

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

As you can imagine this is a very busy year for your son/ daughter. I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention the following key dates and upcoming events which will take place in Coláiste Ris for sixth years students and also to reassure you that I will endeavour to offer a comprehensive Career Guidance and Counselling service to all students throughout the year. If your son/ daughter may feel that he/she requires an appointment then please encourage them to avail of this service and I ensure you that I will do my very best to help and support them in any way that I can.

1. **24 Tuesday October 2017**- There was a talk on the CAO (Third Level Application System and information on SUSI (the grants scheme), HEAR and DARE access programmes, Post Leaving Cert Colleges and UCAS. Students received their CAO booklets too, with information to applying through the CAO system and courses available to select. It is important to read this handbook thoroughly with your child and go online to [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) to check if course numbers have changed or still exist from the printed handbook. Alternatively you can google *CAO Alert List* to discover changes to courses. It is vital to check this regularly as items change weekly. Furthermore, the slides presented from this presentation are now on the Coláiste Ris website. Go to our school website and click on the side bar Parents, then Presentations from Information Evenings.
2. **Careers Portal**- Please continue to use this website regularly with your child and log into their account. It is essential that students spend 15mins at night reviewing and researching courses and try to save them into their file if they are interested in studying them in third level. It is often worrying that students do not fully complete their CAO lists and rely on just one course. For safety, they should have a number of back up courses and plans for the future A, B, C and D!
3. **6 Monday November 2017**- In order to avoid missing deadlines/ reduced fees and to ensure effective use of time I strongly advise to set up your CAO account in the next few days. The process is safer online by going to the [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie) website. Registration for those who wish to apply for an undergraduate place in an Irish Third Level institution is now open. The process is easy and view the demonstration application form. There are also a series of video guides on the website to assist applicants, along with a guide for parents and guardians. At this stage, all CAO is looking for is personal details along with a credit card payment of €30. This will provide your son/daughter with their unique CAO number. They will be able to use this to access their application, make course selections or change them, up to the closing date for course choices on **1 July 2018**. Beyond that if your child is a suitable candidate for DARE/ HEAR, they should answer 'Yes' to question one and begin the process of completing the online supplementary form. If your child is thinking applying for a SUSI grant, they should tick this box as it allows the office to transmit relevant data to SUSI which will speed up the grant application. There is a free useful tool on the SUSI homepage to allow your child to see if they should pursue a SUSI grant, click on the *eligibility reckoner* on the SUSI homepage to calculate if your family fall within the limits. Furthermore, this year students with a language exemption must tick a box on the CAO application form. Students must still contact the university with documentation to their language exemption. It is advised they do this as soon as possible to avoid missing deadlines. Check the college websites on how to submit documents and deadlines for approval.
4. **CAO Course Selection**- Remember to pick courses in preference with realistic expectations to your child's ability. Always, check entry requirements to ensure your child has the correct subjects and levels for entry. There are a number of courses in their CAO handbook

listed as "*restricted*". This means there is an assessment process over and above the leaving cert grades that they will have to achieve. Courses in this area include, art, drama, music, medicine (Hpat Test), design, etc. They must have these courses on their online list before the 1 February 2018.

5. **Open Days-** I know some students have already visited some colleges in 5<sup>th</sup> year. It is really important that they find out where they fit in and be happiest. Parents/ Guardians are responsible for transport to and from these venues. Students have been informed since the start of the year to check the guidance notice board for the Open Day they wish to attend. You should note that many of these open days are on a Saturday so students do not always have to miss school. Dates are available to check at home on [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie) on the calendar of events section. As many students from our school attend DKIT, the guidance department has decided to offer them a trip supervised by teachers on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November with buses leaving the school. If attending other Open Days for third levels it is often worth checking the college website to plan which talks you wish to attend and know the various stalls that are available to speak at.
6. **College Awareness Week 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017-** To mark this national week promoting further education students will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities in school to gain further knowledge into the world of work and study. To launch the week a new Twitter Page will be announced sharing important articles and information. More on this nearer the time.

Yours sincerely,  
James Mc Nicholas, Guidance Counsellor