

Press Release from the IGC, ISSU and NPCPP

Release Date: 13th January, 2022.

In a recent survey of guidance counsellors nationwide, 91.4% of IGC members were not happy with the CAO decision to make the CAO handbook available online only. In October we furnished CAO with the results where our members communicated:

- 67.9% have reduced access to a computer room
- 76.8% said their students have no Ipad
- 46.2% school mobile phone policy (phones not allowed on during class)
- 58.3% difficulty displaying the document on a big screen
- 54.9 difficulty with unreliable broadband

We understand the real and urgent threat posed by Climate Change and we appreciate that we all must play our part to reduce our carbon footprint. This needs to be balanced with practical needs on the ground. As the practitioners guiding 60,000 Leaving Certificate students in 2nd level and several thousand adult learners through the CAO application process annually, we send you this proposal from the point of view of the end user, our students and clients. Our members have our hardcopies; we are not the losers here. Our students are and they say:

"The year(s) of online learning students have faced and the growth of our reliance on technology have showcased to us all the large digital divide within our education system. Thousands of students across the country don't have access to technology, whether that be a device or stable broadband and we're seeing the very same issue among schools too. The sudden move to put the CAO Handbook online has resulted in some students being unable to access the important information it holds, during a time when they need it most. In times like this, we need to be supporting students and making this information as easily accessible as possible, not preventing them from accessing it." Quote from President of ISSU Emer Neville.

With reference to the decision to move to an online only CAO handbook this year, we proposed:

- **Review and evaluate this decision by surveying our members in the academic year 2021 - 2022**
- **Provide the white pages online (pages 1-36) and the yellow pages in hard copy this academic year to at least one class set per school as an interim solution**
- **Going forward use paper that is more biodegradable and use less pages by re-organising the content on the yellow pages (there are a number of pages that are half empty pages ps 43,51,52,56,57,58,59,60,61,77,85, three quarters empty ps 87,96 97 and others with empty space at the ends of pages ps 46, 47,53, 55, 67,68,69,88,96,101) = approximately 11 pages less per handbook of yellow pages if re-organised to save paper**

- ***Have a look at the handbook on a big screen / PowerPoint and consider how it could be designed for a better quality experience for the reader (i.e. look at it through the lens of students of different abilities and socio economic groups)***

We also have some questions that we communicated to CAO and remain unanswered:

- ***Will the cost of applying to CAO be reduced to reflect the substantial saving to CAO of not printing 10 million pages and posting out 60,000 handbooks to our students?***
- ***Will the content of the Alert List be amended on the pertinent pages in real time or will course changes only appear on the Alert List page? If no is the response to this, why not?***

Thank you for reading this Press Release.

IGC, ISSU, NPCPP.



NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL
Post Primary
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