



# COLÁISTE BRÍDE



## **Coláiste Bríde Annual Report 2020 – 2021**

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## Introduction

This Annual Report provides a summary of the operation of Coláiste Bríde throughout the school year 2020/2021.

Coláiste Bríde is a fantastic school founded by the Sisters of Mercy. We are fortunate to have an extremely dedicated and committed staff and a wonderful student body and acknowledge the contribution of each member of our school community in maintaining consistently high standards. Coláiste Bríde is a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School for girls under the trusteeship of CEIST, with an enrolment of 741 students in the school year 2020/2021. We operate an open enrolment system with the vast majority of students coming from the primary schools of Enniscorthy and the surrounding hinterlands. Coláiste Bríde is a school with an established tradition of excellence in all aspects of curricular and co-curricular performance. We consistently perform above the national average in state exams.

We believe that Coláiste Bríde is more than a school. It is a community of people, working together to provide all of our students with an education that prepares them for success today and into their future. Success is measured by the extent to which, each individual realises her full human potential, as a person made in the image and likeness of Christ. Throughout the year, we promoted academic excellence and the broad dimensions of education. We provided opportunities for students to think creatively, to work collaboratively and to develop spiritually. We endeavoured to ensure that students could foster their own human qualities, their social and emotional skills, and to enable them to live happy and healthy lives while making a positive contribution to society.

However, the school year 2020/2021 will be remembered for the closure in January 2021 due to Covid-19. During the closure Coláiste Bríde's teachers demonstrated great commitment and dedication to their students. Their response to the challenges of remote learning epitomised the ethos of our school. An account of the school's response to the closure can be found on page 20.

## Mission & Vision



## Mission Statement

We believe in the value of the Catholic School and in it seek to integrate growth in Christ with the cultural enrichment acquired through human knowledge and skills. Our response requires deep commitment and dedication to the implementation of our mission statement.

"We are working to promote a secure and caring community environment, where respect, responsibility and Christian commitment grow; drawing forth the positive potential of each individual."

## Aim of Our School

To maintain a caring, stable environment where each student feels safe and secure.

To foster in each child a sense of respect and tolerance for herself, for others and for the wider community.

To encourage each student to take responsibility for herself, her learning and her property, and to instil in her an overall sense of honesty, loyalty and integrity.

To develop in each pupil her diverse talents and potential: Spiritual, Academic, Social, Physical, Creative and Emotional.

To recognise and reward effort and achievement, thus promoting a true sense of confidence and well-being.

## CEIST Charter



Senior management made every effort in 2020/2021, to ensure that all decisions, policies and practices in Coláiste Bríde were guided by the vision and values of Catherine McCauley, the Mercy Philosophy of Education, the teaching of the Catholic Church and the core values in the CEIST Charter.

## School Context



## Enrolment

741 students were enrolled in September 2020, this was an increase from 719 students in September 2019. The enrolment profile for each year group was as follows;

1 <sup>st</sup> Year	141
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	135
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	133
Transition Year	92
5 <sup>th</sup> Year	135
6 <sup>th</sup> Year	105

Our closing date for enrolment in First Year 2020/2021 was in December. There were 177 applications for the 144 places available. Following the allocation to students under criteria's 1, 2 and 3 of our Admission Policy a draw was held to allocate the remaining places to students in our catchment area and a further draw was held to allocate places on a waiting list. The



large numbers of applicants to the school is a testament to how well thought of Coláiste Bríde is by students and parents in the hinterland of Enniscorthy.

## **Allocation**

The teacher allocation for 2020/2021 was 49.5. In August 2020 five teachers were granted a Contract of Indefinite Duration. Due to the increase in enrolment in recent years a second Deputy Principal was appointed in July 2020.

## **School Grounds, Building & Facilities**

### **Additional Accommodation**

During the school year 2020/2021 the school's additional accommodation project was progressed by the completion of a large number of site surveys and the development of a Stage 1 Report. The Stage 1 report, containing three possible designs and costings, was submitted to the Department of Education building and planning unit in June 2020.

### **Reopening of School September 2020**

To allow Coláiste Bríde reopen safely for all students and teachers a lot of work was undertaken prior to the start of the school year.

All extra furniture was removed from classroom to allow for maximum social distancing. We converted a number of large spaces in the school into classrooms including the Activity Room and Lunch Hall. A sound proof partition was installed in the Activity Room to divide it into two spaces.

Hot water and new hand dryers were installed in all student toilet blocks. Hand sanitisers were installed at each entrance to the school, outside each room and at intervals around the school. Construction work took place to widen the corridor at the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year toilet block to ease congestion on the corridor at this point.





Signage was installed throughout the school and around the school grounds to highlight the measures that help to prevent the spread of the virus.

A new timetable was constructed to maximise social distancing. The new timetable involved reducing the size of junior classes so that they could be accommodated safely with the guidelines produced by the Department of Education. The new timetable also included staggered breaks and lunch times to reduce congestion on the corridor.

The new timetable involved rooming students in base rooms with teachers moving from room to room.

## **ICT Infrastructure**

All teachers were offered school devices during the first Covid-19 school closure, some teachers had declined the offer, however in September 2020 all teachers were provided with a school device.

A class set of devices and devices for EAL students were also purchased. These devices were loaned to students during the school closure.

## **Infrastructure Improvement Projects**

The school has engaged the services of Verde to replace all lights in the school with low energy LED builds. This environmental and energy saving project will be completed during the summer.

During the year the school made an application to Wexford County Council for planning permission for the development of a synthetic playing surface and ball wall to replace the basketball courts. Following the granting of permission, the school engaged in a tendering process for the installation of the project in 2020/2021.

The school engaged in a tendering process to replace all data projectors with ultra-short throw projectors with a view to installing the new infrastructure in the summer of 2020.

A tendering process also took place for the replacement of all school lockers with new bigger lockers during the summer of 2020.



## Management Structures

### Senior Management Team

The Senior Management team of the school consists of Principal Kiera O'Sullivan and Deputy Principals Rose McConville and Niall Moynihan.

### Board of Management

In October 2020 the three year term of our Board of Management came to an end and a new Board of Management was appointed.

The 2020/2021 Board members were;

- **Chairperson:** Colm O'Tiarnaigh
- **Trustee Nominees:** Emmet Boyne, Angela Long and Father Paddy Banville.
- **Teacher Nominees:** Eleanor Harpur and Louise Murphy
- **Parents' Nominees:** Jean Mernagh and Dervla Tierney

The BOM met six times from October 2020 to June 2021. The BOM acted in accordance with the Articles of Management for Voluntary Secondary Schools, the direction of the Trustees, CEIST and the guidance provided by the JMB.

### Middle Management Team

For the 2020/2021 school year there was an allocation of seven Assistant Principal I Posts of Responsibility.

The school has also been allocated one post for Programme Coordinator at AP I level.

There are 10 Assistant Principal II level posts.

The Post of Responsibility Schedule for the 2020/2021 was as follows:



**Assistant Principals I:**

- 1st Yr. Year Head & Uniform & Home School link
- 2nd Yr. Year Head & Uniform & Home School link
- 3rd Yr. Year Head & Uniform & Home School link
- 5th Yr. Year Head & Uniform & Home School link
- 6th Yr. Year Head & Uniform & Home School link
- School Development Planning/School Self Evaluation /Policy Convenor
- Teaching & Learning, Digital Learning

**Assistant Principals II:**

- Book Rental & Book Lists
- Awards Night & Open Night & Public Relations
- Wellbeing Coordinator
- Junior & Leaving Cert Exam Secretary
- House Exams
- 1<sup>st</sup> Yr. Assistant Year Head & Classroom Clean-up
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Yr. Assistant Year Head & Fundraising
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Yr. Assistant Year Head & Environment
- 5<sup>th</sup> Yr. Assistant Year Head & Literacy & Numeracy
- 6<sup>th</sup> Yr. Assistant Year Head & Fire Drill

## **Policies & Practices**

### **Policies**

Policy review and development was on the Agenda for each BOM meeting. The following policies were reviewed and ratified by the BOM in 2020/2021;

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Review
- Critical Incident Policy
- Digital Learning Policy



## Health & Safety

The following Health and Safety activities were conducted during the year:

- Fire Drills were conducted.
- Fire Exits were regularly checked.
- Emergency lighting was checked.
- Pre-opening and closing supervision is provided.
- Break-time and lunchtime supervision is provided.

The school's Health and Safety Statement was updated in August 2020 to include risks assessments associated with Covid-19.

## Child Protection & Vetting

The BOM & Senior Management adhered to all guidelines & regulations with regard to Child Protection & Vetting. Child Protection/Bullying was on the Agenda for each BOM Meeting & the Principal reported on any Child Protection concerns that arose. A Child Protection Oversight Report was made at each Board meeting. A review of the Child Safeguarding Statement took place using the Department of Education Review Checklist. Both Parents and Staff were notified that the review took place.

During 2020/2021 the following was implemented;

- Vetting of new staff members.
- Vetting of all visitors to the school who engage with students.
- Child protection questions were asked of candidates in all interviews.
- The BOM completed its mandatory Annual Review of Child Protection Procedures.
- The BOM ratified the Child Safeguarding Statement.

## Management Meetings

Each morning the senior management team met to review and plan.

Senior management held weekly meetings with the Care Team to support & develop practice.



Senior management also held weekly meetings with the school's Year Heads.

## **Finance**

### **School Accounts**

The BOM has a Finance Subcommittee and at each Board of Management meeting Dervla Tierney makes a report to the Board on behalf of the Finance Subcommittee.

The school accounts were forwarded to the auditors at the end of the financial year.

The BOM was satisfied that the school was in a financially sound position and a clear budgeting plan was in place.

### **Trustee Directives**

Coláiste Bríde submitted its budget online to CEIST.

The school accounts were also submitted online to CEIST and the FSSU.

A reporting template for the school to advise CEIST on the accounts is completed following each meeting of the Finance Subcommittee.

## **Links with Community**

### **Parents' Council**

The Parents' Council AGM was held at the beginning of every school year. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 the council did not meet as regularly during the year as they would usually have done.



## Parent Support

Each school year a number of information talks take place to support parents. Due to the Covid-19 our Transition Year Information, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Subject Choice, 5<sup>th</sup> Year Subject Choice and Incoming First Year parents' Talk all took place online through the Zoom platform.

## School Newsletter

A Digital Newsletter was published during the school year. The newsletter was VSware mailed to all parents, emailed to those who have subscribed for it and is also published on the school's Twitter feed and website <http://www.colaiستebride.ie/newsletter.html>.

## Open Night

Our Open Evening is one of the highlights in our school calendar, it is an occasion in which our students get to showcase their talents and skills and to show to our visitors exactly what our school is all about. Our students, whether as tour guides or demonstrating in a classroom, are always wonderful ambassadors for our school and they are what makes our school so special. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 it was not possible to host an Open Night in the school.

We instead created a Virtual Open Night to give incoming students a taste of life in Coláiste Bríde. The video was published for parents to access from our website at <https://www.colaiستebride.ie/admissions.html>.

## Parish

Father Paddy Banville, our school chaplain, was always available to the Senior Management team and the general school community throughout the year. He gave advice, visited the school and celebrated at each Liturgy.

## Social Awareness

In keeping with our Mercy ethos and the CEIST core value of being Just and Responsible our students and teachers conduct several fundraisers throughout the school year for various charities and causes.

## Faith Formation



## Religious Education

All students had Religious Education every week in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Episcopal Conference. Religious Education was timetabled for three classes per week for all year groups. All teachers who taught Religious Education in 2020/2021 were qualified to do so.

Faith formation was promoted through the following:

- Morning Prayer
- Opening of Year/Mercy Day Mass
- Advent
- Christmas Carol Service
- St. Brigid's Day





- Feast of St Blaise
- Ash Wednesday
- Retreats for all Year Groups
- Pope John Paul II Award
- Catholic Schools Week
- Fundraising for Charities

### **Links with CEIST & Sisters of Mercy**

CEIST kept in regular contact with the school through;

- Regular correspondence with Mr Gerard Watchorn
- Forwarding the minutes of BOM meetings to CEIST
- Emails from CEIST Office
- Both the Principal and Deputy Principal attended Regional Network Meetings

The Sisters of Mercy keep in regular contact through;

- Correspondence & invitations from the congregation
- Attendance by members of the congregation at school liturgical events





## **COVID-19 School Closure**

In January 2020 it was announced that all schools were to remain closed after the Christmas break. Although this brought many challenges, our school, teachers and students alike, responded incredibly to the challenges of remote teaching and learning. Throughout the school closure we surveyed students, parents and teachers a number of times and adapted our approach to remote learning to respond to the feedback from our stakeholders.

At an early stage in the closure teachers we contacted Sixth Year, Third Year, Fifth Year, Second Year And First Year parents in that order and arranged for school devices to be couriered to those students who required them. Almost sixty school devices were delivered to students to allow them to engage in remote learning during this period.

Although remote learning was an extremely challenging time for all, both students and teachers worked extremely hard to meet those challenges. The work that our Digital Leaders had undertaken in providing training to teachers in Office 365 had laid a very solid foundation and had allowed us to adapt to remote learning very quickly.

Although remote learning was not without difficulty and issues such as illness, lack of adequate technology and internet negatively impacted on many students, we received a lot of positive feedback from parents for the approach that we took.



## Coláiste Bríde Strategic Plan

In the 2020/2021 academic year we developed a strategic improvement plan for Coláiste Bríde. The purpose was to create a plan would provide clear direction for the management, the staff and other stakeholders as to the agreed priorities for the school over the next three years. The project began with an initial meeting with the Principal and Deputy Principals to discuss and develop a project plan that would assist in delivering the school's strategic improvement plan. Central to this was the creation of a Steering Group that was representative of the stakeholder groups. The formation of a steering group consisted of representatives of the Parents Council, staff, County Council, Board of Management, past and present pupils, a 3rd level academic institution and members of the school's senior management team

The steering group was formed to act as an advisory group for the process and encouraged the participation of stakeholders throughout the project. A workshop was held with the group to gather their aspirations for the future of Coláiste Bríde and identify what they wanted to see in place in 2024.

The steering group comprised of the following (in alphabetical order):

- Tom Banville (Senior Executive Officer in Planning at Wexford County Council)
- Dr. Michelle Millar (Past Pupil, Dean of Students in NUI Galway)
- Rose McConville (Deputy Principal)
- Niall Moynihan (Deputy Principal)
- Beth Murphy (Past Pupil Graduated in 2019)
- Louise Murphy (Teacher Representative on the BOM, SEN Coordinator, Assistant Principal 1)
- Precious Obasohan (Sixth Year Student 2020/2021 and Chief Head Girl)
- Maurice O'Mahony (Pinta Facilitator)
- Colm O'Tiarnaigh (Chairperson of the Board of Management)
- Kiera O'Sullivan (Principal)
- Aidan Roche (Strategic Plan Post Holder, Assistant Principal 1)
- Dervla Tierney (Past Pupil, Parent Representative on the Board of Management)



The steering group agreed on the stakeholders to engage with, the method of engagement and the timings of the consultations. They also completed an exercise of identifying and agreeing on potential key areas of focus (Pillars) for the school.

The next phase of the process was a facilitated workshop with the teaching staff. They identified the key areas of focus for the school for the next three years. They focused on the opportunities in the school to facilitate growth, educational excellence and increased student satisfaction. This yielded a significant number of ideas that are contained in the plan. Consultation also took place with the school's administration team, SNA staff and caretaking staff to capture their thoughts and opinions on their preferred future for the school. All staff were invited to participate in individual online surveys in order to include any additional ideas or expand on any captured ones.

In addition, one to one meetings were held with the school's senior management team. Group meetings were facilitated with the school's post-holders and the Board of Management. Online surveys were again created for all parties.

Consultation took place with a cross section of students from Junior Cycle and Senior Cycle in two separate sessions, using the workshop format. All Coláiste Bríde students were given the opportunity to participate in an extensive online survey. They were asked about their aspirations and what they believed to be the future requirements for the school. Past pupils participated in an online survey that resulted in some key learnings being captured.

The next phase of the consultation was to invite parents and community members to participate in a workshop to share their opinions and ideas on the future of the school. A wide range of areas were discussed at the workshop and are included later in the plan. An online survey was also conducted with parents and other community members. An online survey was sent to our local feeder Primary schools to get their input to the process. It was a very productive survey with some excellent insights, particularly in relation to the transition process from primary to secondary school and how the communication process and collaboration between the primary schools and Coláiste Bríde can be enhanced and improved. Additional historic surveys were also included in the outputs of the consultation process.

A comprehensive document containing a collation of all inputs received from the extensive consultation process that represented the views of all stakeholders.

The information was categorised in the identified key areas of focus as follows:



The final phase of the process was to translate the aspirations of all stakeholders into an achievable set of projects and initiatives that would enable the plan to become a reality.

The school's management team worked over a period of weeks to create a "first pass" of the prioritised projects by pillar and this formed the basis for the steering group meeting and discussion. To that end the steering group worked through the entire project list in an online meeting. Subsequent reviews of documents were completed via email which resulted in a detailed plan for the three years, with a particular emphasis on Year 1.

It is envisaged that prior to the completion of each school year, the management and staff will jointly review progress against action items contained in the plan and adjust, modify, or adapt the plan as appropriate.

## Quality in Teaching & Learning

### School Self Evaluation

During the academic year 2020/21 we continued to work on the targets and actions of our last improvement plan. Due to the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we did not introduce any new targets, focusing instead on embedding the outcomes of our previous actions. The outcomes of our previous improvement plan have included the following:

- We developed our teaching with Learning Intentions & Success Criteria.
- Teachers further developed their collective and collaborative practice through Peer Observation and the use of Office 365 to facilitate both collaborative planning and professional dialogue.
- We expanded the use of Office 365 with students and staff.



This year's key focus was to develop teaching methodologies and active learning strategies suitable for use in a socially distanced classroom setting. Staff and students were supported during the period of remote learning.

We also centred on developing teachers' collective practice through expanding the use of Office 365 to support remote Teaching and Learning as well as facilitating both collaborative planning and professional dialogue. Collaboration within subject departments for planning, in particular planning for remote Teaching and Learning, also continued. There was an emphasis on designing and sharing of resources and methodologies that would be suitable for use in an online/virtual learning environment.

Our actions involved the following:

- Dedicated Subject Department meetings as part of Croke Park hours.
- CPD events were organised, including whole staff CPD days & individual subject cluster meetings.
- The development of remote Teaching & Learning methodologies were discussed at staff and subject department meetings.
- Our Digital Leaders provided ongoing CPD in Office 365, concentrating on OneNote and Teams (Setting up Class Meetings and Assignments) and online subject department collaboration.
- All Junior Cycle students were taught a module of IT to include Office 365 in Wellbeing.
- All TY students were taught a module on Office 365.

Additionally, all teaching staff were provided with dedicated one-to-one support and CPD on IT and Office 365, facilitated by our Digital Leaders. In August 2020 our Digital Leaders provided bespoke digital workshops, to develop teachers' technical skills in the event that a move to remote learning was necessary. From September 2020 we also concentrated on preparing a series digital learning screencasts and support documents to share with teachers that would aid online learning

## Digital Learning Plan

Working with our school's overall Digital Strategy, in 2020/21 we continued to embed and enhance the digital skills of our staff and students that had been developed in previous years.



The move to Remote Teaching in January 2020 necessitated an unprecedented advancement of digital technical skills of both staff and students. This involved the expansion of our Digital Learning Plan but also enabled us to move further towards realising our digital learning vision: ***Where all students and teachers would become capable and confident in the use of digital technologies to support teaching and learning.***

In preparing our application as a pilot school for the European Digital Schools Award, we utilised the SELFIE Self Evaluation tool on the Digital Schools website to survey our students and teachers. This provided us with an authentic perspective on how technology was being used in the school and the direction we needed to follow. In the light of an analysis of the evidence gathered we decided that our focus for 2020/21 should be encouraging our Digital Learning teams to support staff and student digital learning development - Staff Digital Leaders for staff development and Student Digital Leaders for student digital learning.

In recognition of our work with our Student Leadership teams, and specifically our Student Digital Leaders, we were invited to participate in the European Commission - Joint Research Centre webinar '**Take action with SELFIE - How can your school develop a digital strategy?**'. Our students spoke at the webinar, reflected on their role in developing the school's strategy and advised European school leaders how to develop the role of student voice in digital learning.

Our Digital Learning staff team, a group of highly competent teachers in digital technologies, led our staff training through demonstrating best practice and sharing their expertise. Our Digital Leaders concentrated this year on creating screencasts and digital content to support online learning. During the lockdown period from January 2020 until April 2020 Digital Leaders offered one-to-one support to assist teachers in teaching remotely. Weekly technical support meetings were held virtually to trouble shoot any technical issues that arose.

Our Student Digital Leaders also worked with teachers and students, offering digital support, advice and assistance to the general student body as well as raising awareness of Internet Safety. They in turn created a series of videos on some of the common areas of technical difficulty for their fellow students.

We engaged in several actions throughout the year to meet our Digital Learning targets:

- Our Digital Leaders Team provided training workshops in various Office 365 tools- including Teams, OneNote, and advancing with OneNote.
- All teachers were provided with Surface Pros for Teaching and Learning purposes.
- Staff were given opportunities to engage in CPD (both in-house and with outside agencies) to enhance their IT skills or teaching practices.
- All Junior Cycle and TY students received dedicated Office 365 training through their Wellbeing and Computer Literacy classes.
- Our student Digital Mentors completed the Schools Digital Champions programme.
- Two student Digital Mentors represented the school as Safer Internet Day Ambassadors on a national forum.
- Student learning was supported, enhanced, and reinforced through the meaningful use of Office 365, school iPads, laptops and devices. Extra devices were purchased and made available to students during the period of lockdown from January 2021 until April 2021.

Our overall Digital Learning aim has always been to Increase whole school engagement with Digital Technology to enhance teaching and learning, create methodologies and to plan collaboratively. In spite of the disruption to learning during the academic



year 2020/21 our collective progress in the area of Digital Technology has greatly advanced. We will continue to work towards future proofing our classrooms, to ensure our students receive the highest standard of teaching and we remain committed to staying abreast with the latest educational technological advances.

Our 2020/2021 Digital Learning Plan is available to view on our website.



## Junior Cycle

The 2020/2021 school year saw further implementation of the new Junior Cycle. During the school year Coláiste Bríde closed to facilitate two Junior Cycle training days for teachers, a whole staff workshop on Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Reporting (TLAR) and a further round of subject cluster days.

## Droichead

Droichead, (the Irish word for bridge), is the National Induction Programme for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The programme includes both school-based and additional professional learning activities to address the needs of NQTs as they begin their careers in teaching. One of our school's teachers, Niamh Duggan, is a Droichead associate.

## Broad Dimension of Education

In Coláiste Bríde we have always offered a very wide range of activities outside the classroom in to promote the holistic development of the students. The breadth of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities was reported to the BOM in each Principal's Report. Unfortunately, due to the health and safety advice from the Department of Education we were unable to offer the range of activities that we would have done.





## Sport

As Coláiste Bríde is committed to the holistic development of each student we positively support and actively encourage the provision of sporting activities outside the classroom. Sporting extracurricular activities provide fun, enjoyment and fulfilment for those who take part in them. They offer an outlet for energies and talents not always recognised in the classroom. In particular students develop teamwork, leadership and social skills. We believe that sport is a valuable aspect of the learning process and contributes to the development of rounded individuals.

### **“I am Worth it” Week & Healthy Active Week**

Although well-being is at the core of all that we do in Coláiste Bríde, each year we have two distinct weeks that are dedicated to promoting students’ well-being. In December 2019 we held our annual “I am Worth it” positive mental health week. The week is a promotion of mental well-being and a celebration of the “I am Worth it” booklet and website which our Student Council developed in 2016. During the week a range of activities and events took place including talks, workshops and lunchtime activities.

Due to the school closure unfortunately, we were unable to hold our annual Healthy Active week.

## Stand Up Week

In November 2019 we held our first Stand Up Awareness Week celebration. While we always strive to be an inclusive school, our Stand Up Awareness Week was an opportunity for our whole school community to say that we are joining together to take a collective stand against homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying. This very successful week was organised by a student committee with lots of whole school activities taking place and was fully engaged in by all staff and students. The climax of the week was our rainbow colours day on the Friday, a day in which each year group wore a different colour of the pride flag.



## Student Council

Student Council elections take place at the end of each school year in preparation for the next academic term. A one-day training course took place in October facilitated by the Student Council Liaison Teachers Nicholas Cullen and Stephen Barry. Meetings were held at least twice monthly. In Coláiste Bríde all members of the school community are supported and encouraged to make meaningful contributions to decision-making. A key part of this is our Student Council which is a vital representative structure for students, through which they can

become involved in the affairs of the school, working in partnership with school management, staff and parents for the benefit of the school and the students. During the 2019/2020 school year our student council were involved in the development of our strategic plan.



## Student Supports

### Pastoral Care

Coláiste Bríde is committed to the ongoing development of the Pastoral Care of all students in the school. Pastoral Care integrates the academic, social, personal and religious dimensions of the school's educational endeavours. Our Pastoral Care supports help to provide an orderly atmosphere and firm framework which will allow the students to get maximum benefit from their schooling and prepare them realistically for life as adults.

We plan for this caring approach by assigning to each junior class a Year Head, Assistant Year Head and Class Tutor.

The Year Heads provide the administrative support necessary to ensure that the pastoral care structure functions effectively. They co-ordinate the caring structure by meeting subject and class teachers regularly to discuss and evaluate students' development. They meet individual students and classes regularly and encourages a high standard of work and behaviour.

The Assistant Year Head supports students by tracking academic progress and monitoring attendance. This information is used to ensure that all students reach their academic potential.

The Class Tutor provides a supportive caring role to students. They support their students' wellbeing in weekly Pastoral Care classes. They monitor the educational progress of each



student by checking their journals regularly. The Class Tutor motivates their class to achieve their highest possible standards

## **Special Educational Needs**

Our Special Educational Needs team oversees the provision of the best possible planning, care and resource provision for students with special needs.

The SEN team consists of

- Louise Murphy (SEN Coordinator)
- Niamh Duggan (Learning Support Coordinator)
- Orla Foley (SEN Teacher)
- Specialist teachers with resource hours
- Special Needs Assistants
- Classroom teachers
- Guidance Counsellor
- Year Heads
- Senior School Management

## **Learning Support**

Key aspects of the provision of Learning Support are summarised below;

The Total Special Education Teaching Allocation for 2020/2021 was 134.63 hours.

Following an appeal to the Department of Education the school was granted .64 hours for teaching EAL/English as an Additional Language students.

The school was also allocated 3.5 SNAs for the school year 2020/2021.

Weekly meetings take place for the Core Team of Learning Support Teachers.

## **Guidance and Counselling**

The Guidance and Counselling service in the school is concerned with the personal and educational development of students. The service of our counsellor, Aisling McDonald, is available to assist students in making career choices and to provide individual counselling.



Pupils may go to the counsellor to request an appointment.

Management have continued to support the guidance provision in the school by the provision of a greater number of hours to guidance than allocated.

Under the guidance of Aisling McDonald the school is reviewing and updating our whole school guidance plan.

### **National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy**

In 2020/2021 we continued our involvement in the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NITRIS). This pilot programme aims to improve participation and educational outcomes for Travellers and Roma in four districts, one of which is Enniscorthy. Our engagement in the programme has resulted in the school being supported by a home school liaison officer, social worker and both a Roma and Traveller educational support worker.

### **Student Voice**

The Sixth Year Head Girls, the Student Council and the Meitheal team provided excellent support for students throughout the school year.

Both the Head Girls and the Student Council under the guidance of Stephen Barry and Nicholas Cullen provide a link with school management as the voice of the general student body.

In 2020/2021 due to our Covid-19 safety procedures and the requirement to reduce interactions across year groups the Meitheal programme did not take place.