

Kinsale Community School

Guidance Newsletter

October 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you are very much aware, sixth year is a demanding and often stressful time for students. In addition to coping with the high academic demands which sixth year brings, students are faced with making decisions regarding their future options. This decision-making process is not easy, it takes time and involves researching all the options available. Ultimately no one can make this decision but the student themselves. Appropriate self-directed research and discussion will help each student in making as informed a choice as possible. It is important to state that each student needs to take responsibility for their final decisions regarding their future plans and that they are not swayed by outside influences e.g. their friends' choices etc.

Over the past two years students have received information from various sources: through guidance class, in one to one guidance meetings, at careers option events and at open days. In fifth year students also had the opportunity to attend many talks from visiting speakers from various colleges and will be able to attend further talks this year.

The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate important information to you with regards to:

- Dates for Open Days.
- CAO/Post Leaving Cert College applications.
- The **HEAR** (Higher Education Access Route) and **DARE** (Disability Access Route to Education) application schemes.
- Grants and student finance.
- Useful information websites.

Open Days

Students have been given a hand-out in assembly listing important open days that will occur in the coming months. A comprehensive listing of upcoming events is available on www.qualifax.ie (click 'Students', then 'Career Events'). It is recommended that students log onto individual college/university websites for event details such as times and schedules so that they can prepare and plan for the event.

The following is a list of **some** of the upcoming open days/events which may be of interest.

- National Maritime College of Ireland Open Day – Thurs 26th Oct 2017.
- Institute of Technology Tralee Open Day – Fri 27th Oct 2017.
- UCC School of Music Open Day – Sat 4th Nov 2017.
- UCD Open Day – Sat 4th Nov 2017.
- UCC Architecture Open Day – Thurs 16th Nov 2017.
- Cork Institute of Technology Open Day – Fri 17th Nov 2017 (Crawford College of Art & Design Fri 17th Nov 2017 and CIT School of Music Sat 18th Nov 2017) .
- DCU Open Day – Fri & Sat 17th/18th Nov 2017.
- NUI Maynooth Open Day – Fri & Sat 24th/25th Nov 2017.
- UCC Parents Information Evening (6-8pm - Library Creative Zone, Ground Floor Boole Library) Thurs 30th Nov 2017.
- Dublin Institute of Technology Open Day – Fri & Sat 1st/2nd Dec 2017.
- Trinity College Open Day – Sat 9th Dec 2017.
- University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College Sat 13th Jan 2018.
- UCC Parents Information Evening (6-8pm - Aula Maxima) Tues 16th Jan 2018.
- Cork PLC Colleges (St. John's Central College, Colaiste Stiofan Naofa, College of Commerce) Open Day – Tues 6th Mar 2018 (date to be finalised).
- Clonakilty Agricultural College Open Day – Fri 9th March 2018.

CAO Applications

Students have received the CAO Handbook in assembly. This handbook contains all the information needed in relation to the CAO application i.e. dates, course codes, offers of places, acceptance, deferrals etc. The CAO process will be explained in detail in class and students have been advised to keep and refer to this booklet over the year as answers to most questions are contained in this booklet.

Some important CAO dates to note include (**all** dates listed on inside cover of handbook):

- Mon 6th November 2017 – online application opens.
- Sat 20th January 2018 – deadline to avail of discounted application fee of €30 (after this date cost is €45).
- Thurs 1st Feb 2018 – normal closing date for application.
- Fri 4th May to Sun 1st July 2018 – change of mind facility opens/closes - free of charge.

Parents and students will find lots of very useful information on www.cao.ie including various downloads and videos explaining the application process.

Post Leaving Cert College Applications

Application to Post Leaving Cert Colleges will also be explained in class. Applications for these courses are made online directly to the college. Students then attend for interview. Applications open usually before Christmas and interviews are held in the spring. Students can apply for both CAO courses **and** Post Leaving Cert courses if they so choose. It is advisable that students log on to websites of Post Leaving Cert Colleges to which they plan to apply for more details on the application process and the entry requirements (Some Cork based PLC's include Kinsale College of Further Education – www.kinsalecollege.ie, Colaiste Stiofan Naofa – www.csn.ie, St. John's College – www.stjohnscollege.ie, Cork College of Commerce – www.corkcollegeofcommerce.ie).

UCAS Applications

The application process for colleges/universities in England, Scotland and Wales (UCAS) has been explained to students in class and the closing date for **most** courses is the 15th of January 2018. Some UK courses and colleges may have different application deadlines, therefore it is essential that students confirm the closing date for receipt of their application. It is also important that any additional entry requirement i.e. aptitude tests, additional information requests are registered for and completed well in advance of their deadlines.

HEAR/DARE Applications

Attached to the CAO application are two supplementary third level application schemes for which some students may qualify; the **HEAR (Higher Education Access Route)** and the **DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)** schemes. Certain colleges/universities are associated with these schemes and offer a restricted number of third level course places at reduced points for qualifying students.

The **HEAR** scheme was developed in order to help to widen student access to third level/college education and it is aimed at students from “low income households and those from non-traditional third level educational backgrounds”. In order to be considered as a **HEAR** college applicant, a range of financial, social and cultural indicators must be met.

The **DARE** scheme is an application process for students with disabilities and aims to assist students whose disability has “had a negative impact on their second level education”. There are certain disabilities identified for this scheme and to qualify students must have relevant professional documentation and details on how their disability has impacted on their education.

If a student wishes to apply for either of these schemes they must register their intention to do so when applying for the CAO. Should students qualify for either or both of these schemes they may be offered a place on their chosen course on a reduced points bases but they must still meet college entry requirements and compete for limited course places. Therefore, whilst they may qualify, they may still not be offered a place through HEAR/DARE. Qualifying students will also receive extra supports in college (*Note: Students who do not qualify for DARE are still entitled to access additional supports in college*).

Details of these schemes will be explained to students in class. Parents will find all information regarding qualifying criteria and application processes, including application guide videos on www.accesscollege.ie. In addition the following is a list of advice and information clinics for the schemes.

- **DARE** advice clinics will be held in UCC and students have been given a letter outlining this in assembly. The contact number for UCC Disability Support Service which is running the DARE clinics is (021) 4902985. The DARE clinics will take place in the Western Gateway building, room G08 at 6-8pm on:
 - **Wed 1st Nov 2017**
 - **Wed 29th Nov 2017**

All students who intend to apply for a DARE place in college should attend one of these sessions with their parents/guardians. You must register your intention to attend these clinics via the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ucc-dare-clinics-tickets-38385528148>

- **HEAR and DARE** advice clinic, Sat Jan 20th 2018, 10am - 2pm in UCC at Aula Maxima. All HEAR and DARE applicants, with their parents/guardians, should attend this session.

Important dates to note for HEAR and DARE applications are:

- Thurs 1st March 2018 – completion of online HEAR/DARE forms.
- Sun 1st April 2018 – supporting application documentation to arrive at CAO offices.

Grant and Student Finance

The Student Grant Scheme (SUSI- Student Universal Support Ireland) and the application process will be explained to students in class. As soon as information is updated for 2018 applications, information leaflets will be distributed to students in school (parents will be alerted via text as soon as leaflets have been distributed). All information is available on www.studentfinance.ie under 'Student Grant'. It is recommended that parents familiarise themselves with the details in relation to student finance, as eligibility for application is dependent on personal circumstance. Student grant applications are made on www.susi.ie and applications usually open in April/May and close in August.

Useful Websites

There are many useful Career Guidance information websites which students have been introduced to in class. We would highly recommend that you take a look at these websites at home in order to gather as much information as possible around choices and options available.

- www.careersportal.ie
- www.qualifax.ie
- www.careersdirections.ie
- www.cao.ie
- www.accesscollege.ie
- www.studentfinance.ie
- www.susi.ie

Every effort has and will be made to equip students with the tools to become engaged in effective career decision making. However, considering time pressures, the time available for one-to-one meetings is limited, thus it is strongly advised that all students become active participants in their own research process.

Parents are invited to attend an information evening which will be given by the Guidance Counsellor in the school in November. A text will go out to all parents closer to the time. This talk will focus on the CAO application and other issues relating to the transition to further study.

A second newsletter shall be issued to students in early February 2018 with more details in relation to student accommodation and the SUSI grant system.

Kind Regards,

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*All of the above information is correct at time of going to print but it is advisable that relevant websites are checked in case any details/date changes occur.