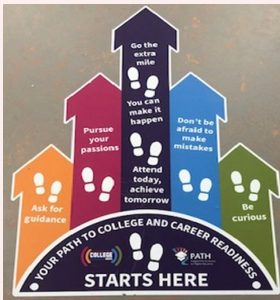




Scoil Uí Mhuirí Guidance Department Newsletter Sept-Dec 2021

Mr. Matthews & Mrs. Brady



Introductions

Our First years were introduced to the school guidance counsellors in Sept. They were given an introduction as to the role of the guidance counsellor, and informed as to how they can avail of the services that the guidance team provide.

First years have had an opportunity to also be part of the Scoil Uí Mhuirí transition programme created and developed by our SEN Co-ordinator Ms. Clarke and the transition team.



In this edition:

- The successful NEW transition programme for our new first years
- World Mental Health Day and how SUM celebrated and acknowledged the day
- Pieta House Resilience programme for 2nd years
- Our CAW– College Awareness Week
- Study skills to 3rd years
- CAO information
- HEAR/DARE Access



Junior cycle students were presented with study skills and how to focus on their goals; short/medium & long term. They will have an opportunity in the next term to be informed about subject choice and discuss their options for senior cycle.





World Mental Health Day- Recognition and acknowledgment in SUM

Here in SUM we are all cognitive of how important minding and nurturing our mental health is. Welbeing is

led by Ms. Mulroy and Ms. Clarke and they have built a strong, caring and motivated team comprising of many staff members who give of their free time to help, support, and encourage positive mental health amongst the staff and student body.

The week of October 10th seen tutorial time utilized in addressing what Mental Health is. In SPHE students were given a ppt presentation with more detail and with their wellbeing classes they actively engaged in mindfulness, mindful colouring & meditation. Students were brought on a mindful walk where they engaged with each other over a casual chat, taking note of the positive quotes positioned along route.

Our Guidance Department have made available a list of helplines that can be found on the school website for all to access if they need a service outside of school time. Also there are a number of noticeboards around the school highlighting the importance of positive thinking, with many positive quotes and helplines highlighted and the QR codes are available to scan if students wish to access the services available. A treat or two were given on the day thanks to the canteen and the generosity of teachers with a NO homework pass!

Staff were also taken into account with a luxurious treat at breaktime thanks to the Well-being Co-Ordinator's & Home Economics Dept Ms. Murphy and her team! Freshly made pancakes, complemented by the strawberries, blueberries, maple syrup and Cadburys chocolate spread with fresh cream!! Staff also got the opportunity to participate in a NEW book₂ swap shelf in the staffroom for those who en-

joy a good novel.

To top it all off, members of the well-being committee and students from An Chrannóg delivered an inhouse room service of hot chocolate or tea/coffee to teachers with a teacake! No better way to address staff wellbeing!

Our guidance Department kindly outlined the services that were available to all staff members and important links that staff could follow and engage in if they so wished.

Pieta House Resilience Academy

As part of our wellbeing and Whole School Guidance programme we took part in the Pieta House Resilience Academy for our 2nd and 3rd year students.

The Resilience Academy is a six-week programme for second year students aimed at equipping students with emotional resilience tools. Skills training programmes aim to increase protective factors such as coping skills, problem solving, decision making, and cognitive skills. While these programmes don't directly target suicide, by targeting risk factors and giving youth important skills, the goal is to prevent the development of suicidal behaviour.



College Awareness Week– CAW



Another hugely successful week in SUM acknowledging College Awareness Week throughout all the year groups. A presentation was sent to tutors of each year group along with a resource pack which provided valuable information to the whole school community regarding the benefits of going to college, the knowledge and skill set that one can develop from this experience, and how this can be transferred into other areas of life experiences. Financial assistance like the SUSI grant was also outlined in the presentation to inform students that there is assistance for those who may need it and the opportunity is there for anyone wishing to further their education.



The guidance office window was used as a notice board to inform students of the various universities, institutes of technology, apprenticeships & PLC opportunities that are available to all. The National Framework Qualification was on display also, highlighting the progression routes available to all.



Sincere thanks to the Woodwork Dept and the Art Dept on their workmanship and artistic ways in providing a Guidance Signpost to the Guidance Dept for College Awareness Week! It was thought provoking and created a talking point for students regarding their ambitions of attending various colleges and promoted career exploration during their IT classes.

There was a display board in the new building also outlining where our staff members went to college and this clearly outlined that many of our staff here in SUM have numerous qualifications, from various colleges and it showed visually the ladder of progression and informed students that education is life long learning!

During the week students were given the opportunity to drop into the guidance office for lunch time clinics on the HEAR scheme, DARE scheme, PLC courses, apprenticeships and the SUSI grant information. Students were and continue to be kept up dated daily with career information via their school teams account.

Virtual career events

Due to Covid-19 we again this year have been restricted with our visits in or visits out within our local community and also the wider community. Thankfully, due to the advances in technology we were fortunate enough to be in a position to organise virtual information sessions for our senior students.

A number of virtual college information sessions have been provided to our senior students. To date we've had the pleasure of having Ruth Daly from St. Patricks College, Kay Mitchell from Maynooth, NUI Maynooth, TUD-Dublin, DkIT, Fiona Kelly from Letterkenny IT, Sligo IT, SOLAS-Apprenticeships.

Students have been strongly encouraged to keep an eye on Qualifax and Careersportal weekly events guide to become informed regarding the various college open days which many require prior booking to

attend, or to register their intentions for the virtual college open days.

Various webinars have been communicated to students to attend, especially those looking towards medicine and the preparation process for their HPAT exam in Feb. 2022.

Julie from **Synergy careers** provides free webinars on various topics. Students have been sent the list of career webinars to their teams account. Each senior student have been encouraged to look at the topics and note these topics in their journal and to register their intentions to attend.

Donnacha O'Malley provides informative podcasts on spotify and DCU and NUI Maynooth to name but a few, offer fantastic opportunities to students to engage via their live chat function, allow for students to ask current students for their expertise in the subject area.



CAO

CAO this year has decided not to provide a CAO Handbook to all students in schools in a hardcopy form. This is of course a little disappointing as it proved to be a very valuable resource to

use in the guidance class.

However, there is a very good interactive PDF form of the booklet available on cao.ie. It is important that students read this booklet as it outlines:

- CAO application process.
- Change of mind facility.
- Offer of places.
- Accepting/declining place
- What to do if you do not receive a place.

We strongly urge that this handbook is kept safe, as it will be the go-to document when leaving cert result come out.

Checkout www.cao.ie

CAO

The CAO is open for applications. Students have been notified of this and are advised to apply before Jan 20th 2022 in order to avail of the discounted rate of €30.

After this date the application fee is €45. Please register. The School Guidance counsellors are available if students need to discuss CAO course options. This will be facilitated via teams or by making an app with the guidance department to schedule an appointment in school, adhering to the HSE/COVID-19 guidelines. Watch the “CAO video for 2022 Leaving Certificate Applicants” on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/502318688?ref=em-share>

Parents/guardians please refer to www.cao.ie for further information or contact the guidance Dept. for clarity.

Key dates for the CAO are as follows:

- ◆ CAO opened on Nov 5th 2021 for 2022 applications
- ◆ 20 January 2022 5pm-early closing date €30 this is the discounted rate.
- ◆ 1 February 2022-5pm-final closing date €45 **Restricted courses CAN NOT be ADDED after Feb 1st.**
- ◆ 1 March 2022 5pm-closing date for completion of HEAR/DARE forms.
- ◆ 15th March 2022-5pm-closing date for submitting HEAR/DARE documents to CAO
- ◆ 1 May 2022-5pm-closing date for late applications-€60
- ◆ 5 May(expected date) -1 July 2022–free change of mind facility open.

For now, we just ask that students register for their CAO number. They have the opportunity of logging courses and looking at their genuine order of preference at a later date, when the FREE change of mind facility opens in May.

Exemptions

If you have an Irish exemption and or a third language and are applying to any of the NUI Universities, you must fill out the NUI matriculation exemption form as well as your CAO form. Please find the attached link

<http://www.nui.ie/college/docs/ExemptionsApplform092010.pdf>

Studying in the UK

UCAS is the name given to the organisation which deals with the admissions to Higher Education in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



Deadlines for applying to UCAS

- ◆ 15 January 2022: General deadline for applying for the majority of UK courses
- ◆ 24 March 2022: Application closing date for some Art courses.
- ◆ Only 5 course choices (whereas, CAO has 20 Course choices to avail of)

Applying to UCAS is a lengthy process and this demands a lot of time and attention. This process should commence in 5th year.



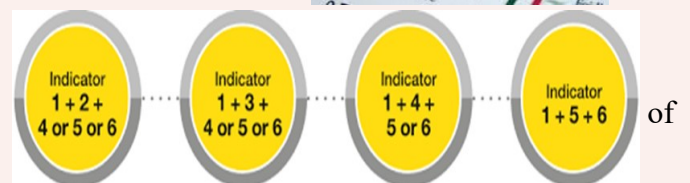
HEAR/DARE applications www.accesscollege.ie

HEAR (Higher Education Access Route)

The Higher Education Access Route (Hear) is an admissions route for school leavers who for social, financial, or cultural reasons are under-represented at third level education. Eligibility to apply for HEAR scheme is based on 6 criteria. **Criteria Number 1 is family income. This MUST be met and then you have 2 other indicators to meet**

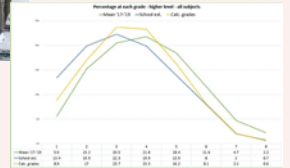
- ◆ Medical/G.P visit card in date
- ◆ Means tested social welfare for 26 weeks in 2020
- ◆ Socio-economic group underrepresented at third level.
- ◆ You live in an area of concentrated disadvantage.
- ◆ You attend a DEIS school

You must meet the income limit and the right combination of two other indicators.



What supports will I get?

- ◆ Reduced points.
- ◆ Guidance/support while at college.
- ◆ College orientation week.



You must indicate on your CAO form that you wish to be considered for HEAR.

HEAR -The link for handbook is <http://accesscollege.ie/hear/making-an-application/handbooks-forms/> which has all the information and step by step instructions as to how to complete the hear form.

There is a large amount of paperwork to be submitted with the HEAR application and students have been asked to let their guidance counsellor know of their intentions to apply for this HEAR scheme as we can encourage and support students during the process.

HEAR webinar Jan 8th 2022, 1-3pm. Zoom link https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_724j7-CqT3KRFBu5QwYWmA

HEAR application timeline

- ◆ 1st February-apply to CAO
- ◆ 1st March-Complete all elements of the HEAR application form. Gather all supporting documents.
- ◆ 15th March -Submit copies of documents to the CAO. **Keep original documents and get a certificate of postage from An Post every time you post something.**
- ◆ April-June-HEAR screening.
- ◆ Late June- Applicants notified of outcome of HEAR applications.
- ◆ End June- HEAR rechecks.
- ◆ August-Leaving Certificate Results
- ◆ CAO offers
- ◆ HEAR offers
- ◆ Late August/Early September-Mandatory HEAR orientation programme.



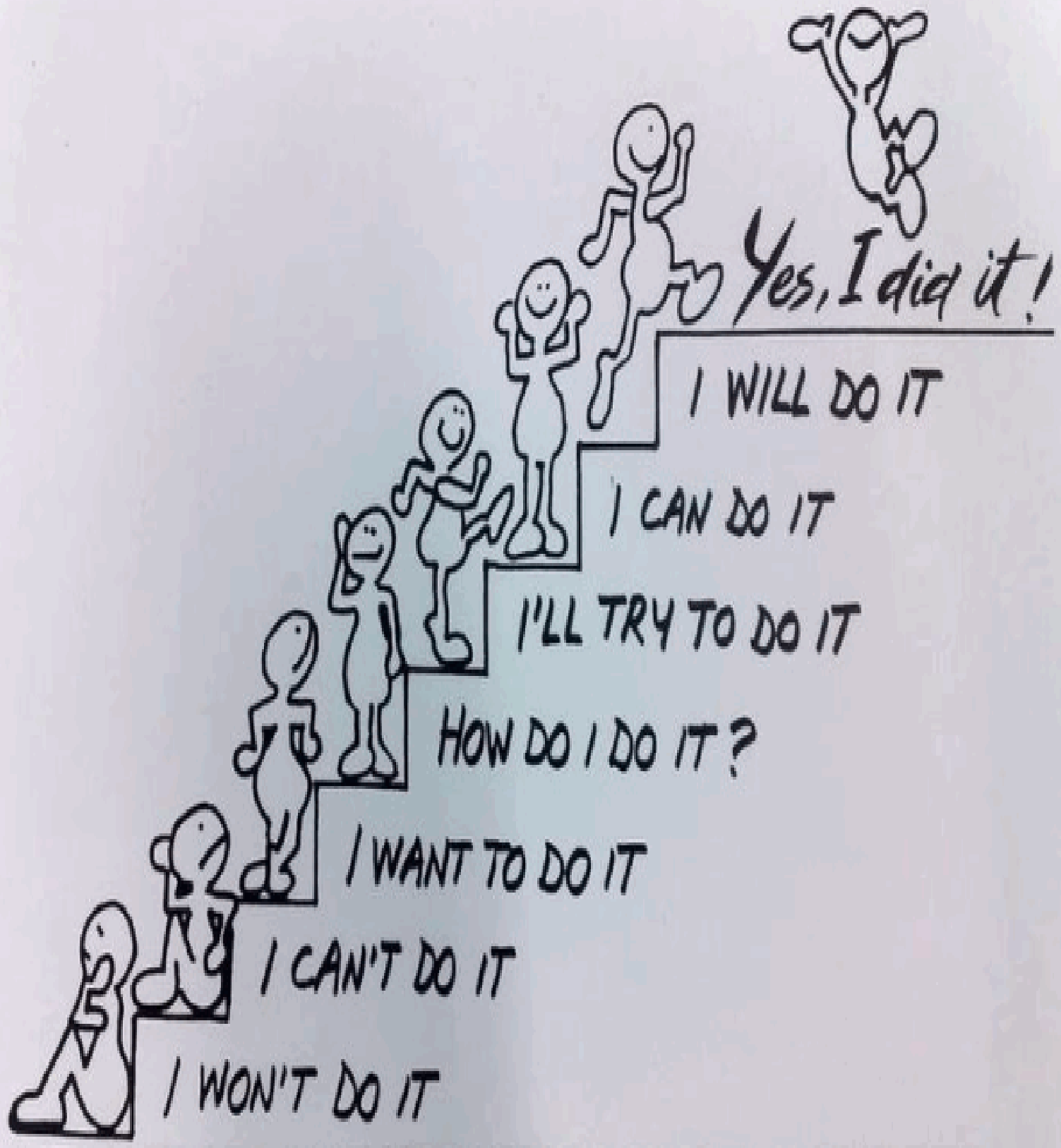


SUSI GRANT (FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS)

THE SUSI GRANT OPENS IN MARCH/ APRIL. [HTTPS://SUSI.IE/SUSI-INFORMATION-VIDEOS/](https://susl.ie/susi-information-videos/)

For more information or advice please contact the Guidance Counsellors. SUSI does not open until Late March/ early April so we will be unable to do anything with SUSI until that time.

If you wish to make contact with the guidance department please email the guidance counsellors or alternatively contact the main office. We thank you for your continued support and we wish you all continued good health & well-being for 2022.



WHICH STEP HAVE YOU REACHED TODAY?