



COOLA POST PRIMARY SCHOOL



PROSPECTUS
2024 - 2025

'Encouraging students to achieve their maximum individual potential in an environment of fairness and mutual respect.'



“The school atmosphere is positive on all fronts: staff morale is high, community links are good, parents are confident, and the students show pride in their school.”

Whole School Evaluation Report.



Welcome to Coola Post Primary School



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Now that your child has completed the Primary School Cycle, you are faced with the difficult decision of choosing the Post Primary School that will best suit your and his/her needs over the next five/six years. Many factors will influence your decision: - distance from school, transport, subject choice, school environment, facilities, staff, fees (hidden or otherwise), uniform etc.

In this brochure, I am putting forward Coola Post Primary for your consideration.

In Coola, we strive for excellence in everything from academic achievement to extra-curricular activities. Students experience a welcoming inclusive environment in which they are encouraged to maximise their full potential. We provide an educational environment that is always carefully controlled and monitored but, is at the same time, understanding and caring, devoted to ensuring the personal development and welfare of each individual student.

At Coola, one of the important factors to be considered is our rural location and the fact that children are on the campus all day under constant supervision and away from the many distractions/influences that exist around larger town schools. Our increasing enrolment over the past twenty years has enabled the curriculum to develop and expand to one that is equal to all modern schools.

The success of our students in State Examinations is exemplary. Results achieved by our students are consistently above the national average. Our transfer to third level is exceptional with many of our students obtaining scholarships to leading Universities such as Trinity College Dublin and UCD.

If you enrol your child in Coola Post Primary, you will be entrusting him/her to a school with a tradition that is proud of its past and confident for its future, and from which he/she will eventually graduate as a young adult fit to take his/her due place in society.

You are cordially invited to attend our open/enrolment evening on October 24th 2024 from 4:30pm to 8:30pm to view our facilities and meet current students and staff. Thank you for reading our brochure and I look forward to meeting you on the night.

Yours sincerely,

Damien McGoldrick
PRINCIPAL



History

During the 1940's Co. Sligo Vocational Education Committee put forward a proposal to locate a secondary school in East Sligo. After much local debate about the school's location, it was agreed to build the school close to Coola Cross on a site bought from the St. Lawrence Estate. This green field site was equidistant from a number of local villages and would serve the people of Sooney, Riverstown, Castlebaldwin, Collooney, Ballintogher, Geevagh, Ballygawley, Ballinagar and Dromahair.

The school opened in 1954 comprising of a Science room, Home Economics room, a Principal's office, cloakrooms and toilets under the stewardship of Felix Gaffney. 41 students enrolled in 1954/55. The arrival of the school opened up educational opportunities to the people of its catchment area by providing day and night classes, and by giving training in the type of skills necessary to survive in a changing society.

The first qualification provided by the school was the Group Certificate and at the time it was a passport into many successful careers. In 1965 an extension comprising of a Metalwork and Woodwork room was added. Two years later, free transport was introduced. The introduction of the Intermediate Certificate Exam led to a significant increase in student numbers. In 1978, the first Leaving Certificate class enrolled in Coola, and in 1980, 14 students sat their Leaving Cert. exam in the school.

In 1981/2 a Community Sports Hall was opened on the campus and there was further development in 1984, with the building of a four classroom block. In 2000, a further extension comprising of a foyer/assembly area was built. Enrolment grew steadily from 2000 onwards and numerous pre-fabricated classrooms were added to accommodate increasing numbers. In 2008, a second Science Laboratory was built and in 2010, a modern canteen facility was opened on the campus. In 2010/11 hard courts were developed for soccer, tennis and basketball, and the gaelic pitch was also developed. In 2012, an extension of six multi-purpose/specialist classrooms was opened. Phase 2 was opened in 2015 comprising of five more specialist and general classrooms.

With 550 pupils on its roll for 2024/25, Coola is eagerly looking forward to the changes being planned for its future development and expansion. Phase 3, consisting of engineering, home economics, science and art rooms, was completed in summer 2021. Funding has been sanctioned for the final phase 4 extension and work will commence on this development in the coming year. All of these developments will enhance the holistic education that we strive to provide here in Coola.





“The enhancement of ICT as tools in teaching and learning, together with staff up-skilling, has resulted in significant Improvement ”

Whole School Evaluation Report.

School Facilities

Our school has a current enrolment of 550 pupils with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. Our facilities rival those of many larger and newer schools. New modern classrooms are comfortable and conducive to study and learning. New extensions which opened in 2012, 2015 and 2021 have greatly enhanced our facilities. These include:

- Three ultra-modern fully equipped Science laboratories.
- Two fully equipped Woodwork and Construction Studies rooms.
- Two Engineering rooms with state of the art equipment.
- Two Home Economics rooms.
- A Dress Design room.
- Computer rooms which all teachers have access to.
- Career Guidance room.
- Two modern Design & Communications Graphics rooms with state of the art computer aided drawing facilities.
- Fully equipped Geography room.
- State of the art, fully equipped Music room.
- Indoor Sports Complex.
- New all-weather AstroTurf pitch.
- Canteen.
- Student lockers.
- Supervised evening study.
- Book Scheme.
- Interactive white boards in all rooms.



The School Environment

DAILY TIMETABLE

Monday -Thursday 8.45am – 3.45pm
Friday 8.45am – 1.15pm

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Girls: Navy jumper incorporating school crest, white shirt, navy tie with green and gold stripe, navy trousers, black/navy shoes, plain navy or black jacket and an O’Neills crested sports top and O’Neills school tracksuit bottoms for PE.

Boys: Navy jumper incorporating school crest, blue shirt, navy tie with green and gold stripe, navy trousers, black/navy shoes, plain navy or black jacket and an O’Neills crested sports top and O’Neills school tracksuit bottoms for PE.

SCHOOL SETTING

Ours is a truly rural school where students spend their entire school day within the school boundaries. There are no outside distractions.

Being relatively small in size, it is possible for our students to build personal relationships with one another and with their teachers. We see this as extremely important. In conjunction with extra-curricular activities, it helps in the formation of a rounded, well-balanced personality that we believe is a hallmark of all our pupils.

MENTOR SYSTEM

Our mentoring programme allows our older students to provide valuable peer support to younger students and increases first year students’ feelings of belonging and commitment to the school. As mentors, the older students offer support to individual first year students.

WELLBEING

We place a strong emphasis on pastoral care in Coola. Our pastoral care programme is managed by a committee and the service is delivered by yearheads and class tutors. Assemblies each morning, gives students a forum to discuss issues which are important to them, in a friendly and supportive environment.

“The capacity of the school to deliver improved academic performance is a strongly promoted aim of senior management... Significant advances have been made with uptake levels at higher level in many subjects greatly increased ”

Whole School Evaluation Report.

The Wellbeing committee ensures that all relevant topics applicable to each year group are discussed during the tutorial classes with the ultimate aim of enhancing students' self-esteem and educational progress.

GREEN SCHOOL

Our students pride themselves in keeping Coola tidy and are actively involved in the Green Schools' Programme, having received a Green Flag in 2004, 2009, 2012 and 2015. A thematic approach has already been successful in reducing litter and waste in the school. In co-operation with the Local Authorities, students have moved on to reducing the school's energy and water consumption. We look forward to a successful project that will bring Coola towards being a more sustainable, environmentally friendly and greener school.

SCHOOL JOURNAL

Every student in the school must be in possession of a school journal. The journal is designed to:

- Help organise homework on a daily basis.
- Ensure constant communication between school and home.

Failure of students to comply with the study/homework demands of relevant teachers will be noted in the journal. It is important that parents/guardians examine the journal on a nightly basis to ensure that homework is being completed.

The journal also contains the school's code of behaviour in the form of student rules and classroom rules. A copy of the school rules must be signed by parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

There is also a Board of Management, which includes two parents of children attending the school, two full-time teachers and four members of the E.T.B. The Principal acts as Secretary of the Board.



PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

Coola Post Primary has a very active Parents' Association which assists school management with the smooth running of the school.

PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS

Our school recognises the important role played by parents in their children's education. Parent/teacher meetings are generally held from 4pm to 6.45pm to facilitate parents who have daily work commitments. Parents are encouraged to develop close links with the school. They are welcome to arrange appointments to discuss their son's/daughter's progress or any matter relating to their welfare, should the need arise.

“The quality of communications between the board, teaching staff and parents' association is very good. The board has an excellent working relationship with senior management and has high confidence in, and strong support for, the principal and newly appointed deputy principal”

Whole School Evaluation Report.



Junior Cycle Subjects

Pupils take a total of ten subjects for Junior Cert examination from the list below. All students take English, Irish, Maths, Science, French, Geography and History. They choose three subjects from the following:-

Graphics, Music, Art, Engineering, Wood Technology, Business Studies, Home Economics.

Every assistance is given by our teachers to help students match their subject choice with their particular talents. On enrolment night, pupils will be asked to nominate their subject choices in order of preference. Every effort is made to give pupils their first choices. Where more than twenty-four students request a position in a practical class, preferences will be looked at first and then names will be drawn at random to fill that particular class.

CORE SUBJECTS

- Irish
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- French
- Geography
- History

CHOICE SUBJECTS

- Graphics
- Music
- Art
- Engineering
- Wood Technology
- Business Studies
- Home Economics

NON-EXAM

- Wellbeing
 - Which covers:*
 - Civic, Social & Political Education (C.S.P.E.)
 - Social, Personal & Health Education (S.P.H.E.)
 - Physical Education
 - Religious Education
 - Digital Media Literacy

For information on the new Junior Cycle please visit www.juniorycycle.ie and click on 'Information for parents'.

Senior Cycle Subjects

A choice of three Leaving Certificates at Senior Cycle is offered.

THE TRADITIONAL LEAVING CERT.

Students take seven examination subjects from the following programme: -

Mandatory Examination Subjects:

Irish (unless exempt), English and Mathematics.

Mandatory non-Examination Subjects:

Career Guidance and Religious Education.

Options: (Four to be selected*)

French, Biology, Physics, Engineering, Construction Studies, Design & Communications Graphics (Technical Drawing), Home Economics, Art, Business, Accounting, History, Geography, Music, Chemistry, Computer Science and Agricultural Science.

**Where more than twenty-four students request a position in a practical class, preferences will be looked at first and then names will be drawn at random to fill that particular class.*

THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE VOCATIONAL PROGRAMME (LCVP)

This programme is offered to all students and involves the previously outlined Leaving Cert programme plus three link modules.

1. Enterprise Education
2. Preparation for work
3. Work Experience

The latter modules are designed to equip students with a body of practical and personal skills not normally acquired in the traditional Leaving Certificate.

The link modules are assessed, graded and points are subsequently awarded which may be used for admission purposes to third level Colleges. Work experience during 5th year is an integral part of the course. Students must study a European language along with Irish and English, usually French or German.

THE LEAVING CERTIFICATE APPLIED

The Leaving Cert Applied is a distinct self-contained Leaving Cert programme. It is designed for those who do not wish to proceed directly to third level education or for those whose needs, aspirations and aptitudes are not adequately catered for by the other Leaving Cert programmes. It is a course of study with emphasis on training for the workplace. Regular work experience is an integral part of the course.

The Leaving Cert Applied is structured around three main elements:

1. Vocational Preparation
2. Vocational Education
3. General Education

Continuous assessment over the two years on specific student tasks, along with terminal exams, form the final examination results.



Transition Year Programme

Our Transition Year Programme has been extremely successful since its introduction in 2008.

THE TRANSITION YEAR PROGRAMME



The overall aims of the programme are:

1. Education for maturity with the emphasis on personal development including social awareness and increased social competence.
2. The promotion of general, technical and academic skills with an emphasis on inter-disciplinary and self-directed learning.
3. Education through experience of adult working life as a basis for personal development and maturity.

Transition Year is optional. Students may decide to apply for the programme or go directly into 5th year.



Ancillary Services

THE BOOK LOAN SCHEME

Although the Department of Education & Science have reduced the grant aid to provide students with books on loan, we continue to offer a Book Loan Scheme that is considerably cheaper for parents than if books had to be purchased otherwise. Joining this scheme will be optional.

AFTER SCHOOL STUDY

Supervised after school study is currently provided two evenings per week. This is based on student demand.

STUDENT COUNCIL

A new Student Council is elected each year and they play an integral and important role in the school community.

PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Cover for each student in Coola is mandatory.

LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICE

We have a number of fully qualified learning support teachers. We place enormous emphasis on the way that we cater for children with special educational needs.

CAREER GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING

There is a full-time Career Guidance Counsellor in the school available to all students. Up to date information on career options and entry qualifications to third level colleges is available. Students are monitored, interviewed and advised as to the direction their career choices should take. Furthermore, senior students undertake visits to many third level institutions to see for themselves the facilities/courses on offer.

We pay particular attention to helping students complete application forms for their preferred college courses or career paths.

“Senior management has successfully led the development of special educational needs provision”

Whole School Evaluation Report.

ADULT EDUCATION

The school has a full-time Adult Education Officer who oversees the implementation of various night classes in the school.

Student Awards & Scholarships

Examination results obtained by students in Coola are consistently higher than the national average of results published by the Department of Education & Skills. Many past students of Coola are at present attending degree courses in Colleges and Universities all over Ireland and abroad such as NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth, University of Limerick, St. Patrick's Primary Teacher Training College, Marino Institute of Education, ATU, Waterford IT, Dublin City University, U.C.D., Trinity College, Queen's University of Belfast and St. Angela's College, Sligo.



ETTA National Engineering award for Coola PPS Leaving Cert student Jason McGoldrick 2021 who is now studying Engineering in UCD.
 From left: Padraig McGarry (teacher), Jason McGoldrick (ETTA Young Engineer of the year), Principal Damien McGoldrick, Aaron McTiernan (finalist) and Michael Byrne (teacher). Photographer: Kathy Burke



Kenneth Henry from Coola representing Ireland in the European Parliament on the Michael Sweetman Tour.



UCD Entrance Scholarship Recipients 2021.

ALL IRELAND SCHOLARSHIPS



Dylan Willis got 595 points in his Leaving Cert (2016) and received an All Ireland Scholarship. He is currently studying Science in UCD.



James Baker got 625 points in his Leaving Cert (2016) and received an All Ireland Scholarship. He is currently studying Engineering in UCD.



Joanne Johnston got 615 points in her Leaving Cert (2016) and received an All Ireland Scholarship. She is currently studying Law and History in UCD.



Ethan Love got 570 points in his Leaving Cert (2016) and received an All Ireland Scholarship. He is currently studying Science in UCD.



Gary Baker receiving his All Ireland Scholarship from TD Michael Noonan at the University of Limerick on 9th November 2013. Gary studied Engineering at UCD.



Laura Johnston receiving her All Ireland Scholarship from TD Ms. Jan O'Sullivan at the University of Limerick on 21st November 2015. Laura received 605 points in her Leaving certificate and is now studying Law and Business in University College Dublin.



U17 Boys Soccer All Ireland Champions 2022. Photo: Donal Hackett.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We encourage our students to use their free time positively through participation in extra-curricular activities. These activities make an important contribution to the overall learning and maturation process in any school.

In Coola our pupils play many sports, including football and soccer, and they participate in inter-schools competitions at County, Connaught and All-Ireland level. They also participate in inter-schools athletics competitions.

Successes in sport are too numerous to mention, but in recent years the school has produced Connaught and All-Ireland Champions in Gaelic Football, Soccer, Basketball and Track and Field Athletics. A totally committed group of teachers coach school teams during lunchtimes and after school.

Involvement in drama, quizzes, music and public speaking is encouraged also. In the past we featured prominently in the Mental Health Assoc. Public Speaking Competitions, reaching regional finals on several occasions. Our senior girls have participated in the Business and Professional Women's Association public speaking competition with great success over the past few years, reaching the All Ireland Finals twice.



Scifest winners 2023.



Regional French Quiz winners 2018, 2nd place.



Girls under 17 Connacht Champions 2023.



U17 Girls Soccer All Ireland Champions 2024.



SCHOOL TOURS

Educational tours form an important part of our school programme.

First years visit places of historical and archaeological interest in Ireland. Our fifth years regularly travel to Paris, the most recent trip occurred in 2024. This 5th year French trip is planned again for early 2026.

Traditionally our Transition Year students have gone on a ski tour to Andalo, Italy. Students have the opportunity to ski, experience Italian food and culture. In 2022 our TYs visited Derry and Belfast and in 2023 they travelled to Rome and Pompeii. In 2024 they travelled to Barcelona.

Our fifth year history students travelled to Munich in February 2019 where they visited Dachau, Nuremburg, the BMW museum and the Allianz arena. It was a fantastic historical and cultural trip. This trip is planned again for December 2024.

These educational tours facilitate education, fun and adventure.

“The commitment of staff to activities beyond teaching duties is evident”

Whole School Evaluation Report.



SCHOOL MUSICALS

In 2017 our students produced the school's first ever musical 'Oklahoma'. There was a cast of eighty students and the show was performed for four nights to widespread acclaim. 'Oklahoma' was an amazing production and a great educational experience for all of the students involved. Our most recent musicals, 'Grease' in 2019 and 'Back to the 80's' in 2023, were also a huge success. Our next musical 'All Shook Up' will run for four nights in March 2025.





Into the Future

With steady growth in enrolment over the past twenty years and changing curriculum demands there has been a need for improved resources and school accommodation. To meet the changing needs of the school we produced a building plan to prepare for future development of the school. The proposed design consisted of 4 phases, three of which have been constructed to date and we are pleased that the building unit in the Department of Education and Skills is supporting our overall plan, with the 4th phase now sanctioned. Work will commence on this development later this year.

In 2012 phase 1 was built comprising four general classrooms, a Dress Design room for Home Economics and a Design and Communication Graphics room. In 2015 phase 2 was completed. That extension comprised of three general classrooms, a second Design and Communications Graphics room and a Construction Studies room. In December 2016 our application for phase 3 was sanctioned and building work on that phase is now complete. That extension provided a third Science room, a second Home Economics room, an Art room, an Engineering room and a project storage room for state exam project work for all the



various subjects. Phase 4 will include 12 general classrooms, one Science lab with prep area, one Art room, one Music room, 2 multimedia rooms, a 2 class base SEN unit, one Staff room, conversion of existing rooms and removal of prefabs. It will complete the school courtyard, joining the old building to the new section of the school with a new entrance foyer facing the driveway.

All of our rooms have state of the art equipment. We have modern IT facilities with data projectors and interactive whiteboards in all rooms. Comfortable classrooms with the best resources available are conducive to quality teaching and learning.

Life After Coola

“I believe the years I spent in Coola have benefited me greatly and I know I will carry fond memories of my days spent there for many years to come. ‘Mol an óige agus tiocfaidh sí’ a deireann an seanfhocail, agus is fíor go bhfuil an rud seo go díreach ag tarlú i gCúl Átha.”

Siobhán Kelly, Riverstown.
UCD, studying Phd. in Synthetic Biology



Below is a list of where some of our past students are studying now.



Ben Diamond
Trinity College
Studying Law.



Jason McGoldrick
UCD
Studying Engineering.



Anna Hazlett
UCD
Studying Veterinary medicine.



Rebecca Breheny
St. Angela's College
Studying HE and Irish.



Amy McGoldrick
Trinity College
Studying Pharmacy.



Christian Martin
NUIG
Studying Medicine



Adam O'Connor
Trinity College
Studying Political Science.



Michael Martindale
NUI Galway
Studying Marine Biology.



Aisling Mohan receiving her All Ireland Scholarship from President Bill Clinton at a special ceremony in the Concert Hall, University of Limerick on 17th November 2012. Aisling studied Radiation Therapy in Trinity College Dublin. From left: J.P. Mc Manus, Aisling Mohan, President Bill Clinton and Mr Damien McGoldrick, Principal.





COOLA POST PRIMARY SCHOOL

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