



## **The Red Chair Project**

During the month of May Scoil Iognáid's student council were invited to take part in a number of inter-school dialogues with pupils from other Jesuit schools in Italy, Malta and the UK. This all took place via zoom.

The aim of the Red Chair Campaign is to raise awareness of the many children around the world who for one reason or another do not have access to education.

Our own experience of receiving an education changed over the course of the pandemic but thankfully we are now back at school and enjoying learning and seeing our friends every day.

The opportunity to speak to children in other countries who were also learning online made us realise that we all have so much in common.

We introduced our school and learned about the other schools and how things had changed over the last 15 months for everyone. Most importantly we realised how lucky we were to have access to education.

There is still a lot of uncertainty for everyone and we are hoping that we are coming out the right side of the pandemic now.

These are a few of the questions we asked each other at the first meeting:

- What has changed for you at school as a result of the virus? Is there something, in particular, that you miss?
- Was there ever a time when something was uncertain for you? How did you react? Name one good thing that you learned from this situation.
- Name one thing that's recently brought you comfort; or talk about one person who you are helping right now. How are you doing that?

Following on from this meeting we took part in a survey about the changes that Covid 19 has brought to our home and school lives.

We all found that not seeing our families and friends were the most difficult things. Slowly, as people are vaccinated, this has changed and has brought us so much happiness.

We love being back at school where we can see our friends and teachers and have fun.

During the second meeting we discussed how we might be able to help children in countries where there is limited or no access to education. We all felt that

we could send resources to them to help with their learning be it books, copies or materials for arts and crafts. It made us realise how lucky we are to have what we already have.

These are the questions we asked ourselves during that second meeting:

- If we think about our school, what good things came out of the pandemic? What did the school do to make sure everyone continued their education?
- Looking beyond our schools, how might children in the poorest countries have been affected? Before the pandemic and during the pandemic?
- How can our school community help other schools so their students get a good and inclusive education?

When we discussed these questions we were able to see how much we had in common and how our schools helped us with our learning during the school closures.

We all had similar ideas about how best to help children without access to an education.

As a result of these meetings with the other schools we have a few ideas that we would like to introduce to our school next year.

One of these is that there will be a red chair in each classroom representing the education we are lucky enough to have access to and to remind us that not everyone is as lucky as we are.

We also hope to have a week during the school year that we focus on the Red Chair and raise awareness throughout the school.

We thoroughly enjoyed the discussions with the students and teachers in the schools in Italy, Malta and the UK.

It opened our eyes to how lucky we are to have access to our education.

We are really looking forward to participating in the Red Chair Campaign next year. This has laid the foundation for our student council to promote it in our school.

**Hannah, Darragh, Jenna, Lúca, Emili, Sam, Lola & Oisín**

**Scoil Iognáid Student Council**