

Creagh College October 2021 Newsletter

Halloween Mid-term

To our students, to their parents and guardians, and to all our staff, well done and congratulations on successfully completing the first term of the 21/22 academic year. It was a particularly busy term for everyone, and we hope that everyone had a well-deserved rest over the mid-term break. At this stage of the year, all students should be well settled into all aspects of school life. Our first-year students have successfully made the transition to post primary school in Creagh College. They enjoyed taking part in Bonding Week from the 11th to the 15th of October. Please follow us on Facebook to get regular updates on all the events happening in the school.

[HSE advice re: Covid-19](#)

The HSE Public Health team has been in touch this week to inform us that a pupil/staff member has tested positive for Covid-19 and that close contacts have been informed. The following is some information they have asked us to share with you:

1. Remind all parents and staff to keep an eye on their health and to check for symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms of Covid-19 can include some or all of the following - fever (temperature of 38°C or higher), cough, shortness of breath, any loss or change to the senses of smell or taste, headache, sore throat, or a runny nose. If any pupil or member of staff develops these symptoms they must self-isolate and contact their GP for advice regarding a COVID-19 test.
2. Even with high population uptake of COVID-19 vaccination, it is important that you continue to support the pupils and staff of your school community during the COVID-19 pandemic in the effective manner you have been. It is important to reinforce to your school community that all public health guidelines still need to be followed to protect the health of pupils and staff, these include:
 - Wearing face coverings
 - Cleaning hands regularly
 - Maintaining physical distance from others
 - Being mindful of the ventilation of classrooms by opening windows and doors as appropriate.
3. Encourage all those who are eligible for vaccination within your school community to access appropriate information around this (available at <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>) For those wishing to arrange vaccination, they can do so at either [COVID-19 vaccines - HSE.ie](https://www2.hse.ie) or www2.hse.ie Register using the HSE Vaccine portal (<https://vaccine.hse.ie/#register>) **OR** phone the HSE at 1800 700 700

What is the advice for close contacts who are fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

Close contacts who are fully-vaccinated against COVID-19 are required to restrict their movements until they receive a call from the HSE Contact Management Programme. During this call a review of each close contact's vaccination (dates and type) and medical history will determine whether the vaccine is likely to provide "significant immunity" for them. **The close contact will then be advised whether they can return to school or whether they need to continue to restrict movements.**

When is a person considered to be fully-vaccinated?

- a. 7 days after receipt of the second Pfizer-BioNTech dose (two dose vaccination course)
- b. 15 days after receipt of the second AstraZeneca dose (two dose vaccination course)

What is the advice for close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated against COVID-19?

- Close contacts who are not fully-vaccinated will need to go for two PCR tests for COVID-19, one as soon as possible and one on Day 10 after their last exposure to the COVID-19 case.
- They will need to restrict their movements ([stay at home](#)) until the Day 10 test has been done. This includes not attending work or school.
- If the Day 10 test result is “not detected” or negative, the pupil or staff member can return to school provided they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

What about the families of those who are close contacts?

Other people who live at home with the close contact do not need to restrict their movements, provided the close contact has no Covid symptoms. This means they can continue to attend school. If the close contact tests positive for COVID-19, the household will then need to restrict their movements.

What if a close contact declines the COVID-19 test?

Testing is not mandatory. But if a close contact does not have a Day 10 test done, this means they need to continue to restrict their movements for 14 days after their last contact with the person with COVID-19.

More information

Up to date information and advice on COVID-19 is available on [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie).

[Behaviour Tab: VSware and use of behaviour tab](#)

Thank you to those of you who have had the opportunity to complete our recent survey on access to VSware. 97% of parents had access and we hope that the remaining 3% now have access.

We would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention, the method in which we have decided to record and monitor student behaviour for this academic year. For most parents this is not completely new as we would have used this method last year due to COVID -19.

The student journal:

In previous years, teachers have used the student journal to record both positive and negative behaviour. We then asked parents/guardians to monitor their child’s journal on a weekly basis and sign the journal at the end of each week. The purpose of this was to inform us that you had viewed their child’s journal and that you were monitoring their behaviour in school.

We have since decided to move away from the journal for recording behaviour and use it solely for the purpose of all other communication between home and school, for example: requesting a phone call from a teacher. We will now record all student behaviour issues using our school management system –

VShare. Teachers will record student behaviour issues on VShare and parents will have full access to this information via the Behaviour Tab.

Why are we changing?

A lot of parents were happy that they could see their child's behaviour in the app. Parents are using VShare increasingly each day, so it is logical for parents to access their child's attendance, reports, timetables (which are now live) and behaviour all in the one place.

What you need to do?

For this new system to work effectively in addressing negative behaviour before issues escalate, and to acknowledge our students' excellent behaviour (almost all our students behave well and work hard almost all of the time) it is important that the school staff, parents, and students are working together. It is important that we support you as much as we can by giving you access to this information on VShare. As parents/guardians it is your responsibility to check your child's behaviour tab on a weekly basis and sign their journal to say, ***"I have viewed my child's behaviour this week."*** This demonstrates to students that we are working together to acknowledge positive behaviour while also working together to ensure negative behaviour is reduced. It affirms the link between home and school.

How do you access the Behaviour Tab for you child?

Step 1:

- All parents should have the VShare app downloaded
- All parents/guardians should have their VShare LOGIN DETAILS. If anyone does not have these details please contact the front office, either via email or by phone and we will get these details to you asap. (Email: creaghcollege@wwetb.ie; 0539484035)
- Here is a link to the guide for parents from VShare <https://support.vshare.ie/en/guides-for-parents> for further information and support and details on how to download the app.

Step 2:

- Login into VShare using your login details
- Please follow the link below for a short tutorial video demonstrating how to access your child's behaviour tab. <https://creaghcollege.ie/vshare-guides/>

Step 3:

- Review and monitor your child's behaviour tab on a weekly basis and sign their journal to say you have done so.
- The class tutor will continue to check journals for signatures on a weekly basis. They will also review each student's behaviour for the week and where necessary implement the appropriate sanctions. This is in line with our CODE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR.

What to do if your child receives a negative note on VShare?

Monitor the situation. A teacher has written this up as they are concerned for a valid reason. Schools are places of learning, and we all make mistakes; it is important that we learn from our mistakes. This also

might be an opportunity for you to discuss expected behaviour with your child and to use a restorative practice approach with them. Please see our website for further information on [Restorative Practice](#).

If the situation deteriorates further or if you see a concerning pattern developing, write a note in the student's journal, asking the relevant teacher to contact you.

Positive Affirmations Committee – PAC

In Creagh College, we aim to acknowledge the efforts of all students. The aim of PAC is to change the focus from negative discipline and to focus on positive targets. This might be academic or extra-curricular activities or random acts of kindness. Teachers can "PAC" students using the behaviour tab on VSWare. Parents/Guardians can then view how many PACs their child has received. A PAC is different to your regular positive note. Please visit our website for further information on PAC.

[Enrolment 2022/2023](#)

We would like to remind parents who have children in 6th class that the enrolment period for Creagh College is now open. Please click on this link for further information <https://creaghcollege.ie/admissions-2022-2023/>

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE: Siblings of current and past pupils have priority in our enrolment process, but only if the application is made on time. Sadly, each year, one or two parents of current and past students have returned application forms after the closing date, and this means they lose their priority and go to the bottom of the waiting list which is incredibly stressful and upsetting for all concerned. Please ensure you submit your application for your children in 6th class this year in plenty of time.

Enrolment Timeline:

Monday 11th October	Enrolment Period opens: Applications accepted from this date.
Monday 8th November @ 4pm	Enrolment Period closes: Applications accepted until this date.
Monday 29th November	Applicants who have applied for a place in Creagh College will be offered or refused a place on this date.
Monday 13th December @ 4pm	Applicants offered a place in Creagh College for 22/23 MUST confirm their place before 4pm on the 13th of December.

Please note: All transfer applications to the Sept 2022 Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth- or Sixth-Year Groups in Creagh College other than to the Special Class, will only be accepted after the 28/03/2022 and the closing date for receipt of applications is 4pm on the 08/04/2022. Applications received after this date will be considered and processed as late applications in accordance with the school's Admission Policy.

[Parent and Guardian Surveys](#)

We would like to take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to parents and guardians for completing the various surveys that we have sent to you over the past few weeks. We would also like to

extend our thanks to the students for completing these surveys as well. The purpose of these surveys is to help inform our school self-evaluation process. The following surveys have been carried out:

- ✓ **VSWare:** The information gathered from this data has allowed us to ensure all our parents and guardians have access to their child's information on VSWare. It has allowed us to identify where parents and guardians need support in accessing and using VSWare and to implement such support. A reminder again if you do not have access to VSWare to please contact creaghcollege@wwetb.ie
- ✓ **School Self-Evaluation** Over the coming weeks we will be updating the SSE section of our website with further information on the feedback we have received so far from our teacher, parent and student surveys
- ✓ **Student Medical Information:** The data gathered from this survey has allowed us to gather all relevant and important medical information in relation to your child. The information provided by you, the parent/guardian, will then be input onto VSWare for staff to access as required. This will ensure that we are aware of your child's medical needs. If you have not submitted this form, please ensure you do so before Friday 22nd November at 5pm.
<https://forms.office.com/r/FXsBjzxNi8>

Supervised Study 2021-22

Supervised study is up and running. There are a small number of spaces available. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. MacRaghnaill at ciaranmacraghnaill@wwetb.ie

Supervised Study is open to all students, however, due to the **limited number of spaces available** priority will be given to 6th, 5th, and 3rd Year students, in that order.

Times

Mondays 4.10pm - 6.15pm

Tuesdays - Fridays 3.30pm - 5.35pm

Payment

€10 per week. Payments are to be made in advance through Way2Pay either in one upfront payment, or alternatively through three installments.

The payment blocks are as follows:

Monday 27/09/21 to Friday 10/12/21 €100

Monday 13/12/21 to Friday 18/03/22 €100

Monday 21/03/22 to Thursday 02/06/22 €90

All school rules and expectations of students remain the same as during the school day, especially regarding COVID-19 Guidelines. Failure to observe these may result in removal from Supervised Study.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Final Inspection Report

Our most recent inspection report can be viewed [here](#). We are delighted to say that we were fully compliant in all aspects of the inspection.

Teacher Recruitment

Many of you will be aware that for some years there has been a severe shortage of teachers available for employment. A few years ago, this issue tended to be confined to a small number of specialist subjects, with Home Economics and language teachers especially difficult to find. However, this issue is now impacting across all subject areas; while it is usually possible to source qualified teachers for *pro rata* teaching positions (this means a one-year contract where the teacher is not replacing someone else temporarily) it has become increasingly difficult to recruit short term replacements for teachers on authorised leaves (including sick leaves and maternity leaves, for example). We are currently experiencing some significant issues in this area at the moment; we are especially grateful to our English, Irish, and T4 (Woodwork, Metalwork, Technology and Graphics) teachers who have been extremely helpful in taking on additional classes to help us cover gaps. We continue to try and recruit substitute teachers and we thank our students and their parents for their patience in this regard. Regrettably, it is a national issue and is impacting a great many schools. Please be assured we will continue to do everything in our power to limit the negative impact of this crisis.

What is coming up next term?

- 3rd Year online Parent Teacher Meeting Monday 8th November 4.15-6.45pm
- 6th Year Wellness Wednesday 17th November
- **Christmas Exam period for ALL STUDENTS; Monday, 22nd November to Tuesday, 30th November (more information to follow)**
- Transition Year Wellness Wednesday 15th December
- School closure day: The school has just been informed by the DES (Department of Education and Skills) that the school will be closed on Tuesday the 18th of January for all students. This is to facilitate training for teachers, as part of the Junior Cycle reform process. This date does not appear in student journals.