



## Open Night 2019

## Information Leaflet <sup>Page</sup>

St. Ailbe's School is a co-educational second level school administered by Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). The school offers an exceptionally broad curriculum including Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied and Transition Year.

Our mission statement is:

- To provide quality education that meets the actual needs of young people in the best quality learning environment. To create an atmosphere of trust and confidence between students, parents, community and staff which enhances self-esteem and self-worth.
- To help pupils reach their full potential in all areas of life, both social and moral. Recognising that there is no single standard that applies to all.
- To help pupils grow in confidence with a positive outlook on life and with due consideration for others and their property.

### Academic Results:

In June 2018 a total of 40 students sat the Leaving Certificate or Leaving Certificate Applied Exams in St. Ailbe's. A number of our students scored in excess of 500 points and a number of students were awarded a Distinction in the Leaving Certificate Applied. Recent changes in curriculum choice, timetabling, afterschool study and in-house exams are helping our students to perform better in state exams.

Our Junior Certificate results are always very good. A's and B's in honours papers are regularly achieved by our students. Again changes to our curriculum choice and timetabling at Junior Cycle are having a significant impact on student attainment.

**It is very important to recognise that students capable of achieving top academic results will do so in St. Ailbe's.** The school has a long and proud academic tradition with past pupils of St. Ailbe's working across the

globe in Medicine, Engineering, Technology, Entrepreneurs, Teachers, Nurses, Plumbers etc.

As a school we take pride in the results achieved by all our students and we aim to support all students to achieve their own academic potential.

### Rising Enrolments:

As shown below, numbers in St. Ailbe's School have grown in the last number of years.

2013/14	243 pupils
2018/19	323 pupils

While this growth in numbers is welcome we do not want to expand and grow too quickly. Thus there will be a limit on enrolments this year and not all applicants may be accepted.

### Curriculum:

1<sup>st</sup> Year students are divided into 2 or 3 (depending on enrolments) mixed ability groupings for the year. Our core subjects are Irish, English, Maths, Science, and French. A taster programme is run up to Christmas when students must then select one subject from each of the following groupings:

#### **Option 1.**

Art, Music, Technical Graphics, Home Economics

#### **Option 2.**

Woodwork, Home Economics, History, Geography

#### **Option 3.**

Business, Metalwork, Woodwork, Geography

**Please note that the subjects offered as core and the subjects offered within each option band may vary from year to year.**

Along with the above we promote student well-being through PE, CSPE, Religion and SPHE. Our teachers run programmes such as "Friends for Life" that promote a culture of respect, build resilience and strengthen students' abilities to deal with issues that arise.

After Christmas in 1<sup>st</sup> year, honours and ordinary level classes may be established in Maths.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> year, honours and ordinary level classes are usually established in Irish.

This is a very broad curriculum giving a great choice of subjects to both boys and girls.

### The 'New' Junior Certificate.

Parents and students will have heard a lot about this in recent years. St. Ailbe's has embraced this new programme and all teachers, the Principal and Deputy Principal have taken part in all necessary training sessions. Further information regarding the 'New' Junior Certificate will be provided to parents and students after the enrolment process is complete.

### Assessment:

Our Christmas and summer exams take place in our sports hall for 1<sup>st</sup> years. Our 1<sup>st</sup> years are seated with 2<sup>nd</sup> students in a very formal exam setting. Upwards of 130 students complete their exams together. This is very good practice in preparation for state exams. It is good training for our students as it highlights the importance of preparing properly for exams. Three reports are issued to 1<sup>st</sup> year parents/guardians. There are 2 parent/teacher meetings for 1<sup>st</sup> year parents each year. As part of the 'New' Junior Certificate programme, our subject teachers will carry out classroom-based assessments on every student.

### Homework Clubs and Evening Study:

Our SCP team run homework clubs 4 evenings a week at no cost to parents/guardians. Teachers are available to assist 1<sup>st</sup> students with their homework each day. Before this begins, students always get a drink and sandwich to keep the nutrition levels going. Sports activities for the group take place on various afternoons for students taking part in homework club. **The number of homework club places is restricted but other 1st year students are offered 1 hour of evening study Monday to Thursday.** There is no charge for this for 1<sup>st</sup> year students. For junior cycle classes and senior cycle classes, evening study runs 4 days a week for 2 hours after the school day ends. The cost this year is €7 per week.

### Learning Support:

St. Ailbe's school has a number of qualified learning support teachers.

All the school news can be found on our St Ailbe's Facebook pages. The main page is "St Ailbes School", our sports page is "St Ailbe's Sports" and we also have a page dedicated to the school musical which is called "St Ailbe's School Musical". The school Twitter handle is @StAilbesSchool.

Based on our internal assessments, a number of students will be offered a place in the Learning Support class which is timetabled opposite French. During this time extra support in English and Maths is provided. This is nearly 3 hours of extra tuition per week in this area. Where necessary the LS teacher links in with other subject teachers to do catch up programmes etc.

Our LS team will also run other support programs for students where resources allow.

#### **ASD Classes:**

St. Ailbe's School is the only school in Tipperary Town with two dedicated classes for students on the Autistic spectrum. The school is very proud of this development. The school will begin a large building project in order to further improve our facilities to support students on the ASD spectrum. The maximum number of students who can have access to each of these classes is 6. Further information regarding the specific requirements associated with enrolment into the ASD classes can be obtained from the Principal.

#### **CAT 4 Testing:**

This stands for Cognitive Ability Testing. It is a suite of tests that assesses a student's (thinking) abilities in key areas that support educational development and academic attainment. CAT 4 is the fourth edition of the test and comprises of the following sections or batteries which assess different aspects of ability. The 4 categories are:

- Verbal reasoning
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Non-verbal reasoning
- Spatial ability

Copies of these results are available for parents/guardians. As a school we are developing our own system where we use these results as one measure of setting standards for our students in terms of exam results.

They are also very useful in identifying students who may require learning support. Another benefit is that they highlight a student's particular learning style and subjects that may best suit this learning style.

This computer based test is a very useful tool for us as educators but it must be stressed that it is not a test or exam in the normal meaning of the word.

#### **Guidance and Counselling:**

Our guidance counsellor is available to all our students to assist with subject choices, CAO applications, HEAR and DARE applications and other issues that may arise.

#### **Culture of Respect:**

St. Ailbe's School has developed a code of behaviour built around respect. Students are encouraged to do the simple things well such as:

- Saying 'please' and 'thank you'.
- Holding doors for others.
- Respecting the fact that we all have individual and different personalities.
- Being very aware of what you say and write and the impact it may have.
- Having respect for our school uniform and school materials.

This culture is very much central to St.Ailbe's being a very warm and supportive learning environment for our students. All recent school inspections including a Whole School Evaluation (which can be accessed online) will confirm this fact.

School assemblies are held on a regular basis where students receive recognition for their achievements and the school Principal constantly reminds students of the expectations we have in our school.

#### **Discipline:**

School discipline is strict but fair and disruption to teaching and learning by any student is dealt with as per school code of behaviour. If any parent/guardian

wishes to tour the school during our school day, I as Principal, would be more than proud to walk you around the school.

Important rules:

- Junior Cycle students cannot leave the school campus during the school day. They must stay on site for lunch time.
- Students can only leave the school grounds if signed out by Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.
- Texts are issued daily if a student is absent from school.
- School Uniform and School Journal must be respected.

It is important to note here that all students will see the Principal and Deputy Principal on the school corridors and grounds on a very regular basis. I am sure that all students will state that we are both very approachable. Our students like this fact and it is one that we as the senior management team in the school enjoy.

#### **HSCL:**

St. Ailbe's School has a full time Home School Community Liaison Teacher who is available to support students and parents/guardians with any issues relating to school.

#### **SCP:**

St. Ailbe's School has 3 School Completion Programme staff at present working with us and with 4 local primary schools.

#### **Sports in St. Ailbe's School:**

Both the boys and girls in St Ailbe's get an opportunity to play many different sports including football, basketball, hurling, athletics, rugby and soccer. The girls also play comogie and the School entered its first spike ball blitz last year. A number of our teams have been very successful particularly over the last three years. Our junior girls football team won the Munster final, the boys rugby team won the Kilfeakle blitz

and the emerging schools cup final which was played in Thomond Park. Our boys football team are very successful, winning a number of games in the Munster championship. As a school we would always be conscious of the fact that participation in sport is to be encouraged but should not be to the detriment of exam results.

#### **Other Activities:**

Our school Library is open 4 days a week for students to drop in and read. The library team also run board games and table tennis competitions. Our SCP team run weekly brain teaser competitions, quizzes and a coding club.

#### **Music and the Arts:**

This is obviously a very important part of school life in St. Ailbe's. Our annual school musical is now regarded as one of the highlights of the year in terms of stage productions in Tipperary Town. All students are encouraged to take to the stage and perform.

As a school the success of these musicals has been founded on 2 key principles:

- Talented and motivated students, willing to work as a team.
- Fantastic team of teachers and support staff working with our students.

Traditional music sessions take place every Thursday and students can perform on the 'Gig Rig' at lunchtime on Fridays.

Music and the Arts bring a smile to our faces in St. Ailbe's and long may the tradition grow and flourish.

#### **School Facilities:**

Our facilities are amongst the best in the country. Over €1 million has been spent recently to ensure that our students are provided with excellent infrastructures to support learning. The school building is always warm clean and comfortable. The school possesses the following:

- Canteen
- Huge sports hall
- Specialist rooms (Metalwork, Woodwork, Home economics, Science & Technical Graphics)
- Astro turf pitches, GAA pitch, Soccer pitch and access to running track
- Fully equipped Computer lab
- Large study hall
- Spacious corridors

- Locker areas
- Well maintained subject classrooms

#### **Canteen:**

Our canteen is open every morning at 8.20am for students to get a free breakfast of cereal, tea coffee, fruit and toast if so desired. The canteen is open every break and lunchtime and before homework club and study. Students can of course bring their own lunches to school. Our canteen staff are very friendly and very experienced and really do look out for all our students.

#### **Caretaking Staff:**

St. Ailbe's has one full time caretaker and two part time cleaning staff. Our caretaker is very good at assisting 1<sup>st</sup> years in settling in to school life. Our caretaker opens our school every morning at 8am - an option not available in every school.

#### **Parents Council:**

The following are the officers of our new council.

- Chairperson Mary Cummins
- Treasurer Anne Nash
- Secretary Melanie O'Grady

The Parents Council will be available to speak with parents/guardians of prospective 1<sup>st</sup> year students on our open night.

#### **Other important pieces of information:**

- Yearly trips to international rugby games, musicals and other events are organised.
- Principal and Deputy Principal are always available to speak with.
- St. Ailbe's runs a school book rental scheme.
- St. Ailbe's keeps costs associated with education to a minimum for parents/guardians.
- Each year group has a Year Head and each class group has a class tutor. The Deputy Principal is also the 1st year head..

#### **St. Ailbe's Way:**

Any person be it teacher, parent, invited guest, inspector who visits our school always makes a reference to the atmosphere in the school. This we refer to as the 'St. Ailbe's Way'. It is where we at all times strive to ensure that high expectations are set in an atmosphere of trust, respect and confidence between students, parents, community and staff.

#### **Open Night:**

**Thursday 15th November at 7.00 p.m.**

**All 5th & 6th class pupils and parents/guardians are welcome.**









