



COLÁISTE ABHAINN RÍ

(Newsletter, Vol. 1)

****New school opening September 2022****

We are a Christian school community of inclusion and care rooted in the Catholic ethos of teaching and learning. We are committed to maximising the potential of each student in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We place our students at the heart of everything we do.

Update:

A new state of the art 600+ pupil post-primary school with an expanded curriculum will open in Callan, Kilkenny in September 2022. This new school will be an amalgamation of two existing second level schools, St. Brigid's College (CEIST) and Coláiste Éamann Rís (ERST). The new school will merge the two existing secondary schools to form a new co-educational Catholic voluntary secondary school to serve all students from the area. Work is currently underway to make this vision a reality. To keep up to date on the progress, stay linked in with the 'Coláiste Abhainn Rí' tab on both schools' websites.



(Photos: TY Practical subjects initiative between both schools)

Local Support Needed:

The Trustees of both schools emphasised that support from both school communities (students, parents, management, staff, both at Primary and Secondary level) along with the support from the entire community in Callan and surrounding areas, is essential for the success of this project. Work is currently underway to plan for this amalgamation with various taskforces set up by the steering committee. *Please feel free to get involved – many hands make light work!*

See school(s) websites/social media for details.



Contact Information:

For further information about and/or to contribute to this project, please contact:

		
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Mission Statement: (Taskforce Report - David Walton)

Following a meeting of both staffs to gather feedback regarding the agreed key values for a Mission Statement for the new school, a committee was formed with staff representatives from each school. These staff members met along with representatives from ERST and CEIST to produce a formula of words, based on these key values. This draft Mission Statement was shared with both school communities for feedback/observations. The Mission Statement was then finalised by the committee and presented to Steering Committee for ratification. The Mission Statement Committee were commended by the PSC for the excellent work in concluding this process. The approved Mission Statement for Coláiste Abhainn Rí is now available – see PG.1 (Committee: David Walton, Martina Griffin, Lorraine O'Shea Jacqueline Kennedy, Joanna Sheehan & Marie Louise Briody)

Uniform: (Taskforce Report - Lorna Cody)

The childhood days of almost every single person will invariably have some memories coloured by the school uniform that they wore. We hope that the new school uniform of Coláiste Abhainn Rí will instil a sense of pride and dignity in all the students of our new school and as such the important task of choosing a new uniform is well underway. A sub-committee was formed from the Project steering committee to work on a new School Uniform for Coláiste Abhainn Rí. To begin the process the Principals from St. Brigid's College and Coláiste Éamann Rís asked parents/ students to demonstrate their wishes for the new school uniform. This research was collated and relayed back to the Entire Project Steering Committee.

It was felt that collaboration with parents was vital in this task and a sub-committee of interested parents and teachers was formed. Over numerous meetings with suppliers in person and more recently through Zoom the onerous task of narrowing down the selection to just 2 options is now complete. The sub-committee are eagerly awaiting the sample uniforms which suppliers are currently producing. Once the samples have been finalised, they will be shared with the school communities and will be voted upon. It is anticipated that this should take place at the start of the new year. A huge level of gratitude must be expressed to the parents, teachers and students involved, as a lot of hours of deliberation and collaboration has taken place to date.

Crest: (Taskforce Report - Aonghus Mac Domhnail)

The process for the selection of the school crest is currently underway. A competition was set up to get input from the community, this was split into three sections – primary, post primary and adult. The purpose of this competition was to get inspiration from the community for the design of the new crest. Below are some of the key considerations:

- The school's name Coláiste Abhainn Rí and its meaning.
- Education, and the history of education in Callan, through the amalgamating schools, St. Brigid's College and Coláiste Éamann Rís.
- What the new school might represent to the community at large.

On closure of the competition, over 100 entries have been received. It is proposed that the submitted crest designs, or a particular crest, will form the basis of the new crest design. All entries are at present being reviewed and a crest, or crest theme, will be selected to go forward as the inspiration for the new school crest, for approval of the Project Steering Committee and the trustees of the existing schools. It is hoped to have our new crest design completed in early 2021.

Coláiste Abhainn Rí:

The new school is named after the river which flows through Callan, this name reflects the history of the town as well one of its main geographical features. Abhainn Rí, also known as the Kings River, rises in the Slieveardagh Hills of Tipperary, flowing 70kms, through Callan, on its way to join the Nore at Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny. Callan is named after a former High King of Ireland, Niall Caille, who, when leading an army across the river to fight the Norsemen, was drowned while trying to rescue one of his entourage being swept away in the flooded river. It is this incident which gives the river its name and that name has passed to our new school.



Brief History of Education in Callan:



Edmund Ignatius Rice was born on 1st June, 1762A in Callan in County Kilkenny. The Edmund Rice tradition of schools began in 1802. The Christian Brothers School in Callan was founded at West Street in 1868 inspired by the vision of the Blessed Edmund Rice. Education continued there until 1983 when the Christian Brothers opened the new CBS school, which today is **Coláiste Éamann Rís** under the trusteeship of ERST.



Catherine McAuley founded the Religious Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin in 1831. The Sisters of Mercy came to Callan from Athy in December 1872, and took up residence in Callan Lodge. This was vacated in September 1881 when the new Convent, St. Mary's, was opened and blessed. In 1884 the Sisters opened St. Brigid's Missionary School. Today we have **St. Brigid's College** under the trusteeship of CEIST.

The primary school **Bunscoil McAuley Rice** was established in 2007 as a result of the amalgamation of Scoil Iognáid de Rís (ERST) and Scoil Mhuire (CEIST).

Coláiste Abhainn Rí will open in September 2022 to continue the work of the Christian Brothers and the Mercy Sisters in Callan.

The work of the Project Steering Committee (PSC):

A steering committee was appointed by the trustees of ERST and CEIST in October 2019 to guarantee the seamless transition for current students enrolled in both schools and ensure the best possible educational provision for future students. Over the past year, the committee has been busy working on areas such as the name, crest, uniform, mission statement, curriculum and much more to ensure everything is in place for September 2022. Please see below for an update from the various taskforces on the work being carried out. (Committee: Frank Smith, Majella Gleeson, Sally Ronayne, Joseph Brennan, Donna Ivers, Lorna Cody, Emer Hickey, Paddy Lacey, Martin Fahey, Aonghus Mac Domhnaill, Mary Dollard, Eddie Bourke & Gerry Watchorn).



(Photo: PSC online meetings)

School Name: (Taskforce Report - Aonghus Mac Domhnaill)

A competition was ran in the first quarter of 2020 where we obtained a list of names from the general community as our starting point. When evaluated against the defined criteria we ended up with a pool of over 85 names to generate our shortlist from. The task force then selected their 5 favourites which led to a pool of 9 distinct names. The task team then voted, order of preference, for each of the nine names to generate a short list of 5 (with subs!) to be put to a vote of the school communities. After the vote was concluded, using PR of the STV as in an election, Coláiste Abhainn Rí was put to the trustees as the preferred choice, a name that was accepted in March this year.

Curriculum: (Taskforce Report - Sally Ronayne)

On the 16th October the two school communities came together for the second day of planning for Coláiste Abhainn Rí. In line with Government restrictions meetings were held via Zoom. The focus of the day was twofold. Staff "met" in breakout rooms to reflect on the benefits the amalgamation would bring to the community of Callan. Teachers had time to consider the curriculum, program and facilities they would like to see on offer to incoming pupils. Consideration was also given to new initiatives that could be envisaged in a larger, co-ed voluntary secondary school. Obstacles that still needed to be addressed were also discussed.

The second main objective of the day was to allow teachers from different subject departments to meet and plan for the 2021/22 cohort. These meetings again happened over zoom but even with restrictions in place bonds between teachers were formed and strengthened. The meetings resulted in most departments agreeing a textbooks, topics and sequences to be covered and a common assessment approach. Subject departments also established Teams on the Microsoft platform thus agreeing to share schemes of work and resources which will further strengthen ties between the schools and help to reduce the workload for all.

It is envisaged that the level of cooperation enjoyed by all will ensure a seamless transition for pupils and staff when the schools finally become one during the summer of '22.