

**St Colman's National School 20353v**  
**Board of Management – Annual Report 2019/20**

**Change of Board of Management**

November 2019 saw a new board formed. We thanked our outgoing board chair Anne Buggie, Treasurer Zandra Horgan, parent representative Alina Deegan and community representative Damien McDonald. A new board was formed following department guidelines with ballot elections used for the parent representatives.

**Book Fair**

The school organised a book fair in November. A story writing competition was organised for each class which proved very popular. €4700 worth of books was sold which meant that the school received €1400 worth of books for the classroom libraries.

Next year we are looking at developing a specific school library to be based in one of our SET rooms. This was delayed from this year.

**Board of Management Meetings**

In 2019/20 our Board of Management will have met 7 times.

Two of these meetings were held using Zoom- a waiting room was used to ensure that only invited participants could attend. All board members have attended training in the Board of Management guidelines 2019-2023.

**Model of Special Education**

In the school year 2019/20 St Colman's will have 5 full time teachers to cater for learning support/resource teaching. This is now called SET teaching. The Presentation Portarlifton and Maryborough NS will be providing teachers for the 5 hours as we had a surplus of hours in our allocation.

**Pupil Numbers**

Currently there are 272 pupils enrolled in St Colman's NS. There are 23 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils leaving for secondary school with 26 pupils enrolled for next year- the majority being junior infants.

**ASD Classes**

St Colman's opened its first ASD class in September 2017. The second opened in September 2018 year. Both classes cater for children with a diagnosis of Autism who need to be in a special class. These children attend the special class but are also integrated into a mainstream class. In December both classes moved in the new extension which was built with a devolved grant from the department. Mrs Oxley and Mrs O'Donnell teach our ASD classes.

**Health and Safety**

For Security purposes all of our school doors are locked daily at 9.30 and Parents are requested to present at the front door to gain admittance to the school.

A Health & Safety checklist was completed on all classrooms.

Fire Drills are carried out once a term and an escape route is on display in all rooms.

Parents are asked to sign pupils out when they collect pupils early. The sign out book is located in the school office. This book is GDPR compliant.

**Parental Communication**

This year we have been emailing all school letters and notes to parent via the Aladdin Parents App.

This year we will send home school summer reports via email.. The Aladdin Parent App which gives parental access to attendance, school reports and old school reports. It is also a great way to receive instant notifications from the school. Aladdin can also be used to give reasons for any absences.

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**Parents' Association/LipSync**

Our Parent Association has done tremendous work in the school this year. At their monthly meetings all issues relating to the school were discussed with the principal or deputy attending. The annual Christmas raffle was a huge success and monies raised have gone towards funding gymnastics lessons for the whole school as well as helping pay for the buses that we use to bring pupils to the various sport events throughout the year.

Perhaps the biggest fundraiser the school community has ever held ran this year. Our previous board had asked our Parent Association to run a fundraiser to help raise funds for the development of the school pitches on the land that the school had purchased.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of February we ran a Lip/Sync fundraiser in the Midlands Hotel in Portlaoise. To say it was a success is an understatement with massive work being done by the parents association working along with the board and members of the wider school community.

The groups that performed on the night and also ran brilliant fundraisers played a huge role in the success of the night.

The night itself is something that will live long in the collective memory of the school community with the groups performing brilliantly and the huge audience in attendance combining to ensure a great night was had by all.

In the background the organization from our school community made sure that everything ran like clockwork.

A further night had been planned to ensure that our parent body was brought up to speed on the money raised along with a detailed breakdown of the costings involved.

Obviously this was not possible with the current Covid-19 guidelines but it is something that will be held in future months. What we can say that there is a net figure of **€96,268.38** raised through this brilliant night.

**Mindful Tuesday:**

On Mindful Tuesday the children have no formal homework on the 1st Tuesday of each month. They had instead to engage in a family activity and then complete a small activity sheet. The response to this has been very positive and we continued it this year. A big push this year was to make this night a technology free night. Mindfulness is also part of our school assembly and Mrs O'Donnell created some lovely pieces for families to listen to on Soundcloud

**Amber Flag**

This year our school worked towards the Amber flag again. The Pieta House Amber Flag initiative recognises the individual efforts of primary and secondary schools, companies, and groups to create healthy, inclusive environments that support mental well-being. Uniting these groups in their efforts, working together toward a happier, healthier Ireland and eradicate the stigmas associated with mental health issues.

We were delighted to receive the Amber Flag again this year.

**Supervision:** St Colman's NS provides morning supervision from 9.00 am in the yard and on wet days in the school hall. At lunch times all yards are supervised by teaching staff. The school does not accept responsibility for children who are in the yard before 9am.

**Soccer:** St Colman's competed in the Spar 5 a-side soccer competition this year. We had two boys' teams and one girls' team taking part. All players played brilliantly and represented the school very well. Mr Twomey, Mr Brennan and Mr O'Brien looked after these teams.

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**Covid 19**

Covid 19 and its effects on our school were perhaps hopefully a once in a life time event that we will never see again.

In late February and early March our teachers taught a number of lessons on hygiene and cough edict. Hand sanitizers were placed in the front entrance of the school with posters regarding guidelines posted around the school. On Thursday the 12<sup>th</sup> of March we received the notice to prepare work for two weeks of closure which as we all now turned into closure until the end of the school year. As well as sending home work we began planning with E-Learning set up for all children. Google classroom and SeeSaw have quickly become part of our digital learning and while not a substitute it greatly enabled families and staff to communicate during the enforced closure. Our Aladdin Connect system evolved during the closure with the chance for families to upload their work for corrections a valuable addition.

Over the closure we have used our social media presence via our Facebook page to hold a brilliant Active Schools Week with our current sixth class planning a wonderful week of activities. Photos and videos were posted up and while not a like for like substitute for the real Active Week it certainly engaged the whole school community.

Using our school Facebook page we were also able to host online assemblies using Facebook live. Work from classes during the week along with school news, updates and birthdays were all announced.

A zoom meeting was held for parents of children starting St Colman's in autumn. Zoom was also used to host staff meetings throughout the closure as well as board meetings. To ensure the safety of these meetings a waiting room was used to make sure only invited participants attended. Guidelines in the use of online lessons were sent home as teachers were eager to use part of Google classrooms which allowed for video calls with whole classes.

**Child Protection** Mr. Hanrahan is the designated liaison person for Child Protection in St Colman's NS. Mrs Carroll is the deputy liaison person. We fully implement the Child Protection guidelines as laid out by the Department of Education. All staff has completed online modules in the New Child Protection guidelines. Our child safeguarding statement is on display and is also on our website.

All volunteers, work experience and people on teaching practice must also undergo child-protection vetting before they can begin any placement in our school.

**Sports**

The year 2019/20 has been a very busy year for GAA activity in St Colman's NS. In September our boys and girls gaelic footballers began training straight away. We entered two boys' teams in the Cumann na mBunscol competition and one in the girl's competition. Both of our boys teams reached the semi-final stage of the competition.

Over the winter months an indoor basketball and soccer league was arranged for boys and girls from 3rd-6th class. This proved very popular and games were held every lunch time. Many thanks to all the teachers who reffed and organised these leagues.

Indoor hurling and camogie training resumed in January in preparation for the Cumann na mBuncol competition. Unfortunately Covid restrictions meant that The competitions could not be held.

**Brenda Corcoran**

On Thursday the 25<sup>th</sup> of June Brenda sadly passed away. Brenda was the first bus escort for children attending our ASD classes. Her kindness and gentle nature with the children she cared for on their way and home from school will never be forgotten. Solas Mhic Dé ar a n-anam.

# St Colman's National School 20353v

## Board of Management – Annual Report 2019/20

### Board of Management 2019/2023

Chairperson	–	Valerie Sheehy
Treasurer	–	Catherine Corbett
Secretary	–	Andy Hanrahan
Teacher Rep	–	Aisling Kelly
Parent Reps	–	Anita O'Riordan Damien Mc Ardle
Patron Nominee	–	Fr Breen
Community Representative: Michael Knowles		

### Policy Development

The following is a list of all policies worked and approved by the BoM during the year.

Curricular: SPHE, English Writing Genres, Maths, Gaeilge,

Non-Curricular: Child Protection, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, Anti-Bullying, Code of Discipline, Grievance Procedure, Aladdin Usage, Standardized Testing Updates, Enrolment and ASD enrolment, Assessment Policy- the school's ASD and Mainstream enrolments have now been combined into 1 document in line with the departments new guidelines on school's admissions.

### Book /Rental Scheme

This has been the fourth year of our book rental scheme. It has proved very successful and this year the school is continuing on with it. The cost for buying all items through the school has been reduced to €100 through the school getting some deals from book companies. The scheme also includes school costs such as photocopying, tests and art materials. All the stationery the children will use in school is also included. We understand that it is not possible to pay all the costs in one go and our online payments scheme via Aladdin allows for this.

### School Inspection

This year we received 1 visit from our department inspector who visited to help the school in its school-self-evaluation process.

We are a Droichead school in terms of probating newly qualified teachers.

### Summer Works/Buildings

The new extension for the ASD classes was finished just before the Christmas break with Room 14 and Room 15 moving into the lovely bright new rooms which contain 2 classrooms, sensory and de-escalation rooms, huge storage rooms and toileting and showering facilities. The Front of the school will be painted over the summer holidays.

### Green Schools

St Colman's school is a green school and actively promotes the areas of recycling, reusing and reducing in line with the policy of the Green School committee. Other green areas that are prioritised are conserving energy usage and water usage. Mr McEvoy is in charge of the Green School committee and is ably assisted by children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

### Staffing

Ms Sinead O'Connor moved to a school in Limerick in March.  
Ms Kieran covered Ms Denise O'Connor's maternity leave and then took Ms O'Connor's junior and senior infants.  
Mr Shane Prendergast and Ms Denise O'Connor will be appointed to permanent positions this summer.  
Mr Jeffrey Payne has indicated that he will not be returning to the school following the completion of his career break.  
We will have 2 fixed-term appointments to make this summer.

### School Pitch

Over the summer of 2019 the board began development of land purchased beside the school. As we are awaiting the full development of the land we have begun by developing a great grass pitch which adjoins the back of the school yard. It has been fenced off and is something that has added greatly to the school. In the long-term this along with the land to the front will be developed into a car park with grass and astro-turf pitches. The fundraising from our Lip/Sync greatly helped this plan.

**The school will reopen on Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of August.**