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**Principal's Annual Report (2019-2020) to Parents' Advisory  
Council AGM  
Wednesday 30 September 2020**

Significant Developments over the past year:

- Our IT curriculum for all first years was rolled out again in 2019-20 and has been hugely successful. This initiative will continue for all first-year classes this year with the objective of equipping students with all necessary skills to complete CBAs in second and third year and to create and manage Digital Portfolios.
- Google classroom has been rolled out in the school as part of our on-going digital learning development and all students have a Loreto Mullingar g mail address that allows access to homework, notes and shared information from their teachers.
- The CAT 4 was administered digitally to all first-year students earlier in September and parents will be issued with a comprehensive report on their daughters' talents and learning strengths.
- Results  
Leaving Certificate results were released to 144 girls on Monday 7 September. Results were very well received by students and teachers.  
Statistics show a steadily improving trend over the past six years:  
The percentage of students achieving 300+ points has risen from 52% in 2015 to 59% in 2016 to 68% in 2017 65% in 2018 to 78.4% in 2019 and 77.7% this year. From another perspective,

those achieving 400+ points have risen from 26% to 36% to 39% to 42.5% to 52% to 51.37% over the last six years.

The results were excellent this year and it was generally agreed that the class group achieved what was expected. Four students achieved in excess of 600 points with one student achieving 7H1s.

We take pride in the academic success of our graduates but also in their ability to be active responsible global citizens. Congratulations to all students and teachers on these achievements.

Annual Awards Ceremony took place on Friday 18 October 2019 in the Concert Hall at 8pm to honour the excellent academic achievements of the various classes in 2018-2019. Our special guest was Orla Doolin, past pupil who studied Financial Maths and Economics in UCG, who has spent time as an international snow-boarder and who now works as a chartered physiotherapist in Sports Med Ireland Clinic in Dublin, specialising in Sports Physio and also works with Leinster Rugby and Lansdowne Rugby, having interned in Santry Sports Clinic.

We were delighted to welcome back last year's very successful Leaving Cert class, many of whom have been awarded academic scholarships including Maynooth University Entrance Scholarship Sarah Reid. UCD entrance scholarships for our students – Andrea Doherty, Eala Flanagan, Anna Flynn, Elysia Greene and Laura Shaw and Rachel Killalea and Jayne Holton for Trinity College. Special thanks are due to Olivia Callaghan who organised the awards night and ensured that it was a fitting tribute to our excellent academic achievers.

This year's Annual Awards Ceremony has been postponed for the moment and we will honour the academic achievements and other successes of our more recent graduates at an appropriate time.

- The London Science trip and the German exchange return visit have been postponed.

- Further work took place on the Library as a space for the promotion of reading for pleasure and also as a cooperative learning space.

### Enrolment

Our first-year enrolment has remained steady at 180 students and total enrolment stands at 880 students.

- I wish to confirm to parents that the school is fully compliant in terms of Child Protection and GDPR legislation and that all mandatory policies are available on our website.
- The annual review of the school's Child Protection policy took place at the Board of Management meeting on 11 February 2020.
- The annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying policy took place at the Board of Management meeting on 23 June 2020.

Our School Improvement Plan continues to focus is on the key skill of 'managing myself' with a strong emphasis on Wellbeing. Key areas of this plan focus on using digital technology to organise work, student and teacher reflection and student responsibility for their own learning journey. This is part of a four-year plan which aims to develop responsible and reflective learners.

### TEACH MEET

Sharing practice meetings were taking place where teachers volunteer to meet and share methodologies and different tips to improve and enhance teaching and learning.

Professional conversations at these meetings were very rich but unfortunately, they are no longer possible during the pandemic.

### Curriculum Development

The Curriculum Planning Group has been looking at various aspects of the curriculum including the possibility of introducing one-hour classes and making changes to subject options at Junior Cycle.

**Curriculum Planning working group:** the working group has been looking at the current curriculum being offered and whether this

needs to change e.g. do we need to offer more choice subjects? Do we need to change the number of subjects currently being studied for Junior Cycle?

The new subject options will allow for a wider choice in first year and a range of subjects to choose from in second year– Geography, Business, Home Economics, Art, Music, Spanish, French and German.

- Finance:

Finance remains a major concern and the ever-increasing costs of heat and power as well as maintenance and cleaning of the building pose ongoing problems in terms of day to day expenses and general maintenance. There has been no increase in capitation for many years and there are no plans to restore capitation grants to pre-recession levels. Because of inequities in funding, it is unfortunate that voluntary secondary schools like ours need to ask parents for voluntary contributions to fund the basic day to day running of our schools. The most recent figures show a drop of €5,000 in voluntary contributions for each of the past two academic years.

- Supervised Study was well subscribed last year but again the facility can't be offered under present restrictions.
- Transition Year was a great success last year with the highlight being the production of 'High School musical'. Ninety six students opted for TY in the last academic year and we have 80 students for this year. The programme is

## **Covid 19**

I encourage every parent to constantly reiterate the public health advice regarding social distancing, the wearing of face coverings, hand washing and cough etiquette.

The school authorities have gone to enormous lengths to prevent the spread of Covid 19. At the beginning of August, we were faced with the reality of 16 junior classes with 30 students in each group and approximately five rooms in the entire school that were able to accommodate 30 students at a one metre distance. The library, music

room, sewing room, sports hall, canteen, study hall and concert hall all had to be 'sacrificed' to create the necessary space. We have managed to organise different entrances for every year group and different sections of the school for each group so that they are totally segregated while in school. All extra-curricular activities have been placed on hold and practical subjects are mostly working on a demonstration basis.

The Gym currently provides classrooms for all of the first years, but we are expecting a delivery of sound proofing partitions and vinyl floor covering that will hopefully make the Concert Hall and Study hall more suitable for classes and will allow for less classes in the Gym and therefore better acoustics.

The canteen area is being used as a PE hall, all locker rooms have been closed, the fifth-year locker area is being used as a classroom, supervised study has been cancelled.

All meetings are taking place online and it is likely that parent teacher meetings will be in the form of a detailed written report from each teacher.

The Students' Council had a very successful year up until March Festive Friday happened before Christmas. Students were invited to wear their own clothes on the day as well as coming to the GP area to enjoy a hot chocolate and each other's company.

'Tea & Talk' (mobile-free) has been divided into a junior and senior group because of its popularity and space constraints. Students are asked to bring their own mug to avoid the use of disposable cups. The Council took on the refurbishment of one of the bathrooms in the school as an experiment to encourage better care of the facilities. It has been painted pink and murals have been designed to give the students more ownership.

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### Summer Projects 2020

Work was completed on:

- Wi-Fi throughout the school

- New digital equipment. Some new laptops , data projectors, new printers, new whiteboards, desks
- New carpets and paint in classrooms on B and C corridor.
- Several corridors were painted
- In our on-going programme of refurbishment 15 new locker units (30 lockers) were purchased for one of the locker rooms at a cost of €4,000.

The Principal, Deputy Principal Carmel O’Grady, Neil Garry and Sinéad Uí Dhroma undertook the Forbairt programme last year and focussed on Digital strategy linking with SSE. The project wasn’t completed because of school closure, but the enhancement of digital skills for first years will be ongoing and will prepare students for classroom based assessments (CBAs) and blended learning should we find ourselves in a remote teaching and learning situation again.

## Staff

All the activities and achievements outlined in this report are only possible because of the huge commitment and spirit of generosity that is endemic among all staff members here in Loreto College. All aspects of sporting and other extra-curricular activities are reported to the Parents’ Advisory Council at the monthly meetings.

- New Teachers  
Nicola Moran – Home Economics and Biology;  
Orla Judge – English and SEN;  
Ciara Cullinane – English.

We bid a fond and grateful farewell to three long serving members of our teaching staff:

Chemistry and Biology teacher Ms Mairead Glennon, Home Economics and Religion teacher Germaine O’Connor retired at the end of the academic year and Business teacher Ms Mary O’Neill will be leaving us at the end of October. I would like to formally express my thanks and appreciation to these three ladies for their many years

of dedicated service to the school and their total commitment to their students.

### Appreciation

The school is hugely appreciative of the work undertaken by the parent nominees on the Board of Management. The commitment and involvement of Mrs Mary Reilly and Mr Paul Moore is very much appreciated and their personal support to me has been immense. Special thanks to the officers, Chairperson Charlotte Maguire, Secretary Irene Fallon and Treasurer Katie Murtagh as well as Assistant officers Aine Killalea, Joanne O'Reilly Lynch and Marguerite Hogan and all members of the committee for their involvement in the Parents' Advisory Council over several years. I look forward to working with the new committee during the next academic year.

I take this opportunity to thank all parents for their support of the school and its development. I urge you to maintain a strong involvement in school life as we continue in partnership to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our girls.

Marése Bell  
Principal

30 September 2020