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An Comhchoiste um Oideachas, Breisoideachas agus Ardoideachas, Taighde, Nuálaíocht agus Eolaíocht

Tuarascáil Taistil, Scoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa
do na Bodhair, An Chabrach, 14 Samhain 2023

Nollaig 2023

Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science

Travel Report, Holy Family School for the
Deaf, Cabra, 14th November 2023

December 2023

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Introduction

Following a very successful engagement, the Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science agreed to send a delegation on a Study Visit to Holy Family School for the Deaf, Cabra, Dublin 7, on 14 November 2023.

The Committee proposed that a delegation should undertake this visit as Study Visits to meet key stakeholders and organisations are a priority for the Committee. The Committee unanimously agreed that a visit to the school, to meet the staff and students, would be very worthwhile. The Committee has a policy of undertaking Study Visits that will enhance its understanding of important issues and ensure that it engages with key stakeholders which is integral to Committee work.

The Committee was represented on the visit by Deputies Paul Kehoe (Chairman), Deputies Sorca Clarke and Mairéad Farrell, Senator Marie Sherlock (in substitution for Deputy Aodhán Ó'Riordáin) and Senators Eileen Flynn and Fiona O'Loughlin. Deputy Neasa Hourigan (Local TD) also attended. The delegation was accompanied by Tara Kelly, Committee Clerk, Julian Power Foley, Committee Policy Advisor and Emma Greene, Junior Clerk.

The visit began at the St Joseph's (Post Primary) Campus, Navan Road, Dublin 7. The delegation was warmly welcomed by the Principal, Staff, School Captain and Vice Captain. They were then given tea/coffee and cakes baked by the students. The Students had prepared a lavish spread and were eager to engage with the visitors discussing their school and their obvious enjoyment of Home Economics.

This was followed by a Tour of the Clonfert Building including the following classrooms:

- Art – John Canning 3C SNA Elaine Condron
- Geography- Michael Dempsey 2A
- Woodwork- Dean McEvoy
- Maths Nicola Roddy 5B

- Home Economics Mary Ohle 2B SNAs Liz Templin & Debbie Ennis McLoughlin

In all the classrooms, the students engaged readily with the visitors and asked incisive and insightful questions. They showed great enthusiasm for their subjects and equally, great respect for each teacher. The teachers showed great interest and commitment and an atmosphere of mutual support was very evident.

The delegation did notice that the building needs serious renovation. However, the the colourful artwork, containing very important messages, that emblazons the corridors, and the craft displays, conceals the very basic conditions of the school.

The delegation travelled by mini bus to the Marion (Primary School) Campus on Ratoath Road and met students, teachers and SNAs in class room settings.

Ms Aimee Ennis McLoughlin, teacher, graduated from DCU recently as one of the first cohort of deaf students graduating with a Bachelor of Education degree. DCU should be commended on introducing this degree. It was very apparent to the delegation that Aimee is an outstanding teacher.

The visit ended with a a performance by the ISL Choir which was thoroughly enjoyed by the delegation.

Finally, staff and students gave separate letters to each member of the delegation asking that 2 Full Time ISL Intepreters be provided to the school. The letter from the students was written in beautiful script by a sixth class student. These letters are now Committee correspondence and have been sent to the Minister for Education by the Committee seeking an urgent response.

Discussions were had with staff on both campuses and the key issues raised were:

- The urgent need to replace the building with a modern, fit for purpose campus that will accommodate both the Primary and Post Primary Campus. Staff and Students want to learn together and older students can act as role models for the younger ones.

- The urgent need for 2 In House Sign Language Interpreters to be employed full time. Students explained it is very important that the Interpreters are specially trained to use language that children can understand. Also, these Interpreters would become valued members of the School Community.
- Specifically, new Home Economics Rooms need adequate space, proper work stations and a lot more cookers. While the students produce outstanding work, assisted greatly by their teachers, it is difficult in the current working conditions.
- Greater support from the NCCA is required in terms of curriculum design and in the provision of examination options for students.
- The Home Economic Teachers produce their own visuals to assist with lessons but should have supporting material provided by the NCCA.
- Many students have long daily commutes to the school from as far way as Monaghan. This must be very tiring for young children although, when asked, none complained. This is in keeping with the infectious enthusiasm which prevails the school. However, there is an urgent need for a Plan to provide School Escorts on a sustainable basis. It is neither acceptable nor fair that the sole responsibility lies with the Principal.
- The current number of boarders could be increased if additional resources were provided. Increased boarding places would allow students living far away to live in the school during the week and avoid long and tiring commutes. The Department of Education, the Department of Health and the HSE need to work together and draw up a Plan that will provide these resources in a sustainable way. The new school building provides an opportunity for the Departments to work together and make this a reality.

Conclusion

The Holy Family School for the Deaf provides excellent teaching and learning despite having complex and unique challenges. Neither the staff or students view these challenges negatively, in fact the prevailing culture is one of positivity and a 'can do' approach. This special community of teachers and learners should be supported properly.

The new school building must proceed without any further delays. A clear time frame for completion must be drawn up by the Department of Education. Given the unique challenges faced by the school community, it should be an ambitious plan that provides the resources that will be needed into the future.

In the short term, the Joint Committee requests that 2 Full Time ISL

Interpreters are employed as a matter of extreme urgency. The delegation is absolutely convinced that the interpreters must be employed as full members of the school community.

The delegation would like to thank Ms Eimear O'Rourke, Principal; Mr Eugene Doyle, Deputy Principal; Ms Helen Newman and Ms Elizabeth McRafferty for interpreting; and all the staff and students, for the opportunity to visit the school. Meeting inspirational people, who value teaching and learning so much, has had a lasting impact on all the visitors. The delegation learned a lot from the visit which was truly thought provoking and inspiring.

APPENDIX 1 – Members of the Delegation from the Joint Committee



Sorca Clarke TD
Sinn Féin



Senator Eileen Flynn
Independent



Senator Fiona O'Loughlin
Fianna Fáil
(*Leas-Cathaoirleach*)



Mairéad Farrell TD
Sinn Féin



Paul Kehoe TD
Fine Gael
(*Cathaoirleach*)

ACCOMPANYING STAFF

- Tara Kelly, Clerk
- Julian Power Foley, Policy Advisor
- Emma Greene, Junior Clerk

APPENDIX 2 – Programme for Visit

Visit of Members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science 14th November 2023

Schedule

11am Committee members are welcomed to Holy Family School for the Deaf (post primary campus, Navan Road D07TH79) by the Principal Eimear O'Rourke and Deputy Principal Eugene Doyle

11am to 11.15am Tea and coffee in the library

11.15am- 11.45am tour of the main post primary building and the Clonfert building. Visit classrooms to meet pupils and teachers & SNAs.

11.45am travel to Primary and /Early Intervention (D07RF99) by school minibus

12pm Members are welcomed to the Primary by Section Managers Elizabeth McLafferty and Sean Herlihy. Tour of the Primary and Early Intervention buildings- opportunity to meet with pupils, teachers and SNAs.

12.20pm-12.30pm primary ISL Choir performance

APPENDIX 3 – Briefing Note

Brief for the visit of Members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education, Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science on the 14th November 2023

Holy Family School for the Deaf

Holy Family School for the Deaf is a designated special school under the Primary Section of the Department of Education and Skills. It is a vibrant centre for specialised instruction catering for the needs of deaf children from age 3 to 18 years and across the full spectrum of hearing loss and learning ability and from many ethnic backgrounds.

The school has three sections **bilocated** on two separate campuses:

(i) Early Intervention, Marian Campus, Ratoath Road, Cabra

Established initially with funding support from CIDP, formal sanction to establish and Early Intervention Class was granted to St. Mary's by Special Education in 2014. These classes came under the remit of Holy Family upon amalgamation. There are currently two Early Intervention Classes with a maximum enrolment of 14 pupils. Accommodation provision includes 2 Classrooms, pupil multi-purpose room, Staffroom and kitchenette and administration office. There is a secure play area to the rear of the building.

(ii) Primary, Marian Campus, Ratoath Road, Cabra

Formerly St. Mary's Primary this building constructed in 1988 has 8 classrooms, two large multi-purpose rooms, Pupil lunchroom, general assembly hall, staff room and specialist services & administration offices. There is a large secure play area to the rear of the building.

(iii) Post Primary, St. Joseph's Campus, Navan Road, Cabra.

Accommodation for Post Primary is divided into separate buildings. The main block (formerly known as Edmund Rice) comprises 32 classrooms, general assembly hall, Science laboratory, library, oratory Staff room, 2 practical/Woodwork rooms, specialist services & administration offices. It has large play-ground areas to the rear and to the side.

The second building known as Clonfert comprises of 2 specialist Home Economics kitchens, a Metal work room, a Technical/Graphic's room, 2 IT rooms.

Holy Family School for the Deaf Mission Statement

Our mission, in co-operation with our wider school community and influenced by the Christian values of Truth, Justice and Peace, is to create a safe and cherishing environment which meets the language, communication and educational needs of each of our students. Holy Family School for the Deaf will endeavour to provide the best possible education, to encourage our students to strive and reach their full potential, physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually.

Current Staffing and Enrolment 2023/24

- Teaching staff: 39 (including Principal and Deputy Principal)
- Special Needs Assistants: 24
- Bus Escorts: 22
- Ancillary: 9
- Deaf staff members: 25

Enrolment 30th September 2023

138 (increase of 10 pupils on previous year) additional applications pending.

- Early Intervention 11
- Primary 55
- Post Primary 72

Major Building Project

Timeline

- Amalgamation of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Schools for the Deaf to form Holy family School for the Deaf September 2016
- Major Building project approved by the Department of Education and Skills
- Schedule of accommodation sent by Holy Family to the Department of Education in January 2020
- The Department finalising the project brief for the building project planned for Holy Family School for the Deaf advised that an additional site area is required to facilitate the development of the project. This area is held in trust by Reach Deaf Services
- April 2022 project devolved by Department of Education for delivery to the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA)
- 19 May 2022 School meeting with NDFA- advised that the project could take up to 5 years or more to complete.

- June 2022 Reach Deaf Services Board approval for use of additional land.
- Brief Formulation Report Draft 3 sent to NDFA 4/11/2022.
- May 2023 Advised by the NTFA that our building project is currently stalled. The government halted the school building project progress citing the challenges of Covid and war on the continent.
- August 2023 Advised by the NTFA that our project is to tender for design brief.
- 29th August 2023 the school Accommodated visits from organisations preparing tenders.
- 9th October 2023 Meeting with Margaret Brennan, senior architect, Planning & Building Unit Department of Education

Presentation of Hubert Loftus Planning & Building Unit Department of Education to the Joint Committee 3 October 2023

1. New School Building for the Holy Family School for the Deaf, Cabra, Dublin
Key Points:

- This project involves an extension to the existing school at St. Joseph's Campus, Navan Road, Cabra including the refurbishment & demolition of existing buildings, construction of a new build extension and all associated site works. The building project will physically bring the school together on this one site.

- The building project will facilitate future growth at the school.
- A revised brief was approved for this project in Q4 of 2022 and provides for the construction of two new separate extensions (Phase 1 of 2,012m² and Phase 2 of 871m²) and the refurbishment of 1,960m² of the existing school building.
- A phased delivery is proposed for the project to facilitate the continued operation of the school throughout construction, including decant of the existing building as required to allow for renovation works and to avoid the requirement for temporary accommodation, which can add significant costs to the project.
- This large scale major project was devolved for delivery to the National Development Finance Agency (NDFA) and will be delivered as part a bundle of school projects.
- The NDFA have received tenders for the appointment of project managers and design teams in respect of schools including Holy Family School for the Deaf and it is expected the outcome of this procurement will be finalised towards the end of Q4 2023.
- Due to the unique special needs nature of this project, extensive consultation between the Department, Board of Management, the end users (principal, teachers and support staff) took place as part of the development of the project brief and will be strong focus for the design team throughout the design development and construction stages.

Holy Family School for the Deaf

A Brief History

Holy Family School for the Deaf was formed on 1st September 2016 with the amalgamation of the two former Schools for the Deaf in Cabra namely St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls and St. Joseph's School for Deaf Boys.

The largest special school for deaf in Ireland, Holy Family is the inheritor of a long and proud tradition in the history of Deaf Education in Cabra.

Schools for the Deaf in Cabra 1846-1946

(i) Catholic Institute for the Deaf

In December 1845, the very Rev. Monsignor Yore P.P. V.G of St. Paul's Quay, Dublin accompanied by Rev Dr Downey C.M and Rev T. McNamara C.M met with five prominent laymen at Ormond Quay to consider the possibility of founding schools for deaf children. Fr McNamara held a life-long interest and commitment to deaf people, publishing number of articles championing their cause. He was deeply concerned that there were no educational facilities from Catholic deaf children in Ireland. Protestant deaf children were provided for in the National Institute for the Deaf and Dumb at Claremont, near Glasnevin, Dublin. The objective of founding schools was met with full approval, and it was agreed to form a Committee under the Chairmanship of Monsignor Yore. At the first Committee meeting, 5th January 1845 they agreed to formally approach the Dominican nuns and the Christian Brothers for assistance. The Committee later became known as the Catholic Institute for the Deaf (CID). The Committee continued to raise funding to support the schools.

(ii) St. Mary's School for Deaf Girls

In 1846 Father Mc Namara approached the Dominican nuns in Cabra to ask them to establish a residential school for deaf girls in the grounds of their convent. The nuns

were delighted with the prospect of undertaking the work which represented a great challenge.

Two Dominican Sisters, Sr. M Vincent Martin OP, and Sr. Magdalen O'Farrell, OP were selected to train as teachers of the deaf and Fr. McNamara organised a visit to Le Bon Sauveur School for the Deaf in Caen, France. On 11th January 1846 the sisters set sail for Caen accompanied by two deaf children Agnes Beedam and Mary Anne Dougherty. When they returned in August 1846, their two pupils were enrolled in the new school in Cabra.

By the end of the year there were 15 pupils and within five years there were 50 pupils. A permanent school was built in 1848 and this was extended in 1865 to hold 150 and in 1880 for 200 pupils.

There was no state provision of any kind, and a training course was set up in 1854 to train some deaf pupils as teachers. The Dominican sisters set up a vocational department in 1863; lace making, embroidery, dressmaking and tailoring were introduced. The Sisters tried to place pupils in employment. By the 1860s St. Mary's reputation had spread and applications were received from England and Scotland. A conference for Teachers of the Deaf in London in 1877 highlighted the fact that St. Mary's, Cabra was the largest female deaf institute in the United Kingdom.

The approach to language at this time was based on the method devised by Abbé Jamet, the founder of Le bon Sauver School in Caen. This structured system of language teaching was adapted to suit English syntax. Speech was never used. The written word was the principle source of language for social communication. In 1880, a Congress for Teachers of the Deaf in Milan decided that oralism, i.e. lip-reading and speech should be introduced in all schools for the deaf. However St. Mary's continued to follow a strictly manual approach to language development until the late 1940s. By 1945 the oral method of teaching was compulsory in most deaf schools in Europe and some Irish parents were sending their children to schools in other countries that were using the oral method. Advances in the field of electronics after World War II played vital role in developing the new oral method. Audiometers were developed to test hearing together with smaller and more effective hearing aids. The

Dominican sisters studied these new developments visiting many schools for the deaf in Europe including a return visit to Le Bon Sauveur, Caen, France. In 1947, the first oral class was set up in St. Mary's and the first Audiology Clinic was opened in St. Mary's in 1947. The newly admitted profoundly deaf children were taught speech and lip-reading. The separation of oral children from those who used sign language was at that time seen as the best method of teaching the oral method and developing language in both sections. Gradually, speech and lip-reading were introduced to the non-oral classes and a combination of total communication was used. The school became well known outside Ireland and many visitors came to St. Mary's to study the 'Cabra Method'. In 1957, a course for the training of teachers for the deaf was established at University College Dublin in conjunction with St. Mary's School for the deaf and the Audiology Clinic.

Official recognition of St. Mary's by the Department of Education came in September 1952 and St. Mary's became a national school for the deaf under the auspices of the newly established Department of Education.

Developments in secondary education commenced in St. Mary's in 1953 when two pupils began to follow a second level programme. These students sat the Matriculation Examination in 1959 and began studies in UCD. There was a great increase in numbers attending St. Mary's during the 1960s which coincided in the services available to deaf children. Special units were established at the school for deaf children with additional needs. The first leaving Certificate class was established with two pupils in 1974. The numbers taking the course increased in the following years.

St. Joseph's School for Deaf Boys

The Irish Christian Brothers, under agreement in 1845 to open schools in many parts of Ireland, were unable to provide Brothers to open a residential school for deaf boys. The Catholic Institute for the Deaf bought a furnished residential accommodation for 40 boys at Prospect, Glasnevin from the Carmelite Brothers. Two Carmelite Brothers remained to care for the boys. A young teacher named

Sutton was selected and initiated in the teaching of the deaf by the nuns in Cabra. He took charge at Prospect in February 1849 with 4 deaf boys and by 1853 there were 70.

A bigger school was necessary and in 1856 The Catholic Institute for the Deaf completed the building of a new school in Cabra. The Irish Christian brothers, with great courage then agreed to take charge of this residential school. The opening of St. Joseph's school for Deaf boys, Cabra complemented the establishment of St. Mary's 12 years earlier and the nuns at St. Mary's helped the Brothers to acquire knowledge of teaching methods in use for the deaf. The school was enlarged in 1869 when a new wing was added.

In 1862, The CID decided to establish training departments in St. Joseph's for pupils to learn trades- tailoring, shoemaking, printing etc.

In response to the resolution in favour of oralism at the Milan Congress in 1880, Bro Walsh, attempted to establish oralism in St. Joseph's but did not receive support from his superior Br. P.M Wickham. The Brothers developed their own system of instruction which recognised their pupils' strong preference for sign language. There was a strong emphasis in developing literacy and written communication. During the superiorship of Br. E.L S-Alton, 1882-1947, a Commission was appointed in England to study the different methods and mediums used for teaching the deaf. A fierce controversy was being waged in the press by defenders of the two systems oral and manual. To end the controversy, three experts were appointed to visit all schools over England. Br D'Alton gave permission for these inspectors to visit. Three or four months later they published a report in which it was stated that of all the schools they had examined with the methods and plans adopted, the system devised at St. Joseph's Dublin gave the best results.

In 1929, St. Joseph's was recognised by the Department of Education as a National School. and 1952, it was recognised as a Special National School. These changes resulted in direct government grants both for education and residential care and towards capital expenditure. These grants made it possible to completely modernist the facilities for teaching and residential accommodation for the pupils.

The Amalgamation Process

In 1972 a report on the education of the deaf suggested that the Dominican Sisters in St. Mary's and Christian Brothers in St Joseph's jointly manage a co-educational school but there was no real progress at this time. A second attempt was made in the 1990s, perhaps, in response to declining pupil numbers which, came in the wake of Department of Education policies of inclusion and parental preference for the local school. Surveys conducted in 1994 and 2008 showed that amalgamation was favoured by teachers, parents, and the Catholic Institute for Deaf People CIDP (formerly CID). However, a variety of issues- essentially the practicalities made the pathway difficult.

In 1998 and 1999 respectively, The Dominican Sisters and the Irish Christian Brothers ceased to be in charge of the Schools for the Deaf and both schools appointed the first lay principals.

The final process towards the eventual amalgamation was initiated by the Catholic Institute for Deaf People, CIDP in 2008. The Schools' Patron the Archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin requested that the process be formally concluded by the 1st September 2016.

APPENDIX 4 – Staff and Student List

Principal Eimear O'Rourke

Deputy Principal Eugene Doyle

Post Primary

Tea & Coffee ; Housekeeper Valerie O'Connell. Assisted by pupils from 2nd year

Delicious bakes- Home Economics' Department Mary's Ohle's 1A class group and Shirley Higgin's 3A class group.

Lorraine Creed- teacher & teacher representative to the Board of Management

ISL interpreting -no professional interpreter available- staff member stepped into support- Helen Newman

Class visits

Art – John Canning 3C SNA Elaine Condron

Geography- Michael Dempsey 2A

Woodwork- Dean McEvoy

Maths Nicola Roddy 5B

Home Economics Mary Ohle 2B SNAs Liz Templin & Debbie Ennis McLoughlin

School bus drivers- caretakers – Joey Watson & Andy Maxwell.

Primary

Section Managers- Elizabeth McLafferty & Sean Herlihy

Class visits-

Breda Egan & Panda- 1st Class SNA June Kiernan

Aimee Ennis McLoughlin & Elephant -5th/6th class. SNA Audrey Conama

Choir- pupils from different class groups.

Conductor – Audrey Conama

Early Intervention

Section Manager- Teacher Geraldine Lewis.

APPENDIX 5 – Letters from Staff and Students

Dear Members of the Oireachtas Education Committee.

We really need Irish Sign Language Interpreters in our school. We want interpreters who understand us and we understand them from age 3 to 18. We've had many, but only a few can understand. We want to be like all kids, having equal access with in-house interpreters. Please support us; remember the ISL ACT 2017 and the 1916 Proclamation about cherishing all children equally.

Thank you,

Students of Holy Family Deaf School

13th October 2023

Dear Members of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education,

Holy Family Deaf School is reaching out with an urgent request to provide us with two qualified In-House Irish Sign Language (ISL) Interpreters. The presence of these interpreters on our campus is vital for the effective daily operation of our school.

We have initiated a campaign with the full support of our School Board of Management. This campaign aims to cover all levels, from Early Intervention to Post Primary, by ensuring the availability of two ISL interpreters on campus every day.

We need to maintain consistency by employing two interpreters on campus to handle routine and on-demand requests. It is common to use auxiliary interpretation for on-demand requests, but this can lead to an unsatisfactory situation as it may compromise the quality of interpretation, leaving many people frustrated. This proposal would significantly alleviate such frustrations.

With the Oireachtas ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 27 obliges the state to ensure full accessibility to work and employment for persons with disabilities. This proposal aligns perfectly with that criterion. Additionally, adopting this proposal would demonstrate a strong commitment to the Irish Sign Language Act of 2017.

Moreover, here are several compelling and following reasons why you should seriously consider and support this proposal.

Benefits for Communication and Inclusivity:

The primary objective of our campaign is to significantly enhance communication within our school community. We firmly believe that clear and accessible communication is the cornerstone of an inclusive educational environment. Having readily available ISL interpreters will help break down communication barriers that sometimes hinder effective learning and engagement.

Adaptation to Student Needs:

One significant advantage of in-house ISL interpreters is their ability to tailor their language skills to meet the specific needs of our students. For example, during assessments and various educational activities, interpreters can ensure that our students fully understand the content, promoting fair and equitable access to education. Currently, many interpreters are primarily trained for adult language, and this initiative seeks to bridge that gap.

Promoting Student Well-Being:

Another benefit of this campaign is that it allows our students to become familiar with the interpreters. This familiarity can reduce worries and anxiety, creating a more comfortable and supportive learning environment.

Supporting All Stakeholders:

The advantages of this campaign extend beyond the students. It also greatly benefits our dedicated staff, supportive parents, and any external parties connected to our school. Clear communication enhances the overall experience for everyone involved in our educational community.

As of September 30th, our enrolment is currently 138 students with three pending applications. Approximately 23 members of our parent body communicate through ISL. Inclusive of teachers, SNAs, Bus escorts, and ancillary staffs; the school has a total of 89 staff members. Thirty of these staff members are also members of the Deaf Community and communicate through their first language, ISL, requiring interpretation support to access communication.

Our school community has always made efforts to provide ISL communication support, which was previously done by staff members with varying levels of ISL competence. However, this practice is no longer acceptable, especially in light of the *Irish Sign Language Act 2017*, which imposes additional obligations on public bodies to provide ISL interpretation services.

While we appreciate funding provided for State Examinations and teacher in-service purposes, we must employ interpreters on a weekly basis for a diverse range of meetings and events. These include general staff meetings, presentations to pupils from outside organizations, staff meetings, meetings with parents, staff training, Board meetings, and interviews for posts in the school and so on. We also translate important email communications and website information into ISL.

Since the amalgamation of the Schools for the Deaf to form Holy Family on September 1, 2016, the costs of ISL interpretation services for each year to date are as follows:

- 2016/17: €5,850.10
- 2017/18: €8,027.30
- 2018/19: €13,201.83
- 2019/20: €10,458.05
- 2020/21: €13,516.50
- 2021/22: €13,516.50
- 2022/23: €12,476.62
- 2023/24: €19,127.42

These costs cover only urgent situations and very short periods of time, not routine or unexpected needs. Failing to meet these needs can have unseen costs in terms of the emotional well-being of children and staff members. The current situation, both financially and non-financially, is unsustainable for our school.

Based on the salary scale from DCU to employ an interpreter:

-Admin Assistant salary scale: €35,321 - €52,791

Salaries like these offer numerous hidden benefits, fostering inclusivity and respect for over a hundred deaf children and deaf adult staff. With this in mind, we kindly request your favorable consideration of our campaign to employ two qualified ISL interpreters on staff.

Please find attached letters of support from the Centre for Deaf Studies at TCD and Avista/Children's Disability Network, who recognize the urgent need for these ISL interpreters. Also a list of interpreting jobs required.

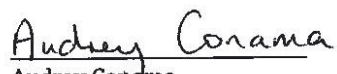
We would like to highlight an important aspect from the 1916 Proclamation:

"The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights, and equal opportunities to all its citizens."

We believe that it's **our duty to cherish all the children of the nation equally**, and we hope you can assist us in achieving this.

We look forward to your positive response and the possibility of making our school even more inclusive and accessible through the In-House ISL Interpreters Campaign. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional clarification or information.

Best Regards,


Audrey Conama
In-House ISL Interpreters Campaigners


Seán Herlihy

List of interpreting jobs :-

General Staff Meetings

Last minute notice staff meetings

Emergency Cases

Parent/Teacher meeting

Board of Management Meetings

Child Assessments/ Psychologists

Interviews for posts in the school

Transition Year (TY) trips

Visitors coming into the school e.g Visiting Teachers, Parents etc

Unexpected visit from Dept of Education

School trips

Translate important email communications and website information into ISL

Voice-Over and translations for many different ISL video recordings e.g ISL Newsletters and stories

Phone calls for Deaf staff

School shows

Presentations to students from outside organisations

Staff Trainings

School Choir

Sports Activities outside school (during school hours) e.g swimming, running, tennis and many more

RTE filming several times during the year e.g Late Late Toy Show, News2day etc

ISL Awareness Week

Maths Week/Science Week/Geography Week

New Primary Maths Curriculum Training

Transition Year National Finals

LCA Tasks Interviews

Team Building

Exhibitions

First Aid Trainings

Fire Marshall Trainings

Well Being Trainings

The list goes on.....



Holy Family School for the Deaf

Navan Road, Cabra, Dublin DO7 TH79

: 01 838 0058 | F: 01 838 0230 | E: info@holyfamilydeafschool.ie

Principal: Eimear O'Rourke, M. Ed | Deputy Principal: Eugene Doyle

Re Campaign for In House ISL interpreters

13th November 2023

Dear Ms Conama & Mr. Herlihy,

Thank you for your letter asking the Board to support your campaign to bring to the Department of Education's attention the communication needs of our school community.

I can confirm that the Board is happy to support the campaign for the provision of two in-house ISL interpreters.

You are authorized to reference the Board's support regarding campaign correspondence and other relevant communication.

Yours sincerely,

PP


Fr Paddy D Boyle,
Chairperson.
Board of Management.

Early Intervention
T: 01 868 9910

Primary
T: 01 868 9910

Post Primary
T: 01 838 0058

Boarding
infoboarding@cidp.ie

Avista



Cabra/Grangegorman CDNT,
Saint Vincent's Centre,
Navan Rd,
Dublin 7
D07VW14
Date: 28/09/2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you to advocate on behalf of the Holy Family Deaf School. This includes the Early Intervention setting, Primary and Post-Primary schools.

Holy Family Deaf School have initiated an In-House Interpreters Campaign. I am writing this letter to support their campaign. I believe having two in-house ISL interpreters would be incredibly beneficial both to educators and students. Having consistent ISL interpreters allows for rapport to be built, familiarity to be gained and improvements made. Increased and consistent exposure to the same students, teachers and curriculum creates a more effective and efficient educational service.

For my own service, it would reduce wait times and streamline accessibility to assessment and intervention. It would allow me to support students more seamlessly and reduce planning time. It would create a more equitable and accessible service for all students and their families. Having familiar interpreters creates less stress and anxiety for students, which in turn would positively impact on their ability to access intervention. Additionally, it would positively impact on therapy outcomes. It is imperative that students are assessed via all communicative modalities available to them, and this includes ISL. Therefore, having an ISL interpreter would allow students to communicate more freely and with an increased chance of being understood.

As individuals we have a right to communication as seen in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This states that everyone has a "right to freedom of opinion and expression" and includes the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers". Having ISL interpreters would increase the ability of a child being able to communicate and support them to achieving their communication potential.

I strongly urge you to consider this campaign.
Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Faye Mansfield", is written over a horizontal line.

Faye Mansfield

Senior Speech & Language Therapist
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Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
Trinity College Dublin
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

3rd October 2023

Dear Ms Conama and Mr Herhily,

I trust this message finds you well. I have reviewed your request for support regarding the In-House ISL Interpreters Campaign at Holy Family Deaf School. I am genuinely impressed by the initiative and the potential benefits it could bring to the school community.

As the Director of the Centre for Deaf Studies, I can certainly appreciate the value of having two in-house ISL interpreters on campus. Your explanation of how this would positively impact students at all levels, from Early Intervention to Post Primary, is compelling. The idea of interpreters becoming familiar with students' language levels and their ability to adapt during assessments is particularly noteworthy.

Moreover, I understand the broader impact this initiative would have on the school's daily life, including staff, parents, and various school activities. It has the potential to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all involved. Your efforts to secure this vital resource deserve recognition and support.

For what it's worth, the employment of two part-time interpreters in this College has been a tremendous success. They are not only available for interpreting tasks around the College but also enable the development and fostering of professional relationships, especially for research collaborations across the College. Their presence makes it much easier for us to attend meetings or engage in informal chats on short notice, which is vital for research collaboration and professional collegiality.

Before their employment, we had to rely on an external agency to provide interpreters for specific tasks, which often took time to request and arrange. While this arrangement is suitable for specific and scheduled tasks, it is not ideal for intensive professional work. I can attest to how beneficial their presence is, not only for us and our colleagues but for the entire College. The College is now recognising the value of diversity and becoming more aware of our contributions.

One strand of our course focuses on training interpreters, primarily geared toward adults in various interpreting tasks. While we do have a brief session on interpreting for children, the employment of interpreters in your school could significantly expand this specialised area of expertise.

Wishing you the best of luck in your endeavours.

Warm regards,

Dr John Bosco Conama
Director
Assistant Professor / Lecturer

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