



St. Columba's College

WARDEN'S LETTER TO PARENTS - TRINITY TERM 2009

Dear Parents,

The academic year 2008/2009 at St. Columba's came to a close with final assembly on 19th June.

The end of the Trinity term is inevitably and necessarily rather disjointed with those taking public examinations in Forms VI and III leaving as they complete their examinations, and the Transition Year finishing one week earlier with the Actiontrack performance in the BSR. The advantage of this, of course, is that it allows the remaining years in the school - Primary, I, II and V - to get on with their end-of-year examinations without distraction.

In view of the fact that the sixth form leavers depart the College as their examinations conclude, we have traditionally sought to bid them farewell with a dinner for them and their parents on the eve of the St. Columba's Day Celebrations. This year's event was attended by 59 Form VI leavers, almost all their parents and a large number of the teaching staff. We were fortunate indeed to have wonderful weather and a highly enjoyable evening was had by the nearly 200 guests.

The following day saw the fine weather continue for the St. Columba's Day Celebrations and it was once again good to see so many parents, Old Columbans and friends of the College in attendance. I often refer to our sense of community at St. Columba's and I believe that the St. Columba's Day Celebrations are a visible demonstration of this. Indeed, I would strongly urge those parents who do not normally come to this event to do so in the future as I am sure they would find it an enjoyable and worthwhile experience.

Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations have now concluded and I am happy to report that our pupils appear once again to have coped with this traditionally stressful period in their stride. Columbans, I believe, are well used to having demands placed upon them and they are therefore able to cope with experiences such as exams. I am optimistic that all those who sat their exams this summer will have acquitted themselves well in the examination room.

As ever, I list below some matters for your attention and information

DATES FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010

All parents were contacted by email some weeks ago with the amended version of our dates for the next academic year. Parents will also receive a hard copy of these dates together with your son's or daughter's end-of-term school report. You are advised that these dates are also available on the College website

(www.stcolumbas.ie) and can be accessed by clicking on the 'Contact' tab and then going to the 'Useful Information' section.

Please note that the second exodus for the Michaelmas term 2009 will begin on **Saturday, 28th November** and end on **Tuesday, 1st December**. This allows us to timetable our College examinations to end on the Saturday before the exodus. I would therefore be grateful if parents would avoid making any travel arrangements for their sons or daughters before lunchtime on the Saturday.

You will also note that the Christmas holiday has been extended until **12th January, 2009** and I very much hope that this will enable parents to ensure that their sons or daughters return to College on time for the start of the Hilary term.

Lastly, I would also point out that the end of year is now **25th June, 2010**, in order to coincide with the completion of the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations.

STAFFING

At the end of this current academic year we said goodbye to Miss Vicky Wright and Miss Patricia Kenny, student teachers of art and geography respectively. We also bade farewell to Mrs. Gena Walker who has stood in for Mrs. Derarca Cullen during her maternity leave over the past year. This was Gena's second period of substitution work here in the College and we are indebted to her for the way in which she has steered our art pupils through their Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. Also leaving us at the end of this year is Harun-ur-Rashid, our laboratory technician who has been with us for the past few years but who, having completed his doctoral research, is now returning to his native Bangladesh to take up an academic position.

Finally, after 43 years' service to the College, we bade farewell to Rev. Michael Heaney. At various times, sports coach, Housemaster, classroom teacher, careers and guidance counsellor and College Chaplain, few have made their mark on Columban life as Michael has, and we all wish him - and wife, Rhodanne - every success and happiness during retirement.

There is also one significant internal change to staffing which parents will wish to be aware of. After 25 years as Housemaster of Gwynn, Mr. Fraser Morris has stood down at the end of this academic year and will be succeeded by his assistant for the last number of years, Mr. Paul Cron. We will, of

course, greatly miss Mr. Morris's huge experience and expertise in dealing sympathetically yet firmly with boys over the years but I am also confident that his successor, Mr. Cron, will bring considerable attributes to the task of housemastering in the years to come.

Mr. Morris, of course, was appointed Senior Master at the start of this academic year and the responsibilities which came with this position made it inevitable that he would not be able to continue housemastering. I am sure that all parents, particularly those of boys who have been members of Gwynn, will want to join me in thanking Mr. Morris for his 25 years of service as a Housemaster.

COLLEGE PREFECTS 2009/2010

Some weeks ago, I appointed fourteen College Prefects for the next academic year. These are as follows: Fiona Boyd, Alec Cherry, Christopher Faerber, Ian Fraser, Tom Guinness, Henry Hatton, Mark Kavanagh, Poppy Kirwan Browne, Sophie Kyd-Rebenburg, Jamie Lyttle, Fred Mann, Leonie Mueller-Methling, Sarah O'Mahony and Anna Traill.

Last Friday, I was also pleased to announce the appointment of Alec Cherry as Senior Prefect and Anna Traill as Second Prefect.

I am sure parents will also wish to join me in congratulating these young people on their appointment and in wishing them all the best in their year of office.

LEAVING AND JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RESULTS

The results of the 2009 Leaving Certificate will be available in the College on Wednesday, 12th August, after which candidates can expect the first round of CAO and UCAS offers within five to ten days. CAO offers will be available online from 6pm on Monday, 17th August, and sent by post subsequently. Candidates can accept or decline offers online if preferred. The Junior Certificate results will be released after the start of next term in September.

The Guidance Counsellor, Mr. Humphrey Jones, will be available from his home during this time. He can be contacted by email (sccguidance@gmail.com) or on his mobile phone (+353 87 681 4255). Both the UCAS Co-ordinator, Mr. Michael O'Shaughnessy, and I, will be available at the College on Wednesday, 12th August, for anyone seeking advice on UCAS offers.

SCHOOL UNIFORM AND BOOKLISTS 2009/2010

In order to reduce the amount of paper we send to you, these lists are now available on the College website and can be accessed by clicking on the 'Contact' tab and then clicking on 'Useful Information'.

Parents have also been emailed separately in the last week advising them of the availability of these

lists and I hope that you will find this a useful improvement on our past procedures.

COLLEGE OPEN DAY

The next College Open Day will be on Saturday, 26th September, 2009. Parents will be given further information of this event nearer the time but I would urge you to draw the attention of friends and relatives to it and perhaps encourage people to put it in their diaries.

EXPEDITIONS 2009/2010

Parents will also this year be able to access a list of proposed expeditions for the academic year 2009/2010 on the College website by clicking on the 'Contact' tab and then clicking on 'Useful Information'.

This list is as a result of a suggestion made by parental nominees to the Board of Management that parents would find such a list useful as it would enable them to plan and prepare for such ventures in good time.

I would also point out that the College has deliberately sought to reduce significantly the number of such trips and expeditions for the next academic year. This is in recognition of the fact that many of us are 'feeling the pinch' in a financial sense and we are given to believe that our parents would prefer us not to offer such a range of trips as in the past.

With this in mind we have sought to produce a list of expeditions for next year which involves different members of the College at different times. Please note that although the annual skiing trip will take place in 2010, this particular trip will become a biennial event thereafter. In other words, there will not now be another skiing trip until 2012. Those seeking to take part in this activity, therefore, should be advised to sign up for 2010.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking parents and pupils for their contribution to the success of the College over the past academic year. I very much hope that you will have a restful and enjoyable holiday together during the summer and I look forward to welcoming your sons and daughters back in September.

With very best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Lindsay Haslett
Warden

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - MICHAELMAS TERM 2009

(See overleaf)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

MICHAELMAS TERM 2009

All parents are most welcome to attend any of the events/performance marked with an asterisk, listed below.

Wednesday 12th August - Leaving Certificate results are published.

Friday 28th August - Date of script viewing in advance of appeal from 6pm - 9pm in the Library.

Wednesday 2nd September - Michaelmas Term begins. Tea in Whitehall for new pupils and parents at 4.30pm. Roll Call in Houses at 8.30pm for boarders.

Thursday 3rd September - Michaelmas Term begins for day boarders and day pupils at 8.50am.

***Saturday 19th September** - Parents' Association barbecue from 4pm. Special overnight exeats may be taken with attending parents after the barbecue.

***Saturday 26th September** - Public Open Day - 10am to 1pm.

***Sunday 27th September** - Transition Year House Speech Competition at 8pm in BSR. All Form IV day pupils and day boarders must attend.

Friday 2nd October - Exodus Weekend begins at 1pm. College closes.

Monday 5th October - Exodus Weekend ends. Return of boarders - Roll Call in Houses at 8.30pm.

Tuesday 6th October - Return of day boarders and day pupils at 8.15am.

Saturday 10th October - Junior Entrance Assessments.

***Sunday 18th October** - P/I and II form plays at 8pm in BSR.

Friday 23rd October - Parents' Association AGM at 10am (Lower Argyle). Classes end 10.45am. **Parent/Teacher meeting 11am - 1pm (Whitehall)**. Half-term begins at 1pm.

Sunday 1st November - Half-term ends. Return of boarders - Roll Call in Houses at 8.30pm.

Monday 2nd November - Return of day boarders and day pupils at 8.15am.

***Friday 13th November** - Senior Play at 7pm in BSR.

***Saturday 14th November** - Senior Play at 7pm in BSR. Special overnight exeats may be taken only with attending parents after the performance.

Saturday 28th November - Exodus Weekend begins at lunchtime, after exams. College closes.

Tuesday 1st December - Exodus Weekend ends. Return of boarders - Roll Call in Houses at 8.30pm.

Wednesday 2nd December - Return of day boarders and day pupils at 8.10am.

***Sunday 13th December** - Carol Service at 8pm followed by a reception in BSR and 2009 Junior Certificate art exhibition.

WEDNESDAY 16TH DECEMBER 2009

MICHAELMAS TERM ENDS AT 11.30AM