



# Le Chéile Chronicle

Welcome - Wisdom - Witness



*Nollaig Shona*

Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig



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December 2021

## From the Chairperson of the Board of Management

To think that this time last year the patronage for Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig had not yet been granted is very hard to believe. It was a very proud moment for Le Chéile School's Trust to receive the good news that the new secondary school in Ballincollig would be a 'Le Chéile' school. We had established Le Chéile Secondary School, Tyrrelstown and were honoured to be chosen by the people of Ballincollig to begin another exciting journey. Through unprecedented times an interim Board of Management was formed. We met virtually and initiated the process of establishing our school, which was indeed daunting but it has been a pleasure for me to watch the school develop and grow from nothing to what it is now. I thoroughly enjoy my visits to the school, meeting with our excellent staff and speaking with the students. So much has been achieved in a very short time and I must thank our staff, students and parents for that. I very much look forward to what lies ahead. Wishing you a very happy and holy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.



Tony Lee

## Principal's address

It is with great honour and pride that I write this first Principal's address of the first edition of the Le Chéile Chronicle.



To be appointed the leader of a brand new school and to play an integral part in its development and growth from inception, is the greatest privilege for any Principal and I am certainly very grateful to the Board of Management of Le Chéile Secondary School and the Le Chéile Trust for appointing me to this very exciting role. To say it has been exciting is an understatement. From my beginning in a room last May, on my own in Ballincollig GAA club, to whom I am very grateful, to sitting in an office in the former Cork Film Centre listening to the hustle and bustle of everyday school life has been an amazing beginning to what I know will be an amazing journey. Once the staff of Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig were appointed last May, I knew our students would receive an exemplary standard of teaching and learning, would be provided with an array of both curricular and extra-curricular activities and most importantly would be actively cared for and looked after very, very well. In a very short amount of time, we have created a positive, warm welcoming atmosphere, where laughter is heard every day, where students are at their ease when speaking with staff and where every child is nurtured individually to become the best version of themselves that they can be. It has been a very busy start for us at Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig as will be evident throughout this newsletter. I wish to thank our Board of Management and in particular, our Chairperson, Mr. Tony Lee, our extremely hard-working staff, our students for being the great characters they are and for always being themselves and of course our parents, who have placed great faith in us. I wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas, and with every blessing for 2022.

Stay safe,

Is mise le meas,

Piobla Bennett

# Meet the Staff

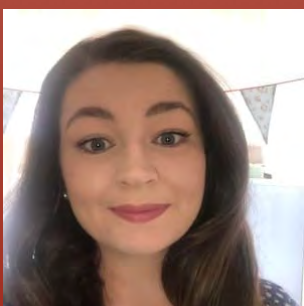
The management and staff at Le Chéile cover all bases to support our students on both an academic and extra-curricular level



**Ms. Nicola Barrett**  
Principal



**Mr. Peter Cregan**  
Technical Graphics |  
Woodwork | Maths



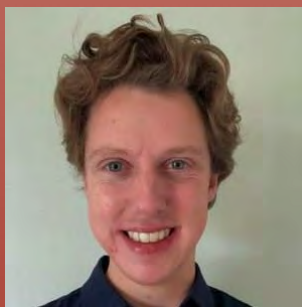
**Ms. Kelly O'Neill**  
Home Economics |  
Business |  
Wellbeing



**Ms. Patrizia O'Mahony**  
German



**Ms. Stephanie Coffey**  
Religious Education |  
History | Social Personal  
Health Education



**Mr. Adam Kelly**  
Visual Art | Religious Education |  
Digital Literacy



**Ms. Amy O'Sullivan**  
Office  
Administrator



**Ms. Aoife Barry-Murphy**  
Geography | Business |  
Physical Education



**Mr. Jerry Browne**  
Facilities Manager



**Ms. Kate McCarthy**  
Science | Maths |  
Physical Education



**Mr. Cillian Brennan**  
Gaeilge | English |  
French | Music

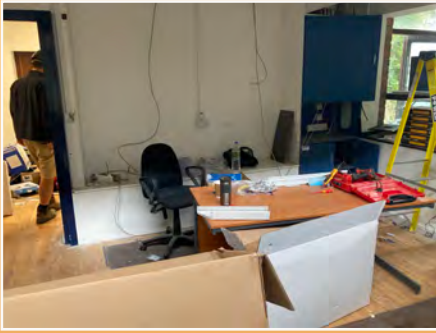
# From a building to a school

The first staff team building day was a busy day preparing the building for the first cohort of students at Le Chéile secondary school. While we worked very hard it was great fun and we are delighted with the transformation.



Hand sanitiser installation, Principal office relocation, Covid posters lamination, book rental preparation - it was all systems go!

# Before and after shots!



Reception Area



Naomh Fionnbarra



Naomh Pádraig



Hybrid Practical room



Corridor



# Le Chéile's Opening Day



Students L-R: Matthew Telford, Rian O'Mahony, Shane McSweeney, Tomasz Cymerkiewicz, Kate Maguire, Sam Varghese, Connor Knapp, Kyle Heneghan, David Dunne, Leonard K.J., Wiktoria Szynekiewicz, Kaci O'Connor, Jayden Doyle, Waldemar Kaźmierczak, Rachel Moyo, Kayleigh Ryan, Bobby Shaw, Eryk Sosadzin and Kevin John pictured with their class teachers Ms Aoife Barry Murphy and Mr Adam Kelly and Principal Ms Nicola Barrett



(L-R) Principal Nicola Barrett, outgoing CEO of Le Chéile Ms Eilis Humphreys and BOM Chairperson Mr Tony Lee



Staff Selfie on the opening day

# Day 1 from a teacher's perspective

Ms. Kate McCarthy

The beginning of a new school year is one of the most important times of a student's life, especially the first day in a brand new school, surrounded by brand new teachers and brand new peers. The nervous energy on day one was palpable, after all, the first day of school is the holy grail of first impressions.

When the doors of Le Chéile Secondary School Ballincollig swung open, the faces of new students and parents peered into a building that had laid vacant for years. The faces of a group of teachers and staff that had only met each other a few days before welcomed them in with smiles and open arms.

These new students were quick to volunteer to help in the founding school Mass, bringing up offerings to the altar and participating in the first of many Prayer Services. At lunch time, the foundations of lifelong friendships were formed, with students slowly coming out of their shells, engaging in tentative small talk which would evolve into raucous laughter by the end of the day.

As the first day came to an end, and our new students rushed out to tell parents and siblings about all the new people they had met, history was made. Our very first day In Le Chéile Secondary School had come to a close.



The moment our students entered their home away from home for the next 6 years!



Principal Nicola Barrett's address to the students, staff and BOM on the momentous occasion

# 1st Year Induction

## New Beginnings

### Connor Knapp

The first week of school was like a whole new world. From the moment we stepped into the building to the weeks settling into classes and school life, it was like nothing we had experienced before. Starting secondary school is daunting, especially since the school was new, we had no idea what the teachers were like, no idea how hard the classes were, and no idea if we would get along with each other.

On the first day, we were introduced to our class teachers, Ms Barry-Murphy and Mr Kelly. We were given our timetables, journals and books and lots of advice. Those timetables, journals, books have become a central part of our lives in the days that have followed. The advice is helping to make those days pass more smoothly.

Part of the process has been getting to know each other. Happily it's been a pleasant one. To think it's been months since we started out, is hard to believe. However I think I speak for everyone when I say we have been enjoying almost every day since we started. I look forward now to the days ahead.

## Creative induction

### Home Economics induction





## School Survival Kits

Each student received a 'survival kit' moment on their first day at Le Chéile



## Time Capsule



Students wrote letters to themselves and recorded their hand prints which they will receive at their L.C. Graduation in 2027!

## Sports Day

### Jayden Doyle

Our first week in Le Chéile was an induction week that culminated in a hugely enjoyable Sports Day. Excitement bubbled over into laughter and shouting as the day went on.

There was a fairly extensive series of fun events including a crossbar challenge, cornhole, the welly toss, an obstacle course and another soccer skills trial. For all that they were fun events, the competition was fierce.

The fiercest competition then was witnessed during the main event - a 60 metre sprint. There was a girls event, a boys event and a relay. Official times were kept and therefore our current school record is held by David Dunne at a blistering pace of 7.11 seconds. Matty Telford was hot on his heels and is reported to be in training for next year already.



# Beginning of School Year Mass 2021

As the first Catholic secondary school to open in Ballincollig, it was with some excitement that we prepared for our opening school Mass. On Friday 26th November, we headed to the Church of St. Mary and St. John, Ballincollig.

Between singing, readings, Prayers of the faithful and the offering of gifts everyone in the school got involved. Mr Tony Lee from the Le Chéile Trust was present and gave the opening address. It was great to have him there. I would like to thank the teachers who put in a lot of work to get everything and everybody ready.

The theme of this Mass was friendship and new beginnings. Fr. Alan O'Leary spoke on this theme and welcomed us to the Church and to the school. He told us that great things can happen in small numbers. He reminded us that Jesus initially only had 12 followers and similarly Le Chéile has been founded with 18 students. We concluded with a friendship blessing and some words from Ms Barrett. After the celebration of the Mass we had more cause to celebrate as we were given a half day to mark the occasion.

Ríán O'Mahony



Our founding students and teachers  
at our opening School Mass



Le Chéile's founding staff choir!

# Le Chéile's Sacred Space



At the entrance of our school, you will find a Sacred Space. This space consists of images, Prayers and quotes which guide us through our day. Each month, there is a different theme. So far, the students have decorated the Sacred Space with the following themes in mind:

**September:**

We are..... (an introduction)

**October: Friendship**

**November: Remembrance Month**

**December: Advent**



# Science Week

Sam's  
magnetic  
slime



Rian  
O'Mahoney:  
Science  
Poster

David Dunne

The 7th of November heralded the beginning of Science Week. Ms. McCarthy had a range of activities for the students to try out. From growing sugar crystals, to Elephant's Toothpaste, to fun with magnets. All the students were feverish with excitement.



Flame Tests



# Maths Week



Eryk - winner of  
the jar of sweets

Kevin John

Ms. McCarthy was working nineteen to the dozen from the 21st of October on. We were bombarded with facts and figures, algebra and arithmetic for Maths Week. There were a number of enjoyable activities and challenges that culminated in the quiz won by Kayleigh Ryan at the end of the week. Congratulations to the runners up Connor Knapp and Tomasz Cymerkiewicz. The jar of sweets which we had all pondered that week was won by Eryk Sosadzin who correctly estimated the total contents and squared them away without delay.



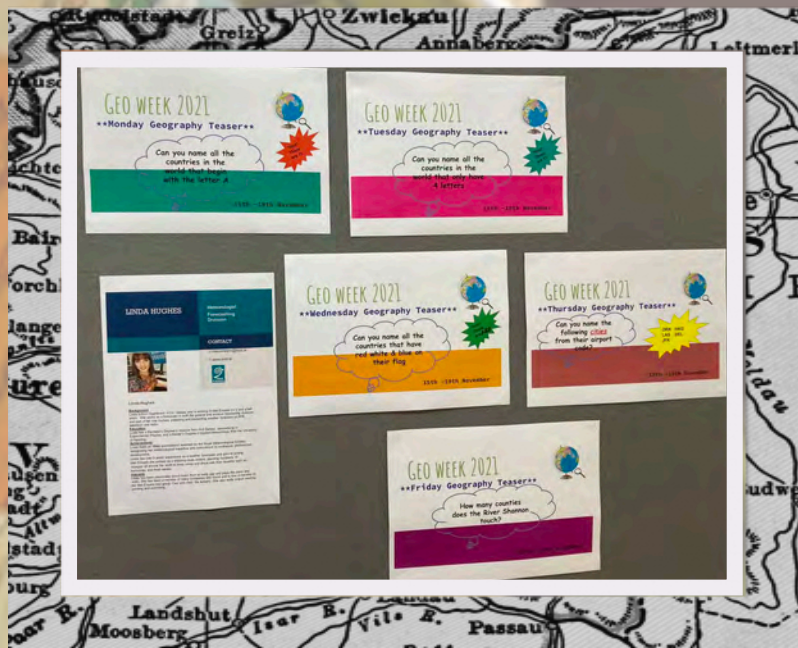
Our  
Maths  
quiz  
winner  
Kayleigh  
focussing  
on the  
task at  
hand!

# Geo Week

15-19th Nov. 2021



Wiktorija and Sam - Geo week winners



## Shane McSweeney

From the 15th to the 19th of November 2021, Geography week took over our school.

Each day we had a Geography Brain Teaser Question students racing to be the first in with a correct answer to win a prize.

We also had a Poster Competition. Each student had to choose a country of their choice and create a flag poster of interesting Geographical facts on that country. Congratulations to our worthy winner Wiktorija Szynkiewicz.

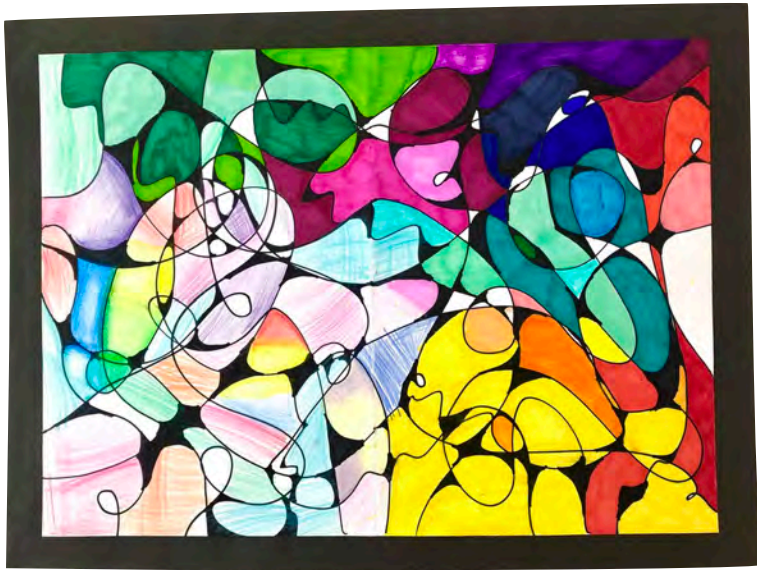
Perhaps the highlight of the week was a virtual visit from MET Eireann weather forecaster Linda Hughes who spoke to us about all things geography, meteorology and climate. She focused on how geography plays such an important role in weather forecasting.



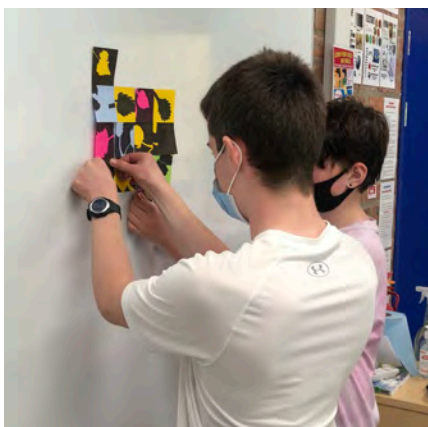
Linda Hughes  
from  
MET Eireann

# Visual Art @ Le Chéile

## Neurographic mindful Art



Our Le Chéile gallery is expanding; our second rotation of Visual Art students were busy working on a collaborative piece. The 49 individual drawings focussed on positive and negative spaces based on their original observations of leaves.



# Student Voice at Le Chéile

## Our first ever... Student Council!

From left to right:  
Sam Varghese,  
Bobby Shaw, Matty  
Telford, Connor  
Knapp, Kevin John  
pictured with  
Principal Nicola  
Barrett.



All of our students are encouraged to join in with the development of our school community. Year groups, as they are introduced to the school, are represented on the student council through class prefects. The aim of the student council is to promote the interests of the school and the involvement of the students in the affairs of the school in cooperation with the Board of Management, parents and teachers. This partnership works for the benefit of the school and its students.

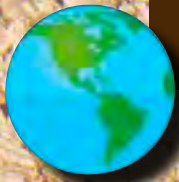
## Academic Support

### Academic Mentor System Kayleigh Ryan

Each student is assigned a teacher to be their mentor. This teacher provides help, support and advice with regard to homework, study and exams. They are ready to help students with any problems that they might be facing. In my experience, this support has both helped students and helped to build a bond of trust between students and teachers.

### Team Teaching @ Le Chéile

We are lucky to have a lot of team teaching in our classes. This has allowed for a much greater level of support for all students. Team teaching has led to variety in instruction, creativity and spontaneity in lessons, and opportunities for enrichment and differentiation with the assistant teacher on hand to help individual students when needed and contributing to the lessons where appropriate.



# Student Wellbeing

## Charity work



Our students participated in the Team Hope Shoe Box Appeal; an Irish, Christian development aid charity. This charity helps needy children in Eastern Europe and Africa. Children who have no food, some can't go to school and some don't even have clean water to drink. We helped these children by filling a shoebox full of things to write with, things to wash with, things to wear and wow gifts.

"Helping one person might not change the world, but it could change the world for one person".

## Physical fitness

Physical Education in Le Chéile Secondary School encourages students to become physically active which contributes to their wellbeing. Students learn to appreciate the importance of regular physical activity and how to include physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle.



## Lunchtime activities



Student Wellbeing is at the core of everything we do at Le Chéile Ballincollig. We firmly believe that if our students are happy, then everything else will fall into place. Students often participate in indoor games and activities during lunchtime when the weather is poorer.



## Waldemar Kazimierczak

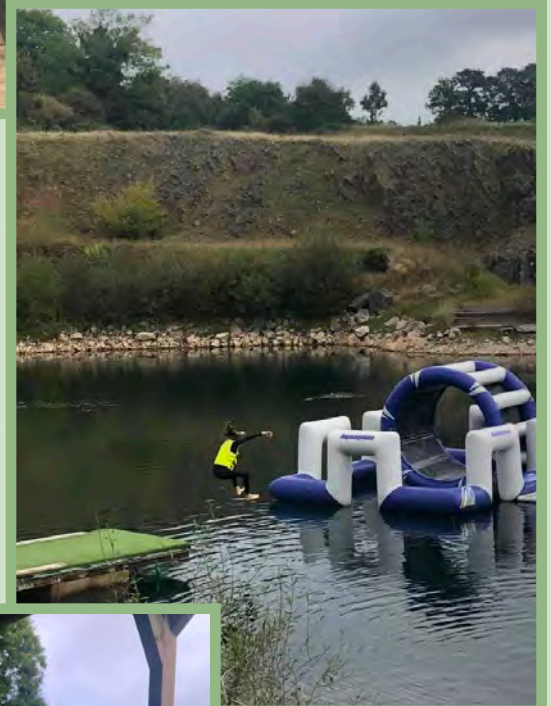
On the 22nd of October on a beautiful sunny day, we set off for a fun day out at Ballyhass Adventure Centre.

The first activity was archery. Both staff and students had a go and everyone did pretty well. Shane McSweeney was the student winner and Mr. Brennan took the honours for the teachers.

In the lake at the base of an old quarry, the huge blow up park loomed up to greet us. There were many different things to try out such as: a slide, a climbing wall, a hamster ball and more besides. We squeezed into our wetsuits and soon enough it was time to jump in. An hour of splashing, jumping, shouting and laughing later everyone swam back to shore and got changed.

After lunch we were given protective equipment to put on. The instructors led us to three ridiculously tall towers that we climbed one by one. The leap of faith was definitely not for the faint hearted.

Back on the bus, the guitar was broken out and the teachers had a sing song while we chatted and relaxed. Happy out after a great day out.



# Halloween



We had lots of fun celebrating our First Halloween in Le Chéile. Both students and staff participated in various activities such as pumpkin painting/carving, classroom decorating and dressing up. Each of these activities had a top prize. It got very competitive!! Students voted anonymously and on October 21st the results were in ....

- 🎃 Best Student Pumpkin: David Dunne
- 🎃 Best Teacher Pumpkin: Mr Kelly and Ms Coffey
- 🎃 Best Student Costume: Shane McSweeney
- 🎃 Best Teacher Costume: Mr Kelly
- 🎃 Best Decorated Classroom: Naomh Fionnbarra



# Navigate November

We set our school community a huge challenge for November to see how far we could navigate around Ireland for the 30 days of the month.

Each week we calculated our steps. Students with the most steps from each class won Homework passes and each teacher winner getting a well earned cup of coffee.

We clocked up a total of 3020km in total which was around the coast of Ireland 1 and a half times. A super achievement by all in the community.



Student winners receiving their 'no homework' passes!



Teacher winners receiving their takeaway coffees!



We finished off our Navigate November with a visit from Rob Heffernan to our school. He spoke to the students about the importance of being active and how a healthy mind is so important for our wellbeing. We went and did a kilometre run with Rob in Ballincollig Regional Park, all students and staff participated and it turned out to be a huge success.

# 'Speak Up' Competition

## Wiktorija Szynkiewicz

The inaugural edition of 'Speak Up' - a First Year Public Speaking Competition - took place in Le Chéile on the 3rd of December.

Representatives from Le Chéile, Pres Ballyphehane, Coláiste Choilm, and Gaelcholáiste Choilm took part on the day. Students had chosen interesting topics and spoke about them in creative ways. The adjudicators were incredibly impressed with the quality of the content and the confidence of the delivery.

Third prize went to our own Shane McSweeney who's wit and clarity won over the judges. Second was Lauren O'Sullivan from Gaelcholáiste Choilm whose poise and confidence in delivery was exemplary. The overall winner was Des Murphy from Gaelcholáiste Choilm and to describe his efforts as scintillating and entertaining would be to understate his achievement.

We look forward now to a debating competition with these and other schools in the new year.



# Ballincollig Christmas Tree Competition



Christmas Festival Cork invited Le Chéile Secondary School Ballincollig to take part in a community initiative to decorate a Christmas tree which is on display to the public inside The Carraig Centre this December and will be part of a Christmas tree competition! Our Assigned Theme is the foretelling of the coming of the Saviour using a Bible verse from the Old Testament (Isaiah 9:2) as a starting point for their ideas.



Students took inspiration from the colour scheme of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' to transform their tree into a wonderful gradient of colours from light to dark

Taking the symbol of the person from Le Chéile's school crest students (and staff!) each decorated their own silhouette to represent the theme of waiting for the Saviour, Jesus Christ

## Isaiah 9:2

"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned"

# Woodwork and Home Economics Christmas decorations



Woodwork students got to grips with using Tenon and Coping saws this season - just in time for making their tabletop Christmas decorations and Home Economics students mastered their running, chain, blanket and satin stitches in time to sew up their padded decorations

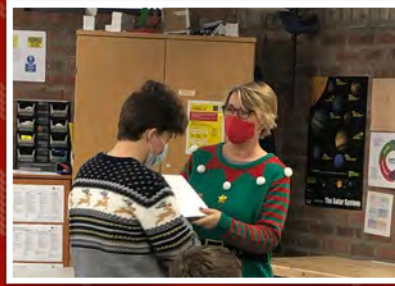


## Secret Santa



It wouldn't be this time of year if students couldn't share a little bit of Christmas cheer with each other!

# Student Achievement and Awards



Student achievements and endeavours are recognised through our Awards Ceremonies.

Eryk Sosadzin was the 1st ever recipient of our Le Chéile Hidden Hero award - in recognition of the unassuming manner in which he has settled into 1st year. He is a hard-working, kind, funny student and has been a great support to all of his classmates.

Certificates of Excellence were awarded to Connor Knapp, Kevin John, Rian O'Mahony and Eryk Sosadzin in recognition of an outstanding merit sheet record. Certificates of Excellence were awarded to Wiktorina and Leo - in recognition of the significant improvement they have made in their classwork, homework and overall participation in school life since October. Congratulations to all!



Le Chéile's Hidden Hero  
for Term 1....  
Eryk Sosadzin!!

Certificates of Excellence: Wiktorina,  
Connor, Rian, Kevin, Eryk and Leo!

# Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig



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