



Scoil Mhuire Buncrana



Achieving excellence in teaching and learning in a balanced and caring environment

In 1891, a resident from Buncrana requested in his will that a Convent be founded in Buncrana to provide an education for young girls as there was no primary education available at that time. The executors of the will used the money to purchase Rockfort House on St Oran's Road and where 'Scoil Mhuire' now stands.

On 7th May 1922, four sisters from the Convent of Mercy in Strabane took possession of Rockfort House. The Parish Priest at that time, also purchased The Sailors Rest building (which still stands beside the Leisure Centre) and set up a temporary school on 15th September 1922.

In 1933, Scoil Mhuire was established. In 1934, a Boarding School was established to cater for girls from other parts of the country who had no access to Secondary education. The first principal was Sister M Benignus McNamee (who later became Mother Benignus in 1959) and who remained as Principal until 1972.

A two storey building opened in September 1972 followed by the opening of the Assembly Hall in 1975 and the 3rd storey opened in 1983. The Boarding School was phased out in 1985. In 2009, the school saw major renovations to the main building of the school with the introduction of new flooring, inside doors and double glazed windows to both the ground floor and the first floor. In 2012, a new block of 5 classrooms were built onto the St Joseph's building. This building was officially opened in September 2012 by Sister Berchman's on what was to be the day that the Mercy order vacated the Convent of Mercy and their last day in Buncrana after a proud 90 year association with the town.

In 2015, the school purchased the Convent building and Grounds and this is now used as classrooms, canteen and an area for our SEN students. The Chapel was also renovated and is now a prayer/reflection space for students.

In 2019, Scoil Mhuire was selected to receive an upgrade of heat and light under the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland as well as an upgrade of the Home Economics room. Energy efficient bulbs were installed as well as new electrical fittings with oil heating converted to gas. The school also financed the installation of insulation to the outer walls.

Outside facilities include two tennis courts, a basketball court, a grass soccer pitch, an all-weather pitch and running track.

From its humble beginnings in the classroom of a primary school, Scoil Mhuire is now co-ed with DEIS status and currently has an enrolment of 859, with a projected enrolment of 887 for 2023-2024. The school currently has one principal, two deputies, 9 AP1, 10 AP2 and one programme co-ordinator at AP1 level. The school is working on its new DEIS plan for 2023 – 2026. We work very closely with the South Inishowen School Completion Programme as well as being very fortunate to avail of the services of the Derry Diocese Catechetical Centre to assist with various activities and events for catholic schools in the Derry Diocese. We are the only Voluntary secondary school in Inishowen and it is a healthy competitive environment, as there are three post primary schools in Buncrana.

Over the years the curriculum has been broadened with educational developments and to better cater for all students in our school. Scoil Mhuire presently offers all five programmes at post primary level: Junior Certificate, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme, Leaving Certificate Applied and Transition Year.

We offer a broad range of subjects in Junior Cycle. Core subjects include Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, Religious Education, Physical Education, Digital Media/Coding, SPHE and CSPE.

Optional subjects include French, Spanish, Visual Art, Business Studies, Engineering, Graphics, Technology, Home Economics, Music and Wood Technology. Some students follow the Junior Cycle School Programme (JCSP) which includes some added supports.

Our Transition Year Programme is optional. Approximately 70% of our students opt for this additional year while the remainder of students move directly into other senior cycle programmes from Junior cycle. Transition year is a popular and very beneficial option for our students.

For Senior cycle, students can take either the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme, the Leaving Certificate Established Programme or the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme. The subjects currently on offer at senior cycle are Irish, English and Maths, Geography, History, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Agricultural Science, Business, Economics, Accounting, Home Economics, Construction, Technology, Engineering, Design & Communication Graphics, Art, Music, French, Spanish, Applied Maths, Computer Science, Physical Education and Religious Education.

The Pastoral Care team comprises the Principal, the two Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, Learning Support teachers and class tutors. There is a student support team who meet on a weekly basis to assist and support students who are having difficulties. Our HSLO teacher is also the 1st year head who has a class tutor for each class in her year group. This system works very well as the HSCLO works with families as well as students to get them to settle into their new school. Children who have additional learning or behavioural needs receive additional support from the Learning Support Teachers in small groups or on a one to one basis. Our pastoral system was recognised as a significant strength during our DEIS inspection.

Scoil Mhuire currently has 6 special classes comprising 3 ASD, 1 moderate, 1 Severe and Profound and 1 multiple. These classes are assisted by the teachers, SNA staff and SENCO to undertake level 1, 2 or 3 programmes at Junior Cycle level. Students then undertake the TY programme, Leaving Certificate, LCA programme or undertake QQI qualifications at their level.

Current developments include a 4 classroom modular unit to be in place by September 2023. The school has also been approved by the Department of Educational for an 11 room extension to include a four base SEN unit, Science laboratories, specialist rooms and classrooms. Scoil Mhuire is a catholic voluntary secondary school under the trusteeship of CCEISCT. Scoil Mhuire Buncrana has 859 students, 72 teaching staff, 18 SNA staff and 20 ancillary staff for this academic year. We celebrated 90 years of Mercy education in 2023.

The school is very strong in extra and co-curricular activities. We offer a range of sports including soccer, Gaelic, golf, basketball, athletics, camogie, hurling, equestrian and girls active. Our senior girls soccer team are currently All-Ireland champions. We also have a number of students involved in sport at national and international level. We are also a sailing accredited school with the Irish School Training Centre.

The school takes part in Scifest, BTYS, Business competitions, Junk Kouture, Debating, Choir, Coding, Climate Action & Green Schools, Maths Competitions, Leadership Courses and much more as well as organising school trips which includes the annual ski trip and international cultural tours abroad. The school has its own choir and traditional band and offers a musical to the students biannually.

Scoil Mhuire is proud to be a voluntary secondary school and it will continue to provide a top class holistic and balanced education to all the students whilst fostering life skills for future years in the Inishowen area.