

Update

Updates for the Staff, Students, Parents & the wider School Community of Our Lady's College and St. Mary's College Galway



As two strong education providers in Galway prepare to merge together to form what will be a new and even stronger enterprise, we present a brief update on progress to date, upcoming events and a glimpse at the curriculum and facilities on offer.





**Preparation work for Galway's Newest
Secondary School
Continues Apace**



Planning and preparation for Galway's newest secondary school, being established by the amalgamation of Our Lady's College and St. Mary's College, continues apace. CEIST Education Trust, patrons of Our Lady's College and the Bishop of Galway, Most Rev. Brendan Kelly D.D., patron of St. Mary's College both expressed their excitement and enthusiasm for this new co-educational school which will open on 1st September 2021.

The new school, a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School, will be co-educational, inclusive, richly diverse and welcoming of students of all abilities and of all faiths and none. The Catholic school has always been synonymous with the highest standards of teaching and learning and enabling students to flourish intellectually. More importantly, the focus is always on the education of the whole person and the showcasing of their many gifts, interests and accomplishments across the entire spectrum of human talent. The new school will represent a marriage of the historic educational philosophy of St. Mary's College with two other towering education traditions in Galway City – Mercy and Presentation. The merging of these traditions into a new co-educational entity promises to provide an excellent, modern, outward looking educational facility for the present and future generations of young people in Galway.

The new school, which will be located at the current St. Mary's College complex on St. Mary's Road, has the advantage of an enviable location with panoramic views overlooking Galway Bay. The campus has excellent sporting and recreation facilities as well as significant outdoor spaces. Students and staff will benefit from the wide-open expanse of the site - particularly desirable in the current challenging Covid era. A capital works programme has been identified and agreed with the Department of Education and Skills to augment the significant existing facilities already in place at St. Mary's Road. Additional classrooms and specialist rooms will greatly enhance the existing provision but most importantly serve to offer the broadest curriculum possible to boys and girls.

The synergy of the amalgamation will ensure curriculum continuity for the current students of St. Mary's College and Our Lady's College and simultaneously facilitate a significantly expanded curriculum offering greater choices and thus greater long-term opportunities in terms of Third level entry and career paths.

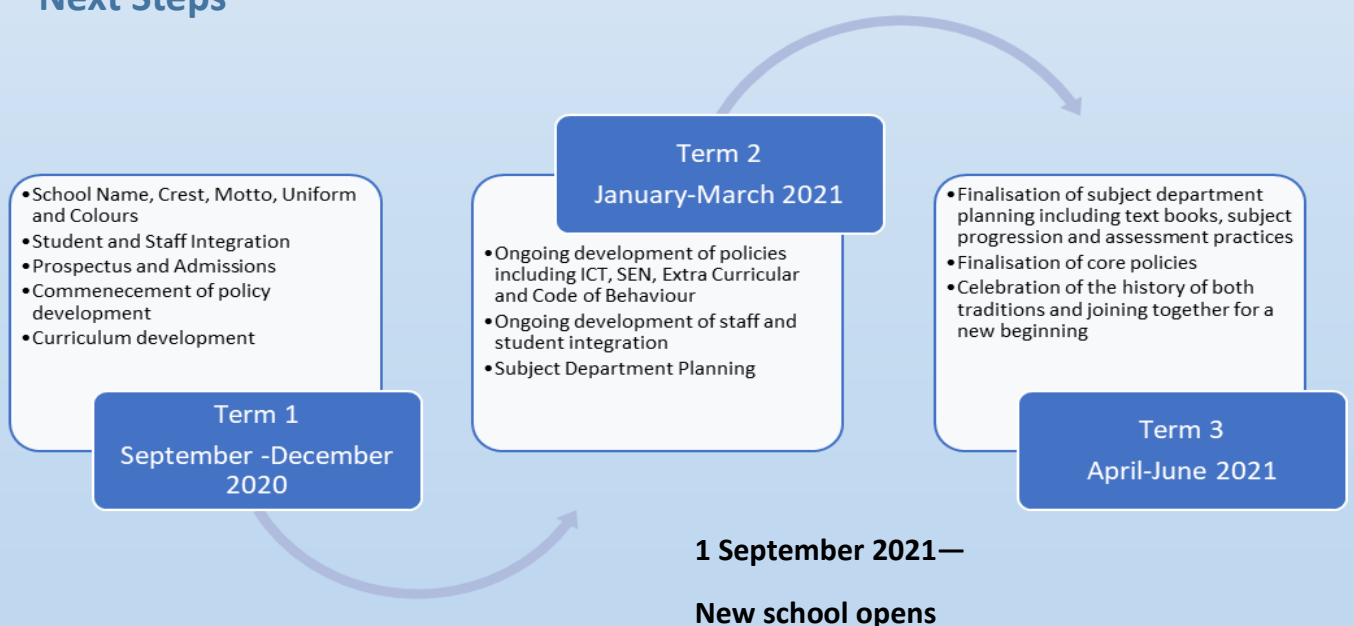




An Amalgamation Steering Committee, chaired by Dr Joe O’Connell and comprising of Teacher, Parent, Board and joint Patron Nominees from both schools, is in place and meeting since October 2019. In preparation for the new school, the Steering Committee is tasked with managing a consultative process to share expertise, practice and procedures, agree areas of commonality and effectively lead the process towards amalgamation. Both staffs have participated in a joint planning exercise facilitated by Dr. Billy Redmond to commence the process of both school communities agreeing a Code of Behaviour for the new school that complies with statutory provisions. Working groups have been established addressing a number of critical areas such as, Communications, Curriculum, Policy Formulation and of course working with all stakeholders to agree a name, crest and uniform for the new school.

The Interim Board of Management of the new school will be appointed by the joint Patrons before the end of October 2020. Our Lady’s College and St. Mary’s College are currently engaged in a process of selecting a Teacher and a Parent Nominee from each school for appointment to the interim Board of Management. The first task of the interim Board will be the recruitment of a new Principal for the new school. Effective from 1st November 2020 this Interim Board of Management will oversee the successful conclusion of this exciting project. Both schools are proud of their long tradition of serving their respective communities over many generations and they hope that through this consolidation will successfully provide a superb option to the Galway City community.

Next Steps



With a combined tradition of more than 120 Years delivering education in Galway, Our Lady's College and St. Mary's College are eagerly looking forward to merging together to form a new co-educational establishment which will offer real choice to the families of Galway City. Both schools bring decades of experience, tradition and expertise to the new school. This coupled with enhanced facilities, a magnificent campus and a broadened curriculum offers extraordinary possibilities to students, staffs and families. Of course change brings uncertainty and a natural sense of loss, but equally it brings with it



opportunity and possibility. The joint Patrons, CEIST and the Bishop of Galway want the very best for current and future generations of the young people of Galway. The new school on the expansive St. Mary's campus offers that possibility and more. We are committed to communicating openly with you to ensure you, as parents and prospective students, can make an informed decision about your future. Our Virtual Open Evening in November will give you a glimpse of that future. A formal launch will take place in the Spring when hopefully Covid-19 is under control.

Facilities/Location

Situated on the current educational site at St. Mary's Road, this **25 acre** campus will provide state of the art facilities for future generations. This site has much to offer with fantastic grounds in an enviable location with panoramic views overlooking Galway Bay. The campus has excellent sporting and recreation facilities as well as significant outdoor spaces. A capital works programme has been identified and agreed to augment the significant existing facilities already in place and will see the addition of modern facilities, classrooms and specialist rooms which will greatly enhance the existing provision but most importantly serve to offer the broadest curriculum possible to both boys and girls.

Subject Choice

Our new school will offer a broad range of subject choice for both Junior and Senior Cycle, with a student centred approach being afforded to all to study an extensive curriculum. Students will be surveyed well in advance of commencing either cycle and every opportunity will be taken to ensure student preference is met. All subjects will continue to be offered at all levels with students being encouraged to pursue subjects and levels most appropriate to them to ensure they reach their full potential.

Other Learning Experiences



Other learning experiences play a critical role in ensuring that students are provided with a broad and balanced educational experience. These include curricular, extra-curricular/co-curricular, volunteerism or school and community based opportunities. The co-educational facility broadens those opportunities and creates a 'normalised' educational environment where boys and girls can flourish in a caring and supportive atmosphere.

Student Care and Wellbeing: A dedicated Pastoral Care Team will be in place to help students with advice and to guide those students who may be experiencing challenges. Already in each school, each of the year groups has a designated Year Head with overall responsibility for the behaviour, discipline and welfare of the students in their year group. A very successful mentoring programme is in place whereby senior students act as volunteer mentors for First Years. This invaluable peer support and role modelling will continue in the new school and will greatly assist the integration of new and existing students.



Curriculum

Irish	Physical Education
English	Social Personal Health Education
Maths	Religious Education

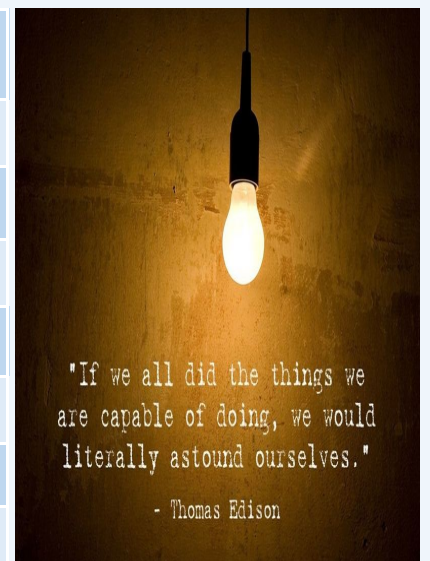
Junior Cycle Subject Options

Applied Technology	Music
Business Studies	Science
Home Economics	Visual Art
Modern Foreign Languages:	Woodwork

Transition Year is offered to all students with an extensive range of activities and experiences.

Senior Cycle Subject Options

Accounting	Economics
Agricultural Science	French
Applied Maths	German
Art	Geography
Biology	History
Business	Home Economics
Chemistry	Music
Construction	Physics
DCG	Spanish
	Technology



Transition Year (TY)

Transition Year (TY) is one year programme, proven to bridge the transition from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle. TY encourages personal and social development and recognises the need for students to grow independently and become self-directed learners.

Core academic subjects Irish, English, Maths continue along with subject sampling in all the Sciences, IT, practical subjects and the various modules of PE to name but some of what is a very busy and active programme.

Career Guidance and specific student direction is an integral part of the programme and will include three weeks of work experience. The year offers students the opportunity to taste and reflect on career possibilities enabling them to make informed choices for the future.

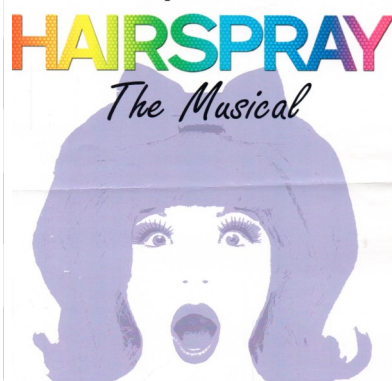
Sporting Excellence



- Football
- Basketball
- Hockey
- Hurling
- Soccer
- Co-Curricular
- Choir
- Debating
- Drama
- Foreign Trips
- Fundraising
- Games Club
- Green Schools
- Retreats
- Student Council
- Peace & Justice
- Public Speaking

Both students and teachers in Our Lady's College and St. Mary's College give huge commitment to extra-curricular and sporting activities. These will be even stronger in the new school. These activities allow students to nurture their other non-academic talents they may have e.g. sporting, music or leadership skills, as well as helping create a sense of school spirit and community. Increased confidence, collaboration, belonging and of course a sense of achievement all support individual and collective wellbeing.

Our Lady's College & St Mary's College
'presents'



Where: St Mary's College, St Mary's Road, Galway.
When: 7pm Wednesday 18th & Thursday 19th,
March - Doors open 6:30pm
Tickets: €8 for Students - €10 for Adults

Already students compete in a wide range of sporting and extra curricular activities with students proudly representing the school at County, Provincial and All Ireland Level in Hurling, Football, Basketball, Golf, Volleyball, Rowing and Swimming. Drama, Debating, Music, Art, Green Schools, Gaisce are all promoted to allow students appreciate 'the fullness of life'.

Additional activities and events such as Field Trips, Educational visits/tours, retreats, competitions, participation in Young Scientist, YSI, Junior Achievement, Business in the Community, Gaisce etc. are offered to extend and enhance student experience. Students are also given a wealth of opportunities to work with Galway Lions Club, St. Vincent de Paul and other noteworthy local philanthropic/social organisations who work in the community, thus developing and promoting a culture of Citizenship and the concept that **Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.**

Career Guidance & Educational Support

The new school will provide a complete Guidance and Counselling service for all students. The Career Guidance Counsellors, work in close liaison with teachers and parents to ensure that students develop their potential and experience a positive learning environment during their time in the school.



The service aims to meet the needs of all students, initially ensuring that the transition from primary to post-primary is as smooth as possible. As part of this effort, the Guidance Counsellors will see all First Years during the first few months. Results of Entrance Assessment results will be shared with parents/guardians and supports put in place for those emerging with additional educational needs and/or exceptionally able students. The school operates a full Learning Support Programme for students with challenges to their learning. Individual Education

Programmes are drawn up for students with special educational needs. There are currently 2 ASD classes with direct linkage to mainstream. Home School Community Liaison, School Completion and Behaviour for Learning all combine to further assist students maximise their participation and attainment.

As students progress through the various year groups they will receive intensive support regarding subject options and the possible Third level/Career opportunities available to each student. Students have access to the very best career search facilities including computer aided career searches and a full range of career selection tests. At all times parents are most welcome to call to discuss student progress or the many subject/career options available to their son/daughter.

Excellence in Teaching & Learning in a Caring and Respectful Environment

Catholic schools are recognised worldwide for excellence in teaching and learning, for instilling and developing caring commitment to civic engagement, for fostering leadership and for nurturing a respect for others and the environment. Whilst remaining true to our founders' intentions—Nano Nagle and Catherine McAuley and the Diocese of Galway, we are committed to providing a quality and transformative education to all students in our care.



Admissions to the new school

OLCG and SMCG are now accepting applications for the academic year 2021/2022. Applications received by both schools are understood to have been made to the new school based at St. Mary's Road, Galway.

Our new website www.coláistenua.ie has further information and the facility to make an enquiry regarding enrolment. On receipt of your enquiry, direct contact will be made with you to progress your application.

Applications in respect of transfers directly into other year groups can also be made.



Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, we are hosting a Virtual Open Evening on **Wednesday 18 November from 6pm—8pm.**

We would be delighted if you could join us from the comfort of your own home—View Facilities, Hear our Story and get a sense of what's on offer. Pre-registration for our Virtual Open Evening is required so that you can log on and be part of the adventure. The recording will be available for a limited period of time to finalise enrolment to the new school. This applications process opened on 1 November and closes on 1 December 2020. Full details on how to pre-register will be posted on the website coláistenua.ie week of 9 November 2020.

