Parent News

Newsletter of Coolmine Community School Parents' Association

December 2020

Merry Christmas from our Principal

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2020 has turned out to be a year of incredible challenges. Nobody could have predicted the changes to our daily lives, the uncertainty about the future and the constant need to adapt that we have experienced with this pandemic. School-wise we experienced learning and teaching online initially. Over the summer the challenge was to reopen the school safely and move to a blended learning experience. Since September, the focus has been to provide a meaningful education in an environment that maintains all the safety protocols – with over 1100 people in the building! The support and understanding of parents throughout this process and the practical support of the Parents Association Executive has made this possible. Parents' appreciation of our efforts, offered us encouragement and affirmation for which we are grateful. We have all been sustained by the incredible kindness of others and encouraged by the resilience of our young people. This was confirmed by a visit from a DES Inspector last week, where staff and students alike were affirmed for our Safe Provision of Schooling.

In these dark and short days of December, we are now experiencing the prospect of hope with a vaccination ready for use. Hopefully, 2021 will offer relief from uncertainty and provide us with a pathway through this pandemic.

As we look forward to Christmas in Coolmine we are doing our best to offer Christmas cheer. Our school is lit up with lights on each corridor, our Christmas trees are up and we are finding meaningful ways to support those in need at this time.

As the year draws to an end, I find myself feeling grateful for parents who have been wise and supportive in dealing with the challenges of these months. I find myself admiring those parents who continue to look for support when they need it and who again and again demonstrate their commitment to their family. I find myself proud of our Staff and Students who showed great resilience, kindness and dignity in the middle of uncertainty.



With these thoughts, I have confidence that we have the recipe to succeed together. Please know that we are here to offer support in any way we can. May I wish all families in our school community a restful and happy Christmas and a healthy and bright New Year.

Patricia Mc Phillips

Seasons Greetings from your PA

The recent pandemic has brought us all closer together (while staying 2 metres apart!!) with a common goal to stay safe and well. To stay safe we must look out for each other and remember that without each other we are alone. Community spirit is our power. We work together to get our goals complete, we stand together for our beliefs, we listen together so we can make the right choices. Our children don't just attend a school they are a key element of a Community..." The Coolmine School Community " . The Parents Association is just one element of this school community. As we work with the school we find the word "Community" is forefront in creating a dynamic relationship with the Principal, Deputies, Teachers, Secretaries, Caretakers, Pupils and fellow parents.

Coolmine Community School has also been dynamic in its approach to staying safe. Our teachers and students have been diligent in their approach to accepting and participating in new methods of learning and teaching. The Parents Association want to assure you we are regularly updated by the Principal in relation to these platforms. In particular, at this time we want to encourage you to use the new VSWare app to get more "finger tip" access to your childs progress etc. It really is so easy and a fabulous way of communicating.
We want to thank the whole school Community for their continued interest and support for the PA. We would like to acknowledge the work of our outgoing Chairperson, Dermot Kinane, who undertook this role for 3 years with great diligence and vigour. We also thank all PA Committee members & Executives for the hard work and continued interest . We welcome our new members and look forward to working together.

At our recent Zoom AGM we welcomed a guest speaker from Jigsaw which is another Community element to our school. Jigsaw offer great support to the whole school community, pupils , parents and teachers alike. Visit www. jigsaw.ie

To find out more about us you can visit the Parents Page link on the school website.

We thank Ms Manek for her hard work in putting this newsletter together with us. We have superb volunteers who help with the PA work. If you would like to assist contact us directly by email; coolmineparents@gmail.com.

Janet Mitten
PA Chairperson

Parents' Association Executive 2020/2021



Janet Mitten (Chairperson)
Hilary Sweeney (Vice Chair)
Paola Visciano (Secretary)
Dermot O'Mara (Treasurer)
Dermot FitzPatrick (Vice Treasurer)
Karen Curtis
Orla McCormack
Dermot Kinane
Linda Osborne
Niamh Glynn
Mary Conneely
Tracy Byrne

Arthur Centore
Glen Phelan
Gillian Douglas
Larissa Norton
Paul McShane
Brenda Colohan
Catherine Andrews
Selina Bonnie
Emer Burke
Tai Popoola
Denise Mooney
Valerie Mc Allorum Byrne



Our Covid-19 Experience

by Dia Joseph and Abbey Eglington

Throughout these recent months we have experienced many changes that have drastically affected us academically and socially. Initially, the situation was quite petrifying and created anxiety amongst us due to the lack of information and clarity on the global pandemic and what it meant for us. On March 13th 2020, the Government of Ireland issued a national lockdown which we believed would only have lasted 2 weeks. Little did we know, we would not return to school until September. This lockdown was the beginning of the strangest and most challenging year of our lives.

Trying to find the motivation to sit down and learn online was very difficult as our routines became inconsistent. Instead of the usual early morning struggle to get up and go to school everyday, we found ourselves longing to go back. Personally, we were fearful of how the Junior Cert would proceed and what was expected from us during this unprecedented time.

We all quickly realised that online school wasn't working as effectively as we thought it would due to students' personal circumstances. Being stuck inside and unable to see our friends and family left us all feeling hopeless. However, seeing individual communities come together as a whole provided hope and optimism for the future.

We felt hesitant and uneasy coming back into the school environment. Each year encountered their own obstacles having missed a portion of their previous year. The atmosphere in the school felt eerie and quite unnatural for the first few weeks with all the new changes and safety precautions we had to adjust to. Academically, we felt there was a lot of pressure on us to catch up and we were both eager and nervous to get back to work. Socially, the masks became a barrier to communication and expression between us. Despite having these ground rules set in place steering us away from one another, we have become unified in the shared uncertainty of the global pandemic.

Abbey is a member of the Meitheal and felt awful for the incoming 1st years. "I was aware they weren't going to have the traditional welcoming experience or memorable moments we had in 1st year such as the struggles with the lockers, the scattered crowds in the corridors and the festive events. Nonetheless, we are going to try our best to make this a wonderful year for them!"

Dia is a member of the Community Care team and was conscious of the people who had a major disadvantage during this unimaginable time. "I knew we still had to support the charities each Community Care team had helped in the past. This is why I, along with the other Community Care members, are attempting to make this Christmas a special one for those in need and to create a positive school environment during this festive season!"

After quarantine, we realised that we can't prepare ourselves for the unknown but all we can do is hope for the best. This year taught us not to take the little everyday things for granted and be mindful that everything can change in an instant. Going forward, we will incorporate what we learnt this year and take it as a lesson rather than a burden. We hope that the vaccine will provide us with safe, healthy and joyful years to come.



Dia Joseph and Abbey Eglington
5 Manek

VS Ware Parent App

by Ms Connolly

The VSware Parent App has been re-designed from the ground up and our school has invested in the full communications package. The App is free to use and is now available on iOS and Android as well as desktop. We have asked that all parents download the app and turn on notifications so that you have access to the following features:

- Attendance
- Behaviour
- School Reports
- Timetable
- VS-Mail (which will replace text messages)
- Submitting absence notes

Full instructions about how to download and use the app are available here: https://support.vsware.ie/parent-app-downloading-and-logging-in
Once the app is on your device, you can find the school by typing the name as follows, Scoil Pobail Chuil Mhin, then select it from the dropdown list when it appears.
You can then enter your username and password and hit Login
If you don't yet have a password, follow these steps:
Click Create or reset your password
Enter your username and the last 4 digits of your mobile number, hit Send Code
You will receive an SMS code on your mobile phone which you then enter, along with your new chosen password. Follow the instructions on screen and hit Change Password
You will be brought back to the login screen where you can enter your username, new password and hit Login
We are asking all parents to download the app as we will be using it to communicate important information on a regular basis. This will completely replace text messaging in the New Year. We also ask that parents submit absence notes through the App. This can be done for a past or future absences. Many parents have been using this feature with great success over the past few weeks. You can watch a video of a parent submitting an absence request here: https://support.vsware.ie/en/a-parent-sending-an-absence-request
Please contact the school on info@coolminecs.ie if you have any problems logging in. Looking forward to a new year with our new mode of communication.

Lost & Found

DID YOU KNOW…

- Lost property is stored at the front office
- Any property that is clearly labelled is returned to the student
- On a monthly basis lost property is put on display in the mall for students to reclaim
- As it is not possible to retain large amounts of lost property indefinitely any property not claimed is donated to charity

See Student Journal for more details.

Christmas Cards to Nursing Homes

By Ms Sheridan

Thanks to *An Post's* Community Focus, our school can send mail to local care homes for free!

Everyone in our community has been affected in some way this year due to the pandemic. Residents of nursing and care homes have increased restrictions and may be feeling lonely at this time of year. Community is about reaching out with compassion, staying connected and sending love to each other.

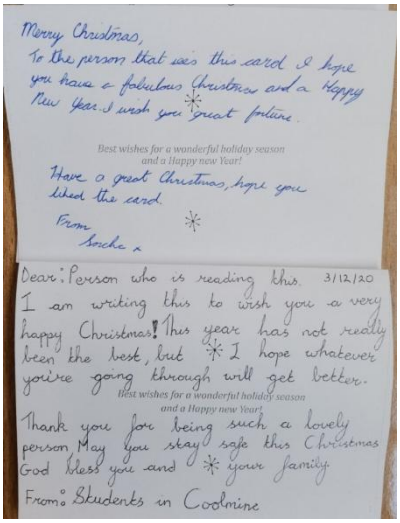
Some of the 1st year students of Coolmine Community School have created magnificent Christmas Cards to send to some local nursing homes. These are beautifully decorated and contain some wonderful messages to fill everyone with joy at this time of year.

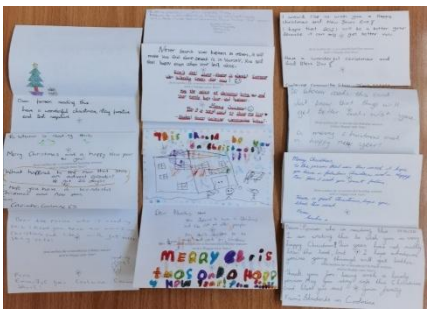
This is such a kind gesture from our students and hopefully the residents are as impressed with the cards as we are!

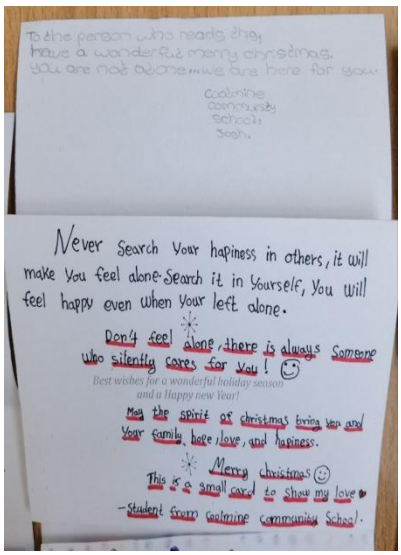
An Post will ensure free delivery of all cards and letters (up to 2kg) posted to and from residents of nursing and care homes in the State until January 31st 2021 by writing FREEPOST where the stamp would normally be.













Transition Year Horticulture

by Mr Kinlon

This years TY group had to work extra hard to get the school garden back into shape. Much endeavour, skill and hard work was shown by them since September as the garden had gone through an extended period of wilding due to Covid. This year students have benefited from the addition of more outdoor seating in the garden which we are all grateful for. The students have also been busy preparing our raised beds for the spring planting season where we will be setting out our vegetable crop for 2021.

The Transition Year class of 2021 and I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.







Home Economics

by Ms Smith

Below are just some of the fantastic projects that students of Coolmine Community Schools get up to during their Home Economics studies…



Junior craft projects



First years making cookies



Senior Home Economics Swiss Rolls

Mindfulness for Parents

by Mary Conneely (PA)

The PA recently had a talk from (Jigsaw) about how to support teenager's mental health. Jigsaw supports young people's mental health by delivering workshops to young people, parents, those who work with young people and health professionals. One of the key messages from the talk was the importance for young people to have "one good adult" in their lives that they can talk to. It can be hard for parents to get through to teenagers at the best of times. It can also be nigh impossible to get into the right headspace to support teenagers if you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed yourself! Here are some ideas to bring mindfulness into your own life and by extension in your child's:

Put yourself first - practice saying "no" or "I'll think about it" instead of immediately agreeing to take on extra responsibilities in your life. Your time is precious and should be spent doing things you want to do with people you want to spend time with. If you are involved with an activity that you are really not enjoying, work to disengage with it and replace it with something you enjoy. Similarly, are you dragging children to activities that they are not really that passionate about? Would that time be better spent just hanging out together enjoying each other's company?

Turn off your phone - take some time away from social media and digital devices. Scrolling through perfect lives on social media can make the most confident of us feel less than adequate. Use your phone to interact with friends and family but stay away from social media accounts or news websites that wind you up! Have a look at your device settings' and you can see what apps you are spending the most time on. Are some of these apps making you anxious but you still spend hours on them every week? Consider using Apple's Screen Time to set Downtime for iOS. Similarly, try Google's Digital Wellbeing to set usage limits on your android device. These are especially useful at night to turn your screen to Greyscale and silences your notifications with Do Not Disturb.

Get outside - walking 30 minutes in the fresh air everyday will reap rewards both mentally and physically. Walking in your local park is free and will help you get your steps in as well as getting some vitamin D. Your fitness will improve without risking injury and time to yourself will give you some perspective on any stresses you may be experiencing.

Reduce Coffee & Energy Drinks - drinking too much coffee not only affects your sleep, it can also spike your anxiety levels. Remember there are 2 shots of espresso in your average Americano! Try herbal teas and limit your caffeine intake. Green tea, specifically Matcha, will help with relaxation and also has some caffeine in it.

There's an app for that - put your phone to good use with Headspace or Calm for guided meditations and healthy sleep routines. Also consider using something like Sunsama or Asana to get organized and keep track of your daily tasks. The more organized you can be, the less last minute stress you will experience!

Human Rights in Coolmine Community School 2020

by Ms O'Hora

Human Rights Awareness Week ran from December 7th to 11th. This coincided with International Human Rights Day which is observed every year on December 10th. The theme this year was 'Recover Better - Stand up for Human Rights.' So, First Years took a cross-curricular approach to the theme. In Geography they looked at places around the world where human rights abuses occur. In CSPE they studied the treatment of child soldiers. History focused on the background to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Maths Department studied graphs which showed homeless figures in Dublin and the right that everyone should have to call a place home. Students have also been made aware of Rights through their English novel 'Trash'. They now understand that not everyone has access to Safe and Nutritious Food and that 690 million people went hungry in 2019. How to say 'No discrimination' became the theme of the Language classes. Other themes were explored in many subject areas. Students expressed their thoughts through their Art, Woodwork and Music, some of which is on display here.



Global Citizenship Education

By Ms O'Hora



Global Citizenship Education (GCE) is an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world in which we live. By challenging stereotypes and encouraging independent thinking, GCE helps students critically explore the root causes of global justice issues and how they interlink with our everyday lives. Our school has been selected as a winner of a Good Practice Award for its innovations in the area of Student Capacity & Engagement.

Human Rights in Coolmine Community School 2020



Bea Asuncion and Saoirse Phelan from 1 Enright who won our 1st year competition for Human Rights

That Time of Year
by Saoirse Phelan

As children's cries fill the air,
And adults hush amongst each other.
People huddle in tight pairs
Glancing to one another.

As it is that time of year,
Gifts are exchanged and food is shared
But others are clouded with worry and fear
In the shelter no joy is declared.

While we celebrate among each other
We forget the true meaning of this holiday
It is not about exchanging gifts with each other
It is about helping those unlucky today.

So spread some joy I beg of you
To those who's rights are denied today
Donate something old or new
And share some joy this Christmas!

Please consider those who are not as fortunate as us especially this year. Merry Christmas!!!

Human Rights
by Bea Asuncion

I certainly agree with everyone having human rights. Firstly, what are human rights? Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to belong to every person in the world, such as clean food, clean water, the right to have education, the right to live, etc. Here's a question to ask yourself, if the right to have education unequal, would you even be here in school right now? Exactly. Human rights guarantee people the means necessary to satisfy their basic needs, so they can take full advantage of all opportunities. Human rights for everyone give people the freedom to choose how they live, how they express themselves and what kind of government to support. Think this; if we didn't have the right to vote, and were forced to vote for a specific other, for example trump, how would you feel about that? And finally, by guaranteeing life, liberty, education, equality, and security, human rights protect people against abuse by those who are more powerful such as race discrimination, slavery and white privilege, etc. Thank you for listening on why I agree with everyone having human rights.



A Right to be me.
Give to every human being every right that you claim yourself.

College Awareness Week

By Ms Maher

College Awareness Week took place in the school 23-28th Nov. There was a great buzz around the school. Teachers all wore stickers stating where they went to college and what they studied. This generated lots of questions and chats in the classroom around the college experience. All students were shown a presentation about the benefits of going to college.

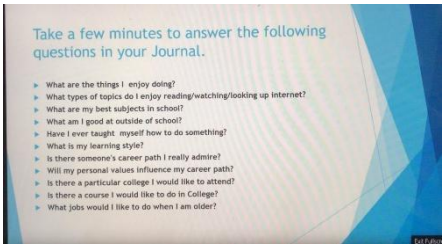
The first years did lots of college-related activities in their Guidance and SPHE classes that week. The TY's had a Careers Themed Table Quiz and the 5th years all received a careers workshop where they learned how to navigate websites such as Careersportal.ie and Qualifax.ie.

Teachers had access to a curated selection of College presentations and virtual college tours which they showed to students in their subject area. There were lunchtime workshops where students took personality tests, 16personalities.com, to find out what career they would be suited to.

There were college theme posters all along the corridors to emphasise the importance of third level education. It was a different year than others as we could not have any visitors to the school as usual but all reports from teachers and students alike have been positive. Roll on CAW 2021!!







Debs 2021

by Linda Osborne (PA)

The Parents' Association are delighted to announce that plans for the 2021 debs ball are firmly underway. We are hopeful that this event will take place next year for our 6th year students at our brand NEW VENUE Carnegie Court Hotel Swords Co. Dublin on Friday 3rd September 2021.

This formal end of year event promises to be a memorable and exciting night for you with the help of our new event organisers *Debs Ireland*. Tickets are €85 each, which include coaches to and from the venue, four course silver-service meal, themed decorated room of choice, e.g. Oscars/ James Bond to name a few, DJ & disco, lip sync battle, photo booth, karaoke, games, video area for committee members, the list goes on... finishing off the night with a buffet-style breakfast before your coach home at 6am.

Tickets are available on line only with a 5% fee, details to follow from your rep. Please note that each student must fill out a form and return to your class rep, signed by your year head. These forms will be distributed in the next few weeks. Return date for forms is Friday 26th February 2021.

Looking forward to seeing you all there. Let the EXCITEMENT begin...

How Do You Get To Know First Years Through Their Masks?

by Ms Moloney

First year students are introduced to many option subjects with an 11 week taster program. So how do you get to know these bright, eager students, so new to secondary school in a short few weeks?

In art class we began with drawing a self portrait with our masks on that opens up to show our smiling faces. Students then surrounded the self portrait with images and words to describe themselves, their hobbies, their likes and dislikes, favourite foods, subjects etc.

This is a relaxing exercise but also a good gauge of drawing ability and introduction to facial proportions, colour and elements of art.

Here are some of the lovely results…



Community Care

by Mr O'Shea

Last week, the Community Care Team organised a 'Christmas Jumper Day' for students and staff in the school in order to raise funds for Barnardos. Coolmine Community School is a long-standing supporter of Barnardos and the work the organisation carries out for those in need. The event raised well in excess of €500. Congratulations to the Community Care team for their work and diligence, 3 of whom are pictured below. . .



Adopt an Animal

by Ms O'Hora

Our second years have risen to the challenge and are supporting the recent appeal by the Zoo to adopt an animal. Each class has chosen an animal and students have contributed to raising the funds necessary to carry out an adoption. This matter became very serious in November, as the Zoo were running out of funds to feed the animals. We were made aware just how expensive it is to feed the animals. It costs €75 to feed an elephant for a day. This action allows students support Global Goal 15 – Life on Land.



Woodwork Class Christmas Creations

by Ms Gallagher

2nd year woodwork classes were given an assignment to design and make a Christmas gift for someone special. They have worked very hard on this assignment over the last number of weeks and they are almost all complete and ready to wrap up and bring home. The Christmas-themed artefacts show the skills they are developing and a small sample of their lovely projects are shown below. Well done to all involved.



LGBTI+

by Mr Purcell

For the second year running the school has participated in Stand Up for Awareness. This week is focused on the LGBTI+ community and trying to make students and staff more aware of the supports offered in the school and the challenges that this community may face in their day to day lives. This week involved daily facts being announced in the morning, a daily rainbow straw competition (students won prizes for locating the rainbow straws around the school), teachers were sent resources that they could use in their lessons if they felt it was relevant, and on Friday students/teachers were encouraged to wear a colour of the rainbow to show their support for their LGBTI+ classmates and colleagues. I would like to thank all the students and staff of Coolmine Community School for making this week a very inclusive and positive experience. If any parents or students would like to give feedback on this week they can email kpurcell@coolminecs.ie.

Christmas Door Décor

by Ms Dolan



In the lead up to Christmas, our Meitheal students have brought an extra bit of holiday spirit through the doors of Coolmine Community School. Normally, the Meitheal will have spent time, over the past few months, getting to know our 1st year students. However, due to restrictions, their opportunities to get involved have been greatly reduced. So when an idea came about to get to know the 1st year students, they were thrilled to get involved in the project.





As 1st year students have been designated base classrooms this year, we thought it would be a wonderful idea to help them create a Christmas display on the classroom doors that demonstrates the creative talents of the groups. Over the past week, the Meitheal have been going to students in their Caomhnoir classes and helping them to bring their ideas to fruition. These works of art are certainly a sight to behold. Well done to all 1st years and our ever enthusiastic Meitheal for their dedication to the project.

Our New Classrooms

by Ms Connolly

In August 2020, the school undertook a project to convert our six mall areas into classrooms. This project was carried out to create new classrooms which could accommodate thirty students in a socially distanced space. The work was completed over mid-term and students are now settling in nicely to their new surroundings. This project has significantly reduced the number of students who go to Overflow. As part of this project, new screens and white boards have been installed. The grey walls can be folded back so that the malls can be restored in a post Covid-19 school environment.





LCA Practical Achievement Project

by Mr Kinlon

For the past 8 weeks a number of Leaving Cert. Applied students have been taking part in an after-school Horticulture workshop with Mr. Kinlon.

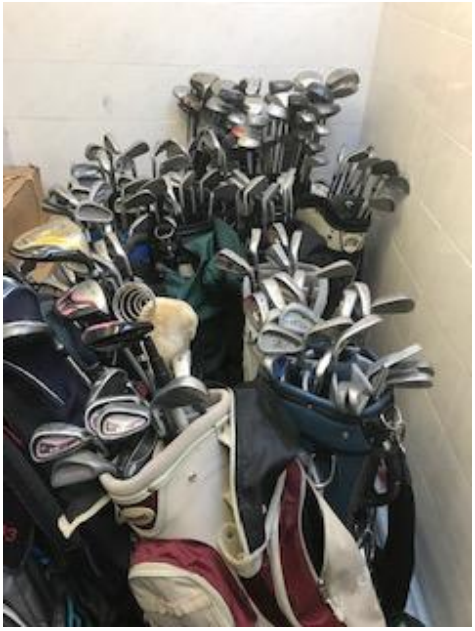
In anticipation of Christmas the students helped add a bit of colour and Christmas cheer to the front of the school as part of one of their projects. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas.





PE Department Adapting to Covid

by Mr Purcell



The PE department has been working hard to try and ensure that practical lessons can be safe, educational and engaging for students since their return to school. This has not been easy as a lot of activities have been deemed high risk for passing on Covid-19. So, the PE department has attempted to re-think its approach to lessons and has introduced new activities that have never been done in Coolmine e.g. table tennis and golf. This allows for students to have their own piece of equipment and not have to share with others, also strict hand sanitising procedures and sanitising of equipment has been introduced. Orienteering has also now been expanded and updated so students can still develop teamwork skills at a safe distance. A big thank you is owed to Elm green golf club (especially Helen Stokes and Graham Sweeney) and to all the parents and staff who donated golf clubs to the school, we now have a class set for each student. We are currently updating our outdoor space to include a mini driving range and a foot-golf course, again so our students can stay active and be socially distant. A big thank you for all the support and a Merry Christmas from the PE department.

Transition Year Mini Company

by Ms Maher

This year our Transition Year students have been working very hard creating group and individual Mini Companies. We have seen great innovation by the students considering Covid-19 restrictions. The students have been entered into the Student Enterprise Programme by Fingal County Council. They have been partaking in Zoom seminars with our Local Student Enterprise Officer during class. They are currently completing fantastic business plans tailored to their individual business. Some of the amazing companies include –

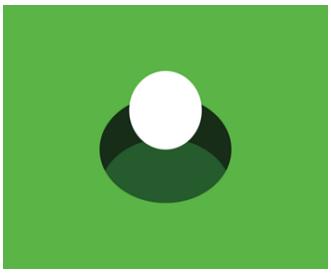
"Coolmine Masks"- customised facemasks with the school crest.
"Hot Chocolate Delights"- Hot Chocolate treats and a beautiful Christmas mug.
"Big Money Study"- A study app designed for exam students in the school.

One student, Adam Kelly in TY1, decided to go down the entrepreneurial route and set up his own company **"Right ON Par Golf"** following his love for golf. Adam has gone so far as opening his own golf repair pop up shop at weekends. He adds grips, checks loft and lies and paints clubs. He has even teamed up with his golf club to sell merchandise. Adam has many orders and queries coming into him each week.

Along with their enterprises the students have also been volunteering as Covid-19 Ambassadors for the school by directing the student body off the school premises at the end of the school day. This is truly fantastic work by the students ensuring all students adhere to the one-way system.







Perfect Attendance

by Ms Manek

Huge congratulations to students right across the school who have had perfect attendance since school resumed in September… no mean feat during these Covid times! A small selection of recipients who received a certificate and festive treat are pictured below…



Elisha Gallagher 1st year receiving her certificate from Trista Talan 5th year



Brothers Adam & Cian Flinter



Students from 1 Enright

Crossword Competition



ACROSS

3 A horse of course, but in Irish (6)
6 Which Irish singer sings 'Giants'? (7)
9 What is the only even Prime Number? (3)
11 Dublin mens senior football captain (7)
13 Samuel Beckett play 'Waiting for _____'? (5)
15 SI unit of Time (6)
16 Capital city of the Czech Republic (6)
18 Our school's motto '_____ Beo' (Living Faith) (9)
19 Who is the President Elect of the United States of America? (5)
20 Who disappeared from Dingle during the year? (6)

DOWN

1 The name of the company founded by Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak? (5)
2 In the movie of the same name, who plays the Grinch? (6)
4 5th planet from the Sun (7)
5 Yeats' poem 'Lake Isle of _____'? (9)
7 Which river flows through Slane in Co. Meath? (5)
8 W is the chemical symbol for what element on the Periodic Table? (8)
10 Who is the Minister for Education? (5)
12 Who is the manager of Glasgow Celtic? (6)
14 The points value of the letter Q in Scrabble (3)
17 My True Love gave me this amount of gold rings in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' (4)

To be in with a chance to WIN one of four €25 vouchers for the Blanchardstown Shopping Centre complete the Crossword and return it to the front office with your name and class year (e.g. 1st year/TY etc.) by **3pm on 15th January 2021**. Winners will be drawn at random from correct entries received.

Name _____

Class _____