often take time to acquire from the relevant institutions (Social Welfare Office, HSE etc.). It is the student's responsibility to provide these reports with their CAO application and failure to comply with deadlines or not having the right documentation will result in students not being offered places through these schemes. There is an advice clinic taking place online this year on Saturday January 9<sup>th</sup> 2021 for these schemes with representatives from the Access offices to answer any questions you may have and to offer further support with applications if required.

The CAO opened for applications on November 5<sup>th</sup> 2020 so we have advised students to apply early to avail of the early application discount which applies up to January 20<sup>th</sup> 2021. We would suggest that students sit down with you during the Christmas holidays and discuss their applications and choice of courses and apply well in advance of this deadline. This allows them to concentrate on their studies, project work and orals that begin shortly after Christmas and

alleviates some of the pressure associated with this time of year. We will continue to work on the CAO in career class in the New Year and once students have made the initial application they can continue to use the change of mind facility (for courses that are not restricted) on the CAO website until July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.

For students who are applying to PLC colleges or apprenticeships, this process is also beginning, with several colleges already accepting applications. As each college has a different application process and deadline it is your sons' responsibility to ensure they are applying on time for the courses in which they are interested and doing any preparation work involved.

The final reminder concerns students who have an official exemption from either Irish or a Third Language and who are applying to courses for which these are a requirement. They must apply to the NUI office in Merrion Square for an exemption from the entry requirements for NUI colleges. For non NUI colleges the students must apply to the college individually by downloading and completing the relevant information and forms on each college website or by contacting the admission's office there. We will support students with their applications however as with all other applications it is the students' responsibility to ensure these forms are completed and posted so that the colleges are notified in advance of the CAO offer of place that your son is exempt from this entry requirement.

This and all other relevant information is being disseminated to students on a regular basis both individually and in their weekly career class and we are supporting the students with all of their applications and queries. However, as much of this work needs to be done at home with your input and support we hope this information highlights some of the key areas for you. It is unfortunate that we have not had the opportunity to meet with you this year and we have had to postpone our CAO night and our Mock Interviews which is always a highlight in the Sixth Year calendar. However you can access all of the relevant information online and through your son's Careers Portal account which is an invaluable resource. We are also on hand to answer any questions you may have so please do not hesitate to contact us at the school anytime throughout the year. We will look forward to seeing you at a future date, in the meantime take care.

Yours faithfully,

Ms B. Kearns

Ms M. Harris

Ms D. Dolan

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Principal

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Guidance Counsellor

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Guidance Counsellor