



CBC PARENTS' COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

2025

The CBC Parents' Council is the representative body of Parents in the College.

Partnership is the key to Success in Education.

The Parents' Council (PC) seeks to enhance the positive experience of education for our boys, in a strong spirit of co-operation with the college.

The role of the PC is advisory and consultative, providing a home-school link and supports the college provide wider opportunities for the involvement of parents.

Two parents are elected to represent each school year on the Council at the PC Annual General Meeting. A teacher is nominated by the Principal to the Council to undertake the role of college liaison. The PC meets monthly.

Dear Parents,

As the 2024 -2025 school year comes to a close, the Parents' Council (PC) would like to take this opportunity to thank Parents, Guardians and the CBC community for supporting the PC throughout the year.

The involvement of parents is particularly valuable as research consistently shows that a strong home-school partnership plays a crucial role in enhancing the positive experience of the secondary school years, a time of transformation and growth, marked by both challenging and rewarding experiences along the way.

In partnership with the College, various events were organised by Parents, for both Parents and Students, during the year to support and involve Parents on their sons' journey through the different years of secondary school. As you will read throughout this Newsletter, the events held ranged from social meetings, careers information events to various parenting topics.

The PC Newsletter aims to provide an insight into the numerous PC events and activities held throughout the year, to share the key points discussed and the 'take home messages', to ensure parents feel supported and have a positive relationship with the school. May the Newsletter be an enjoyable and informative read.

To the Leaving Cert class of 2025, Good Luck in your exams. Believe in your abilities and be proud of what you have achieved. Wishing all families a safe and happy summer holiday.

Lynda O'Donnell
PC Chairperson

Parent Council 2024-2025

Ms Lynda O'Donnell (*Chairperson, 6th Year*)

Dr Rosario Kielty (*Secretary, 6th Year*)

Ms Ita Gubbins (*5th Year*)

Ms Lisa Stewart (*5th year*)

Ms Kate Nagle (*5th Year*)

Ms Cliona Conway (*4th Year*)

Ms Marie Downey (*4th Year*)

Ms Thérèse McGrath (*3rd Year*)

Mr Paul Hayes (*3rd Year*)

Ms Nicola O'Connell (*2nd Year*)

Dr Juliette Buckley (*1st Year*)

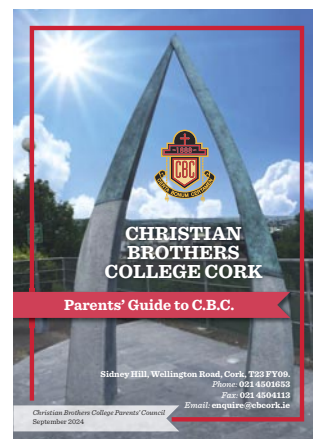
Mr Traolach Martin (*College Liaison*)

First Year Parents Welcome Meeting

A welcome meeting was held on 21st August 2024 in Lansdowne. An invitation was extended to the Parents of incoming 1st year students to meet and greet one another on the final day of the traditional 1st Year sports camp. The event, was well attended, on a lovely sunny midday, on the well maintained sports grounds in Lansdowne, where refreshments were served from CBC's own coffee dock. The event proved enormously enjoyable and beneficial for Parents, many of whom did not know other Parents and were entering CBC for the first time. A relaxed and chatty atmosphere soon prevailed, on the sports ground that would become familiar over the coming months and years for many. The PC extends a sincere thank you to Brian Jordan, Sean Cullinane and team for their ongoing assistance and support in hosting this annual welcome meeting. The PC wishes to acknowledge the College Team, led by Mr Russell Foley and supported by CBC senior cycle students, for providing the 1st year boys with an opportunity to meet one another ahead of the start of the school year.

Parents' Guide to CBC Handbook

Each Year the PC publishes a handbook primarily for the Parents of boys in 1st Year. The booklet is provided on the inaugural day and is available on the College website, under 'Publications & Booklets'.



School Policy Reviews

The PC reviewed a range of draft school policies and made submissions to the College ahead of their adoption and implementation, including:

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Data Protection Policy and Guidance Plan
- CCTV Policy

School Policies are available on the College website, under 'Publications & Booklets'.

Student Overview of their Experience in Zambia

Following the PC AGM on 10th October, Mr Steven Lynch (*Vice Principal, Preparatory School*), James Buckley and Oran Kielty (*6th Year students*), representing the fourteen students and three teachers who travelled to Zambia in June 2024, gave a brief overview of their

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trip, organised run under CBC's Zambia Immersion Project and supported by parents through various fundraising events.

The boys enthusiastically recounted the various aspects of their trip, how they immersed themselves in the Zambian way of life, visited a number of schools, engaged with and helped the local community in any way they could during their visit. The boys mentioned electricity was a luxury, described how some days they had dinner in candlelight and how simple living in all aspects of life was accepted in Zambia. Heartening video recordings were shown giving insight into the trip.

James and Oran described the visit to three schools, including St. Patrick's, a school near the slums greatly funded by Ireland, a primary school in Lolaboyale and a school for persons of all ages with special physical and mental

needs. During these visits the boys interacted with the students, helped teach and work with them including building a chicken coup, planting banana trees, painting schools, thought Irish culture, learned Zambian culture and quickly learned sign-language to communicate with school students who are deaf.

It was uplifting to hear James and Oran say the trip "has truly changed our lives", brought a "joy that can simply not be put into words", gave them a new-found appreciation of all they have and how they have learnt spending time with people is more important than just items or gifts.

The PC extends a sincere thank you to Mr Stephen Lynch, students James and Oran for taking the time to speak with parents about their trip to Zambia.

Parents' Council Annual General Meeting

The PC AGM was held on 10th October 2024, followed by an overview from students of their trip to Zambia and a talk from Mr John Loneran titled *"Parenting – the Challenges and Rewards"*.

Mr David Lordon, CBC Principal, extended a warm welcome to Parents and thanked the PC for working with the College in promoting the educational and wellbeing interests of the boys.

An overview of the role and various activities of the PC was provided by Dr Rosario Kieley, PC Secretary.

Parenting - the Challenges and the Rewards – Mr John Loneran

The Parents' Council was honoured to welcome John Loneran, who worked in the Prison Service for over 42 years, serving as Governor of the top security prison in Portlaoise and as Governor of Mountjoy Prison for over 22 years, to speak at the PC AGM. John, a parent himself of two adult daughters and of the belief there is no such thing as a perfect parent, managed to communicate numerous tips on how to go a long way to achieving this, including two key "Do's" of parenting:

- **Accept our children totally, be they academic or not, introverted or extroverted, whatever their abilities and personalities.**
- **Communicate with our children and really listen to what they are telling us.**

The following is a summary of the talk as recounted by a 4th Year parent in attendance and the key messages taken-home messages:

Known for his warmth, positivity, and engaging presence, John's reputation as a thought-provoking speaker preceded him. While I was familiar with his media appearances, I hadn't read his work or realised the depth of his insights into parenting teenagers. What I discovered was both refreshing and profoundly impactful.

John delivered his advice with a light-hearted yet meaningful approach, leaving us with simple, practical concepts that often get lost in the busyness of family life. One of the most reassuring aspects of his talk was the sense of

shared experience. I was relieved to know that many parents, like me, sometimes feel overwhelmed or question their parenting choices, especially when it comes to teenagers.

Key Takeaways

John's central message was to return to the basics: communicate openly and listen without judgement. He challenged us to ask ourselves some fundamental questions:

- Is my child healthy?
- Is my child happy?
- Am I accepting my child for who they truly are, rather than who I want them to be?

John cautioned against imposing our own dreams onto our children. One memorable example involved parents pushing a child to excel at hurling from a young age, only for the child to grow resentful of the sport. Instead, John urged us to manage our expectations and let our children forge their own paths.

Another valuable insight was to avoid constant scrutiny. John humorously pointed out that many of us are guilty of "staring" at our teenagers, turning every interaction into a life lesson or a critique. Instead, he advised creating space for natural, pressure-free conversations—whether in the car, on a walk, or just relaxing at home. Sometimes, simply being present and listening is enough.

John also highlighted the importance of being receptive when teenagers choose to open up, even if the timing isn't ideal. Turn off distractions and give them your full attention—how you react can shape their

willingness to share in the future. If they confide in you, respect their trust and don't share their thoughts with others.

A particularly powerful point was about allowing teenagers to make their own mistakes. Whether it's forgetting homework or missing sports gear, let them experience the consequences. This approach fosters independence and responsibility, essential skills as they grow.

John concluded by sharing four critical **"No, No" behaviours of Parenting** to avoid:

1. **Never humiliate your child.** Negative comments can leave lasting scars.
2. **Avoid comparisons.** Every child is unique; celebrate their individuality.
3. **Don't engage in arguments.** You can't win, and it may damage your relationship.
4. **Don't focus on the negative.** Celebrate successes, no matter how small, and maintain a positive outlook.

John Loneran's talk served as a powerful reminder to focus on understanding, acceptance, and communication. His practical advice encouraged us to be present, supportive, and to nurture our children's growth without imposing our own aspirations.

The PC extends a sincere thank you to Mr John Loneran and to Cliona Conway, 4th Year Parent, for sharing her recount of the talk.

Careers Webinar: "Navigating Course and Career Choice: A Guide for Parents" Mr Brian Mooney

A very informative, practical and worthwhile on-line presentation was provided by Mr Brian Mooney, one of Ireland's most prominent guidance counsellors, on 24th October 2024.

A number of relevant areas were discussed during the hour long webinar including the choice of subjects for Leaving Certificate, minimum subject entry requirements for the various third-level courses, aptitude testing, CAO application process, Hear and Dare schemes, University course availability, PLC courses, Further Education College programmes, Apprenticeship programmes, opportunities to study in Europe and the UK including the associated timelines/deadlines and the supporting documentation to be submitted with applications, course costs and grant availability.

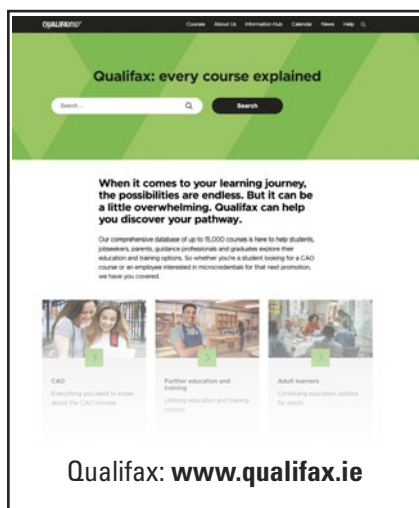
Mr Mooney provided practical advice to Parents on managing the student who is saying "I've no clue what I would like to do", indecisiveness, the paying-out of various emotions, the change in focus and direction over the years in secondary school right up to the end of the LC year and the final closing date for third level courses. Mr Mooney assured parents as students grow and mature their thinking evolves.

The importance of listening to the students

own "gut instinct", their personal areas of interest and affording them support and full participation in the decision-making process was emphasized.

Mr Mooney expressed a strong belief that there is always a way to find an access route to all areas of interest particularly for a motivated student with a keen interest in a specific area. The career journey can take many twists and turns and many parents own journeys are indeed testament to that.

The value of gathering accurate and up-to-date information from a reliable source was discussed and to this end Mr Mooney recommended the following information sites:



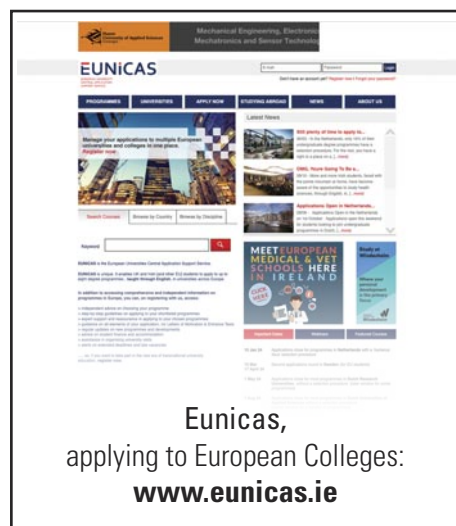
Consent Workshops

Consent Workshops continued to be facilitated by Ms Margo Noonan, Sexual Assault Treatment Unit (SATU), South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital, with TY students. We are fortunate to have someone of the calibre and experience of Ms Noonan talking to our boys about consent, a discussion on which we can build at home and equip the boys to make the right choices in situations that may arise.

The PC extends a sincere thank you to Ms Noonan for her ongoing support to CBC & to the CBC Teachers who, following training, deliver a modified version of the *UCC Bystander Intervention* programme to TY students, a programme that builds upon the RSE aspect of the SPHE programme and the Consent workshop.

Parenting Workshop – Fatherhood Programme

The long-running, two-evening workshop, for fathers and men who play a significant role in the boys' lives, was held in March. Mr Brendan Dennehy, founder of The Fatherhood Programme, facilitated the workshop with very positive feedback. The course, aims to enhance skills in relating to sons, communicating better, developing better relationships and becoming a role model in boys' lives. The PC extends a sincere thank you to Mr Dennehy, the parents and guardians who participated and provided positive feedback.



Careers Exhibition 2024

The PC extends a sincere thank you to the CBC Guidance Department for working in partnership with the PC to provide the boys with an opportunity to explore career paths and plan their future. Thank you to the representatives from the Universities, Colleges, other third level institutions and the multidisciplinary practitioners who participated in the event on a voluntary basis and shared their expertise with the boys.

The support from past pupils and parents of students is acknowledged and appreciated.

Testimonials:

"Well done on organising a very comprehensive event, gives the students a super chance to explore and discuss different career opportunities" PWC

"A note of thanks, both the Careers Webinar and the exhibition held this week were excellent. We really appreciate the hard work put into organising the events" Parent

"Thank you for the invitation, we much appreciate the opportunity to speak with the boys of CBC. We appreciate the time and effort involved in running an event like this. Thank you for the warm reception, we express our gratitude to all students" Garda



CBC CAREERS FAIR

THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER • 3.30-5.15PM

Open to Third, Fourth, Fifth & Sixth Year Students & Parents

Come and meet
UCC, MTU, UCD,
Trinity College Dublin,
Colleges of Further Education (Cork),
Representatives from the Army & Navy
& Apprenticeships, Representatives
from different professions
and much, much more.....

ACCOUNTING
HEALTHCARE
EDUCATION
TECHNOLOGY
HUMAN RESOURCES
ENGINEERING
COMPUTER SCIENCE
INFORMATICS & DESIGN
COMMUNICATIONS



Navigating the Alcohol & Drug Talk Together

A talk on navigating the alcohol and drug conversation with our teenagers was held in CBC on 9th April.



Recognising the conversation on alcohol and drugs can be a daunting aspect of parenting in today's world, the PC was delighted to host a talk, facilitated by Ms Gemma Hilario and Ms Lisa Sheehan, with extensive expertise in this area. The talk was well attended and through an interactive meeting provided parents with insight, practical advice, tools and strategies to feel more confident when it comes to talking with our young people about substance abuse.

Areas discussed included what is a drug, types of drugs, cocaine use, what to do if you suspect drug use and key take-home points, as detailed right.

The PC extends a sincere thank you to Ms Gemma Hilario and Ms Lisa Sheehan for sharing their insight and practical advice.



NAVIGATING THE DRUG TALK TOGETHER... KNOWING WHAT TO SAY

- Building Resilience
- Tools & Strategies
- Signs & Symptoms

Wednesday 9th April Time: 7pm

Gemma Hilario
20 years in Education and Drug & Alcohol Awareness, Training, Client Work, Leaving Teams & Service Development, Life & Business Coach

Lisa Sheehan
10 years working in Drug & Alcohol Awareness, Training, Client Work, Leaving Teams & Service Development, Life & Business Coach

Join us on Wednesday 9th April for "Navigating the Alcohol & Drug Talk Together", an evening for parents on approaching conversations about alcohol & drugs with their teens.

Gain expert insights and practical advice on this most important topic.

The event will take place at 7pm in the College. Registration & further details to follow.

Key Take-Home Points:

- Start the conversation early on the basis it is never young to begin age-appropriate chats about health, safety and choice.
- Ongoing, open conversations – built on calmness, curiosity, and connection – are far more effective than one-off warnings or lectures.
- Future-proof your child by setting clear boundaries.
- Allowing or normalising underage drinking (even at home) doesn't reduce harm – research shows it may increase the risk of future misuse.
- Delaying first alcohol drink is one of the most protective steps you can take.
- Keep reinforcing your child's strengths.
- Keep reaffirming their ability to make good decisions.
- Remind them they can manage peer pressure, they can have fun without substances, and they do have the coping skills to navigate tough situations. Many young people have already been to discos and parties without alcohol
- Signs and Symptoms of the type of drugs
- **You're still the biggest influence in your child's life - Your influence matters more than you think.**

If you suspect or know your child is using Drugs:

- Don't panic, but don't ignore it either. Stay calm, take a breath, and plan for a conversation – not a confrontation.
- Choose a good time to talk. Let them know you're concerned, not angry, and that you want to understand what's going on.
- Use open questions: "Can you help me understand..." or "What's been happening lately?"
- Focus on safety, support, and your relationship first. You can move to consequences or boundaries after the initial conversation, once you understand more.