

Best Wishes for the New Year Ahead

A chairde,

I wish each and every member of the Le Chéile family gach beannacht agus ráth as the new school year begins. Welcome back to all returning staff and a special welcome to all new staff. I look forward to getting to meet as many people as possible in the times ahead. Schools have certainly played a huge role during Covid-19 and I extend my appreciation for all the hard work that continues in each and every school as we ensure we all do our very best to protect, support and mind each other in these trying times. I encourage you all to be proud of how you have adapted, how you have served your community of students and parents and I hope that you had a good summer break. I extend my condolences to the schools and members of the Le Chéile family who experienced bereavement over the summer break.

From caretakers, to admin team personnel, to supervisors, to canteen staff, to Special Needs Assistants, to PME students, to teachers, school leaders and members of Boards of Management, we put the 'le chéile' into practice! We live our gospel values in our relationships with each other, we give witness in our interactions, we share our wisdom and experience and we extend a welcome to others.

Anyone of us can, at any time, enter the house of God.

All we have to do is turn the Key. – J.P. Vaswani

One of the things that has struck me most about the Le Chéile crest and story is the significance of keys. The piece of art that adorns the entrance of the new Chéile Education Centre features keys from the 15 Congregations of the Trust, the interlocking keys on the crest points to an unlocking of knowledge, opportunities and creativity. Together we are all called to open doors, to create new possibilities, to look forward and I certainly hope that together we shall continue the wonderful legacy that we inherit in Catholic education and the rich heritage that is entrusted to us.

As I transition into my new role within Le Chéile Schools Trust, I thank everyone who has reached out to extend a warmth of welcome. Be assured of my total commitment to serve, support and encourage the 75 schools within the Trust. I was very fortunate to meet many of the Chairpersons and school leaders at the end of the year via Zoom, please God in time we shall get to meet in person. As I said that day, I am the person wearing the big "L" plate – Learning, Listening and Leading. I have been hearing of many exciting plans that individual schools have, the fantastic wealth of talent and experience in our schools, as well as, the pride in our students and past-pupils – indeed our Olympians.

I wish Eilís every blessing in her new role and I thank her for the guidance, kindness and openness she has shown to me personally at this time. She leaves a rich legacy in Irish education and in the Le Chéile family. Her 12 years of leadership of the Le Chéile Schools Trust has seen great development and change but her commitment, vision, steadfastness, tenacity and dedication has ensured an organisation that has grown from strength to strength. Her most recent achievement has been the fruition of years of work to open the new Le Chéile Education Centre which please God in time, many of you shall get an opportunity to visit.

Go n-éirí libh ar fad,

Marie-Thérèse Kilmartin.