



Coláiste na hInse

Eolas don bhFoireann Nua Information for New Staff

Coláiste na hInse is a 'Start Up/Green Field' second level school in Baile an Bhiaigh Co. na Mí. Established in 2008, *The Coláiste*, as it is referred to locally, opened its doors to seventy nine first year pupils in The Neptune Hotel. The location of the school caught national attention with the media covering our experience of education in this unconventional environment. From the very beginning a number of challenges faced Clann na Choláiste (daltaí, tuismitheoirí agus múinteoirí). These challenges, in hindsight, were the fires that forged a strong spirit and an unyielding determination to create a school of excellence that would stand strong and proud in the community. This courage, fortitude and conviction to ár bhfís is simply the 'way we are'!

Our determination to succeed, genuine team ethos and unrelenting focus on providing the best teaching and learning in an environment of positive relationships has won us many accolades. The use of the Irish language is a unique aspect of who we are and a commitment to develop this ethos is essential for any new staff member. Coláiste na hInse staff are student centred, positive, hard working, flexible and open to new ideas and methods. Our mission statement (ár bhfís) below is the standard that we live by:

Coláiste na hInse is a school of Excellence where students are happy and secure in a learning atmosphere characterised by Dearfachas (positivity) and belonging. There is a unique emphasis on ár dteanga Gaeilge (our Irish language) agus ár gcultúr (our culture). We focus on the whole young person and aspire to develop each as an intellectual, emotional and spiritual individual. The cornerstones of our philosophy are Bród (Pride) agus Uaillmhian (Ambition). We encourage the highest standards in ár ndaltaí (our students) ensuring that they reach their full potential through strong relationships and positive reinforcement.

Coláiste motto: Aimsigh do Réalt Eolais (Reach for Your Star)

Coláiste crest: An Bradán Feasa agus an Réalt Eolais (The Salmon of Knowledge and the Star of Knowledge)

1. Dearfachas/Restorative Practice Positive Learning Environment

"Dearfachas/RP is about building empathy in students and staff, holding people responsible and accountable for their behaviour, and increasing a feeling of community."

The learning environment within The Coláiste is a positive one with a strong focus on the promotion of positive behaviour rather than focusing on punishment of poor behaviour. The underpinning philosophy of The Coláiste is Dearfachas/RP. As a result there is a strong ethos of praising students and acknowledging achievements where possible including during Tionól (daily assemblies). Dearfachas/RP incorporates a structured rewards system that is operated by gach múinteoirí. We also hold award ceremonies including Réalta na Míosa and organise regular contact procedures with parents to positively reinforce students e.g. An Cinn Lae. In keeping with this philosophy of respect shouting or raising ones voice aggressively is not tolerated. The use of sarcasm and verbal ‘put-downs’ should be avoided and correction of students should be constructive. Staff should take opportunities to recognise and acknowledge good behaviour. Coláiste staff are expected to ‘catch students being good’ rather than punishing students when they make mistakes. We promote ‘**Deir Dearfachas**’ i.e. ‘**Speak Positive**’ as all communication can, regardless of content, be presented in the most positive manner where the student integrity and self-esteem is promoted. When in a doubt staff are encouraged to reflect on three key principles that underpin the school i.e. Relationships, Relationships, Relationships!!! Developing positive relationships based on mutual respect, caring and kindness will ensure your classes operate within an atmosphere of calm effectiveness. Poor behaviour is dealt with in a Restorative Justice manner giving students the opportunity to talk, explain the action and question the impacts of the action and what relationships have been damaged and need attention. We often refer to this as the ‘**bite the tounge**’ method i.e. múinteoirí give daltaí the time to narrate and talk through the event instead of the múinteoirí telling the daltaí what they have done and what is required to fix the problem

2. Gaeilge sa Coláiste **(Irish in The Coláiste)**

Ar teanga agus ár gcultúr gaeilge is strongly promoted sa Coláiste in an inclusive manner. Our standard is based on the following seanfocail:

Is fearr Gaeilge briste, ná Bearla Clíste
(Broken Irish is preferable to clever English).

All communication (oral and written) is encouraged trí gaeilge and all formal litir and e-mails will have an emphasis on the Irish language. All múinteoirí are expected to embrace this standard and develop their skills in an teanga gaeilge.

3. Múinteoireacht agus Foghlaim **Teaching and Learning**

The process of teaching and learning is the central pillar of the school and as such is a permanent issue on all staff meeting agendas. The staff of The Coláiste will be expected to show knowledge and experience of various active pedagogic strategies. Múinteoir commitment to continuous professional development is essential as teaching staff are expected to be dedicated to continually developing their teaching

skills. It is important to note that Team Teaching will be an important teaching mechanism within the school. Learners in a team teaching environment feel more included in class and this dramatically affects student self-esteem. In addition to this the benefit of team teaching to teachers includes better, more innovative planning, the sharing of ideas and the development of professional learning communities within the school. Prospective teachers will be expected to be strong advocates of Team Teaching and its educational benefits. All prospective teachers of Coláiste na hInse must be willing to engage in this pedagogic practice. Self-evaluation is also an important aspect of staff development in Coláiste na hInse. All foireann are expected to strive towards being a reflective practitioner and are encouraged to include daltaí agus foireann eile in this process.

Abhair Roinn have continued to develop as The Coláiste grows. However, in Coláiste na hInse it is important that teachers work in a cross-curricular approach sharing methodologies, ideas and skills as this offers the best opportunity for dynamic lesson planning and delivery and the evolution of a real team spirit among professional colleagues. Prospective staff must be willing to work in such a cross-curricular manner.

Central to the learning environment is a culture of high expectations for all our daltaí. To facilitate this there is a regular examination and reporting process and academic monitoring. This involves daltaí results being systematically reviewed by teaching teams to ensure daltaí are achieving their potential and to develop early and prescriptive supports to those who are having difficulty. The Coláiste maintains an 'honours norm' as a baseline standards approach especially in junior cycle.

In-Seirbhís (CPD)

All new múinteoirí entering The Coláiste are encouraged and expected to regularly visit ranganna do múinteoirí eile. In particular it is important that visits are made to certain established múinteoirí including Ceann Roinne, Mentor, Taoisigh/Relatoirí (Year Heads). As excellent practice occurs sa teach (in-house) it is most beneficial that it be shared through this open-doras policy. Indeed it has been this policy and method of sharing best-practice that has been identified by staff to be the most effective in-aimsir (CPD) for all múinteoirí. To build confidence in this sharing style it is important to note that as Team Teaching is so well established in The Coláiste it is a very normal experience to have multiple adults in a classroom. We also advise that when correcting obair or doing class preparation that múinteoirí nua take a suíochán in another múinteoir class as it offers an opportunity for obair as well as being an environment to 'soak-up' our ethos and expectations.

The Coláiste has a commitment to in-house in-seirbhís. There is no doubt that excellent practice is part of everyday school life in Coláiste na hInse. It is our belief that the best in-seirbhís opportunities are simply a seomra away. Established múinteoirí are identified as Teaching and Learning mentors and they are available to all múinteoirí to discuss teaching methods. These múinteoirí expect visits to their

classrooms and are also available to visit others seomraí to give support and advice. It is essential that all múinteoirí nua engage in this on site in-seirbhís.

4. Ríomhairí agus Foghlaim **ICT and Learning**

LMETB is the lead ETB in the integration of ICT in teaching and learning. Dunshaughlin Community College exemplifies this and was chosen as one of twelve schools worldwide to be included as Microsoft School of the Future. Other LMETB schools have also been recognised internationally for their commitment to ICT including Ratoath College. Coláiste na hInse has an excellent ICT infrastructure which supports the development of an interactive, dynamic teaching and learning environment. Prospective staff will be expected to have a high degree of knowledge and skill in ICT usage in the classroom including proficiency employing digital learning resources such as PowerPoint, Digital Whiteboards, Data Projectors, USBs, assistive technologies etc.

5. An Foireann ag Obair Le Chéile **Collaborative Environment**

The classroom in the 21st Century is a more holistic environment often with non-teaching assistants included in the support of lesson delivery. Therefore the strategic employment of Special Needs Assistant to support identified students promoting their engagement with the lesson material and ensuring they feel more included and involved in the class. Prospective teachers will be expected to be strong advocates of the practice of SNAs working alongside students in their classrooms.

In 2013 Coláiste na hInse opened An Cuan our ASD unit. This addition to the school has been most enriching for all. An Cuan operates a ‘sliding doras’ mechanism with daltaí moving between the main school and An Cuan and vice versa. All múinteoirí are encouraged to spend time in An Cuan as a means of fully appreciating the rich learning environment that exists here. Múinteoirí nua may be timetabled in An Cuan.

6. Modhanna Múinte **Assessment for Learning**

Coláiste na hInse has Assessment for Learning as the baseline teaching methodology within the school. This teaching style requires a dynamic approach to teaching. Assessment for Learning practices includes:

- ❖ Comment only marking
- ❖ Guideline to students on corrected work and exams of how to improve (2 wished and a star approach)
- ❖ Formal frames or formulas to be followed to ensure successful tasks
- ❖ Sharing the learning objective with students

- ❖ Self and peer assessment
- ❖ Variety of questioning strategies

Prospective teachers will be expected to be strong advocates of Assessment for Learning and its educational benefits. All múinteoirí are expected, as part of their own personal professional initiative, to develop their skills in this area. Again visiting established múinteoirí classrooms is the easiest way to develop skills in the area.

Self-Evaluation School Improvement Plan

The Coláiste embraces the SIP process. From a teaching and learning perspective the SIP allows us to plan, focus and review developments. Our main focus has been on developing Afl to its advanced level of active methodologies as a mechanism for promoting student engagement in their own learning and achieving differentiation. On site supports exist to help múinteoirí develop their skills in the area.

7. Tionól (Whole School Assembly)

Tionól takes place each morning in Coláiste na hInse. These morning assemblies are an opportunity for us to develop a sense of clann/family as a school to celebrate success and identify topics for the day. Tionól offers an opportunity to express and develop our ethos as a clann (family). Prospective teachers will be expected to attend all morning assemblies.

8. Caomhnú na nDaltaí **Pastoral Care**

Ensuring that ár ndaltaí are **happy** and **feel secure** is of crucial importance. Coláiste na hInse has a Clann(family) ethos i.e. we see all members as part of the CNI family. Dearfachas/RP works very effectively withing this ethos. Caomhnoirí (Class teachers) are appointed to care for rang groups with particular attention to their health, welfare and educational attainment. Caomhnoirí are in effect the ‘good parent’. Therefore, it is essential to note that prospective teachers of Coláiste na hInse will not only be excellent subject specialist but also professionals who demonstrate a **pastoral and caring role** with regard to all pupils. The Caomhnóir (tutor) generally teaches their group a subject and SPHE. The group or Rang is named after them. The Caomhnóir develops a close relationship with their Rang by educating themselves on their student’s backgrounds, learning needs and any other relevant information. The Coláiste prides itself on its positive learning environment however we recognise that some daltaí may need extra interventions at times.

The Code of Behaviour is based on the philosophy of ***Restorative Practice*** and ***Disciple for Learning***. There is a ‘ladder of referral’ which outlines sanctions and interventions which may be necessary at different times with members of the Caomhnóir group. It is important to note that each teacher is responsible for his/her own classroom management and developing positive relationships is an essential first element in the achievement of effective classroom management.

The Coláiste encourages student advocacy and the language of empathy when discussing behaviour issues with daltaí. Daltaí are encouraged to talk through the reason for their actions and the impacts it has on self, others and the clann. Opportunities for ‘restoring’ relationships where breakdowns have occurred are always the first line of approach. Building daltaí capacity to recognise disruptive behaviour, reasons for it and its impacts on other have proven very successful in The Coláiste for promoting a calm, positive, atmosphere. Daltaí are empowered to repair damaged relationships and hurt feelings. This results in the múinteoirí, Caomhnóir, Realtoirí (Year Heads), Leas Príomhoide agus Príomhoide being ‘facilitators’ in daltaí managing their own behaviour and this promotes positive supportive relationships within the clann.

A dedicated and specially developed Cinn Lae (school diary) is in place to facilitate home-school liaison with regard to a number of areas including pastoral care. This diary will record punctuality, absences, positive and negative behaviour.

9. Clubanna agus Imeachtaí **Extra and Co-Curricular Activities**

The benefits of extra and co-curricular activities cannot be underestimated. They give daltaí the opportunity to work together as a team with their teacher which help develop positive pupil-teacher relationships. Further to this it gives students who may not shine as brightly in the academic environment the opportunity to succeed. Prospective staff will be expected to involve themselves in a wide variety of such activities including academic competitions and sporting opportunities.

10. Ard-Caighdeán na Foirne **Staff Professionalism**

Teachers are role models for children and therefore the staff of Coláiste na hInse are expected to exhibit the absolute highest standards of professionalism at all times. All prospective staff should be fully familiar with the Codes of Professional Conduct for Teachers which has been published by the Teaching Council of Ireland. There is a strict professional code of dress for the staff of Coláiste na hInse. Jeans, runners, revealing clothing and facial piercings are not part of this professional standard and are not worn in The Coláiste. Please view http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are for more information on this area.

11. Fón Póca **Mobile Phones**

Staff should have their mobile phones turned off and **out of sight** while in classrooms whether teaching or supervising and on corridors.

12. An Idirlíne

Social Networking Sites

If any members of staff have their own social networking sites it is important that these sites would remain private and cannot be accessed at any stage by tuismitheoirí or daltaí of Coláiste na hInse.

13. Dea-Iompar Tríd na Scoile

General Monitoring of Movement and Behaviour throughout the school

We have collective responsibility for the behaviour of daltaí on corridors, in the lunch areas and in the toilet blocks. Working as a unit we should ensure positive organised and consistent school structures. Therefore please be vigilant Re. behaviour on corridors, which may lead to damage or injury or cause hurt to somebody. As a clan all are expected to be proactive on supervision and while moving around the corridors. Please note corridor supervision is an active role and all múinteoirí are expected to use this time to engage with daltaí to further promote good relationships and intervene in situations to prevent escalation. Múinteoirí are expected to move purposely around the corridors while on supervision. Corridor supervision is not done in pairs in Coláiste na hInse.

14. Sláinte na Scoile

Healthy Eating Policy

The school has a healthy eating statement for daltaí. We would ask that you would respect this policy and refrain from eating/ drinking sweets, cakes, biscuits and crisps in the presence of daltaí. Again it is the collective responsibility of all staff to ensure all daltaí are adhering to this policy. This may involve ‘chats’ and words of support and encouragement.

15. Eolais Faoi Rún

Confidential Information

Staff can be privy to confidential information regarding daltaí or families. This information should be respected. Discussions of certain delicate problems should be confined to those who have the professional position and interest in the case. General negative discussion about individual daltaí in the staffroom should be avoided.

16. Díláthair

Absence

Staff who are unavailable for work due to illness or extracurricular activities should provide cover work for their classes and let the school know as soon as possible that they will not be in. Please ring an Leas Príomhoide if an absence is unavoidable (texts are not accepted as notification of absence). Work can be emailed to the school. Please note all staff absences are reported on a monthly basis to LMETB.

17. Ailtireacht na Scoile

Effective School Architecture

Coláiste na hInse has identified eleven factors from international research as essential guiding principles for effective schools. These act as guidelines and supports to our development and evolution. They are also relevant to the processes of school self-evaluation and review. All staff are provided with a copy of these factors prior to beginning work in The Coláiste. Please view these on www.coláistenahinse.ie.

Notaí: As a new school the staff cohort must be dynamic, energetic and innovative professionals with strong leadership qualities and a zeal for Teaching and Learning that will ensure highest standards. Such individuals must be both flexible and courageous in order to successfully meet the unique demands of a ‘Start-Up’ situation (*Per Ardua Ad Astra*-through hard work we reach the stars!!!!)

It is important to note that múinteoirí are encouraged to be innovative in all areas of school life. How a múinteoir uses their voice to communicate information and command a situation is central to their effectiveness. Voice range, pitch tone etc are regularly changed to manage communication and classroom management. However, shouting is aggressive and is not respectful of clann and hence is not acceptable in Coláiste na hInse within the teaching and learning framework.

18. Basic Key Points for Successful Múinteoireacht agus Foghlaim in Coláiste na hInse **(Teaching and Learning)**

- ✓ Know Coláiste na hInse’s Mission Statement
- ✓ Research Restorative Practice approaches to relationship building
- ✓ Focus on developing positive relationships
- ✓ Talk to your mentor or another member of staff .
- ✓ Visit other múinteoirí classrooms (CNI has an open doras policy)
- ✓ Review the Guide for Múinteoirí Nua
- ✓ Be on time for class
- ✓ Always take a register of attendance
- ✓ Welcome daltaí into seomra
- ✓ Cinn Lae always on right hand corner of desk
- ✓ Books copies and equipment on desk without delay
- ✓ Keep a seating plan
- ✓ Daltaí stand when adult enters room
- ✓ School bags should not be left in aisle ways or on desk
- ✓ Daltaí never touch board, blinds, windows without specific instruction from múinteoirí
- ✓ All litter is picked up at end of class and whiteboard is rubbed clean
- ✓ All chairs are under desks neatly
- ✓ Report all damage and/or graffiti
- ✓ Do not let your class out early
- ✓ Do not send daltaí out of class without a note
- ✓ Never allow chewing gum in class

- ✓ Records of lesson plans, test results, homework and attendance are kept
- ✓ Talk to your mentor or another member of staff if you have any concerns.

Múinteoirí who are successfully appointed to a position in Coláiste na hInse will be invited to a cruinniú (meeting) with the senior leadership foireann prior to the formal start to the school year. A letter of invite including date and time will be posted to all successful candidates. Attendance at this cruinniú is viewed as an essential support.