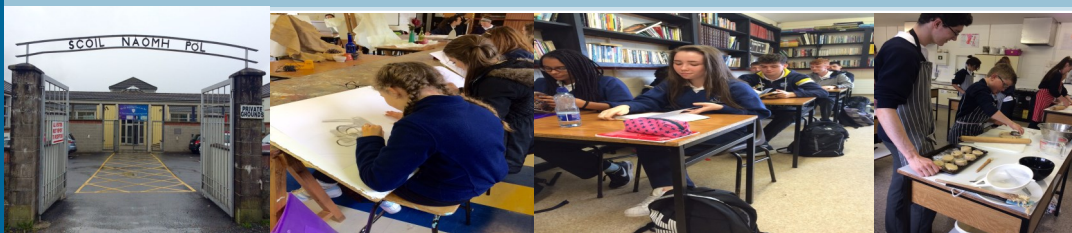




# *St. Paul's Autumn Newsletter*

Magazine produced by Transition Year Students

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

It has been the beginning of an academic year like no other.

When we returned as staff and students this Autumn it had been six months since we had been in the school, since the flow of our lives had ground to a halt, since we had retreated from all the hustle and bustle of school life and were confined to our homes.

During this time we were challenged to come up with new ways to communicate, to be there for one another. Solidarity and community were never more important. Technology delivered but this crisis has confirmed that it will always play second fiddle to the craft of the teacher in the classroom. Teaching and learning continued virtually via MS Teams. I thank my colleagues for the way they adapted to the changed circumstances and continued to deliver the curriculum with ingenuity.

The response of the students was also excellent. They embraced the new way of engaging with their teachers. They looked out for one another and were determined to keep going. They got through it and will be the better for the experience.

The Leaving Certificate students of 2020 have been magnificent. They endured much uncertainty yet kept positive and committed to each other and to the school. They have left a strong legacy. Whenever 2020 is talked about, and it will be frequently, the dignity, character and loyalty of our 6<sup>th</sup> years will be acknowledged. I am proud of them and wish them well as they embark on new journeys.

And so to the next year as the L.C. class of 2021 assume the mantle. Although there was a degree of uncertainty around the shape of the opening of the new school year the challenges of opening the school were surmounted and the year began. Changes have been made throughout the school to help with lowering the risk of the spread of COVID-19. New habits were introduced which we have to practise throughout the day - the wearing of face coverings, the frequent washing / sanitising of hands, the making of space between us. It's not easy to keep a distance from friends. However, the students are making huge efforts to do what is right. To quote J.C.Watts "character is doing the right thing when no one is looking".

As this new academic year begins, I would particularly like to welcome the First years to our community as well as other students who have joined various years throughout the school. I would also like to welcome new staff members – Ms. Kyne, Mr. Groves, Mr. Begley, and Iníon an Bhreathnaigh. I would like to wish Mr. Paddy Clancy the very best of health and happiness as he retires from St. Paul's this November. Mr. Clancy has been part of the fabric of St. Paul's for many years and we will miss him.

## CONTACT US

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St. Paul's is a Christian community of learning, a caring community, built on respect for each other where each member can give of his best, striving to **be the best they can be**. We are much more than an assembly line of academics, mathematicians, scientists, artists, linguists. We share a common creed. Each one of our students has much to offer, has a contribution to make. We must encourage each other to make it, to make a difference.

**"To be the best you can be"** requires a daily commitment to homework as well as to extra-curricular/local club activities. It may not be possible this year to take part in extra-curricular activities or training in your local club if restrictions due to COVID remain. However, these may change and if/when they do we can once again enjoy these activities. The requirement to commit to a couple of hours work each night between homework and revision cannot be overstated for students. Anything less than that will lead to unnecessary anxiety as examinations approach. Parents can ensure that this is happening at home. Furthermore, parents should check their son(s)/daughter(s) homework journal regularly. It is far better to suffer the pain of discipline than the pain of regret.

At the start of another year I wish to thank my colleagues, the teaching staff, for their continued enthusiasm, hard work and interest in each child's wellbeing and academic progress. I thank you, the parents, for sending your child(ren) to St. Paul's to be educated. We ask that you share our collective vision for students of the school – the pursuit of excellence for each person, **to be the best that one can be**.

This year may well be a year where we all experience "falls" of one type or another in our lives but remember

**"Failure is not falling down, it is not getting up" .**

**Orla Malone**

## STUDENT COUNCIL 2020/2021

St. Paul's Student Council acts as a voice for the students. There is one representative elected in each class from each year. They raise awareness about issues which are important to them and organise student-led events. This year's newly elected council cannot wait to get started. Pictured below is our brand new socially distanced Student Council.



# Covid-19 Response



This year's return to school has been a year like no other and it has been a huge undertaking by management and staff to ensure our school was as safe as possible for students.

All classrooms have been fully cleared out and fitted with single desks to ensure as much space is available as possible

Pictured is Mr. Molloy's room which has been completely refitted as it previously contained tiered seating.



A one way system has been put in place to avoid any congestion in the corridors and signage has been placed around the school to help students with the new system.

The school has also purchased a number of picnic benches so students can sit outside and eat their lunch at the correct social distance.

Our canteen has moved into the main hall to allow for more space and breaks have been staggered to keep queues to a minimum.

Each room has also been fitted with an automatic sanitizer dispenser so students can keep their hands sanitized before and after each class.





# Meet the First Years

We wish to welcome our First Years as they begin their journey in secondary school.

This year, we have 79 First Years, one of the largest year groups in the school. They are all settling in very well, and despite the new rules and procedures they have gotten off to a flying start.

Pictured below are some of the class groups settling into their new classes.

Scientists in the making -students from St. Cummin are hard at work in the newly arranged science lab.



The masks are not stopping our first year students reciting some French verbs as they take on a number of new subjects.

Students have the choice to study French or German as their modern language for Junior Cert.

Pictured are a mixture of first year girls enjoying the Halloween themed arrangement put together by students from Sr. May's class.

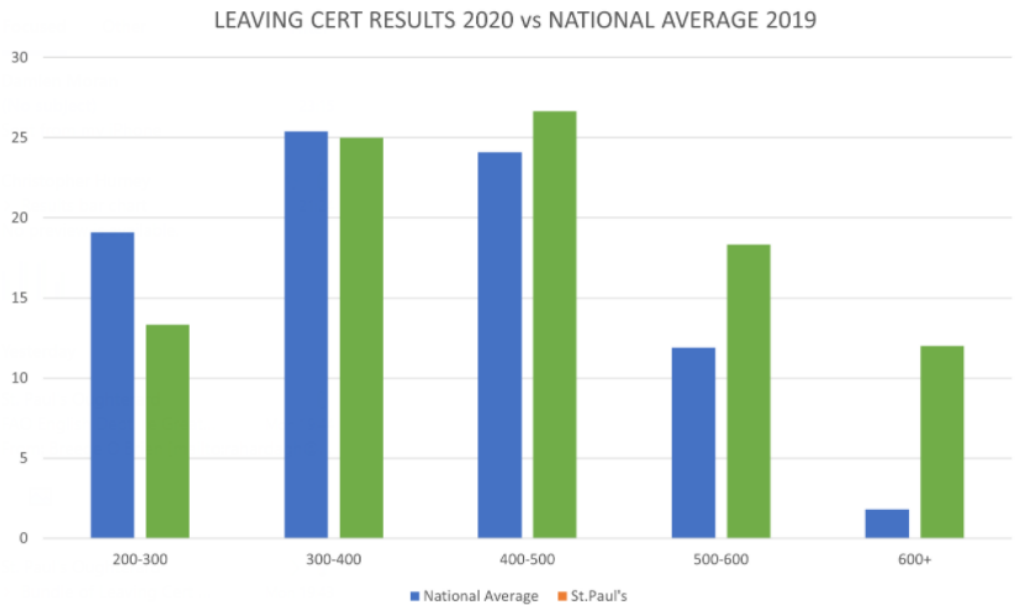


# Leaving Cert Results

This year was an unprecedented year for the Leaving Cert class of 2020.

For the first time ever the results were released on the 13th of September and the students accessed them online.

This graph shows how our students exceeded the national average in the 400-625 point bands.



Everyone at St. Paul's would like to congratulate them on their great results under such difficult circumstances

We could not be prouder of the class of 2020 (pictured below). They showed determination and commitment in the face of adversity.

The vast majority of students have recently taken up places at university and we would like to take this opportunity to wish them luck in their chosen field of study.

We would like to make special mention of three students who achieved 625 points, Shauna Carter, Aonghus Feeney and Cora McGloin. Aonghus was also awarded the Naughton Scholarship for his exceptional results. Well done to all.





# School News

This year we are very excited about our totally revamped school website. The new design offers easy access to a huge array of up to date school news and information,

This platform gives both parents and students an opportunity to stay connected with our school community.

There are a number of helpful links for support services that parents and students may find helpful.

Please visit us at  
[www.stpaulsougherard.com](http://www.stpaulsougherard.com)



## News



### Clarification on Face Coverings in Post Primary Schools

18 September 2020

Click on the link below: [Face Covering Clarification Document](#)

[Read more](#)

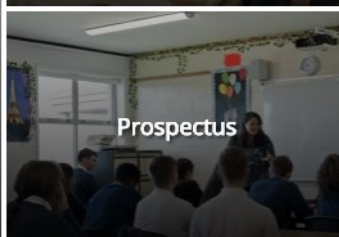
[School News](#)



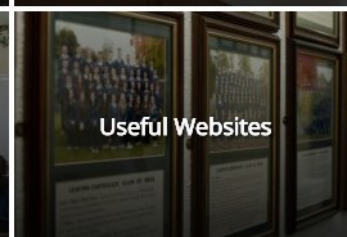
School Calendar



Virtual Tour for Incoming 1st Years



Prospectus



Useful Websites

A huge congratulations to Marta Banek and Dara Walsh who were selected to play on the Irish U-16 girls and boys teams respectively.

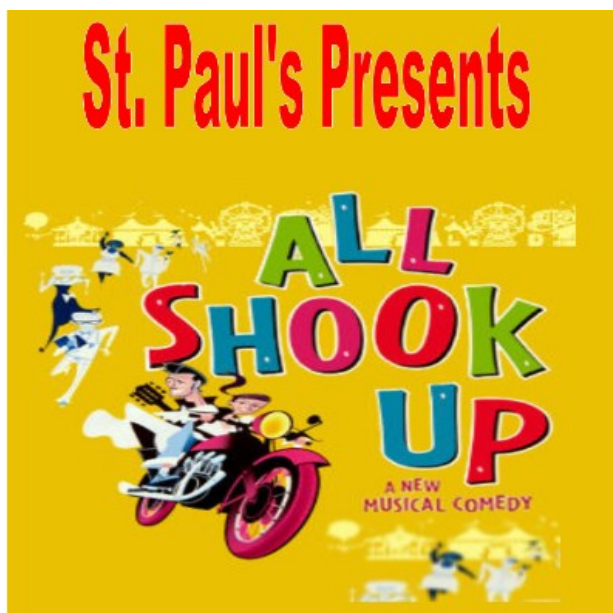
To play basketball at an international level is a remarkable achievement and we are all very proud of them.



# Transition Year Muscial

One of the highlights of last year's Transition Year was their production of "*All Shook Up*". The cast were remarkable and the show was a resounding success. Pictured below are some of the cast in action on the night.

In keeping with public health advice we have decided to postpone this year's school musical. However when it is safe to do so we will be back bigger and better then ever.







## **VIRTUAL OPEN NIGHT**

**St. Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard**

**Thursday 22nd October 2020, 7.00 p.m.**

**Principal's presentation at 7.00 p.m. A virtual tour of the school is available on our website**

This year we have had to slightly change the open night format in light of recent public health advice. All 6th class pupils and their parents are invited to attend a virtual information evening/open night online. Any 5th class pupils who do not have siblings in the school are also welcome to attend with their parents.

Parents will be able to access the open evening through our school website @ [www.stpaulsoughterard.com](http://www.stpaulsoughterard.com).