

December 1st, 2023

Dear parents/guardians,

We are writing to you with some very important reminders for sixth year students as they begin the CAO, PLC and other application processes for 2024.

CAO

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 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. The CAO handbook which all candidates are obliged to read is also on their website in both PDF and interactive format for ease of access.

The CAO opened for applications on November 6th, 2023 and we have advised students to apply early to avail of the early application discount which applies up to January 20th 2024. 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 1st, 2024.

DARE/HEAR

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 13th, 2024 for these schemes with representatives from the College Access offices to answer any questions you may have and to offer further support with applications if required. Further details on www.accesscollege.ie

For students who are applying to PLC colleges or apprenticeships, this process is also beginning, with several colleges and employers already accepting applications. This year, students can also apply for PLC Colleges through the new online portal on the CAO website. As each college has different entry requirements it is again your sons' responsibility to ensure they are applying on time for the courses in which they are interested and doing any preparation work involved.

Exemptions

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 sent to the relevant bodies so that the colleges are notified in advance of the CAO offer of place that your son is exempt from this entry requirement.

Queries

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. Our parent/ teacher meeting for Sixth Year students is on December 6th, however we appreciate it may take longer than the time allocated to discuss any queries or any questions you may have regarding your son on the day so as always, you can contact us at any time throughout the year by phoning the school and leaving a message on the Guidance and Counselling office extension. Before you do so it would be very helpful for you to access your son's Careers Portal account with him to see the work he is doing and this also allows you to access information on all applications, colleges, jobs, careers etc.

Thank you for your continued support for us here at the school,

Yours faithfully,

Mr M. Kerins

Ms D. Dolan

Ms M. Harris

Deputy Principal

Guidance Counsellor

Guidance Counsellor