



# NEWSLETTER



## ST. CATHERINE'S NS



## ATTENDANCE

**At St. Catherine's, good attendance is something we take very seriously. While we have been working hard on our school attendance strategy, attendance in February was slightly lower than in January. Despite this, many students maintained excellent attendance and remained in Tier 1 Attendance. To celebrate their commitment, these students were entered into our ANSEO Attendance Draw. Congratulations to the lucky winners, who each received a €50 Smyths voucher as their prize!**

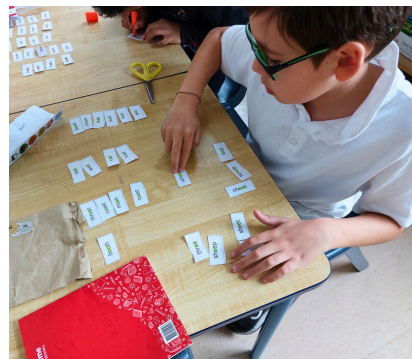
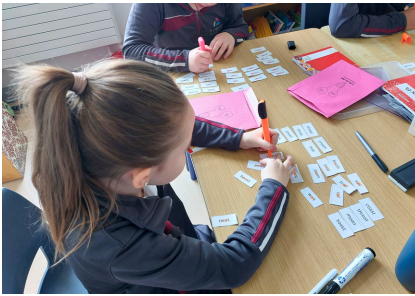
Research from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), drawing on data from the Growing Up in Ireland study, shows that absenteeism in primary school is more than just a short-term issue. Children who miss significant amounts of school at a young age are more likely to experience challenges later in life.

Findings indicate that poor attendance at primary school age is linked to lower academic achievement, reduced engagement in secondary school, and a higher likelihood of leaving school early. In adulthood, these patterns are associated with fewer career opportunities, lower earnings, and decreased participation in community life. While these findings highlight a national trend, they also reinforce why improving attendance at St. Catherine's is so important.

Through our Anseo Attendance Programme, positive reinforcement strategies, parent engagement, and a supportive school environment, we aim to help every pupil benefit from every school day. By working together as a school community, we can help ensure that our pupils build strong foundations for success both in school and in the years beyond.

## SPELLING BEES

Buzzing with Spelling Activities



In St. Catherine's, many classes use the Words Their Way spelling programme. This approach is tailored to each student's individual ability, making spelling both engaging and effective. It is a hands-on, active way for children to explore spelling patterns and develop their skills.

Here, some of our 3rd Class students are working hard to sort their spellings according to different patterns, demonstrating focus and teamwork. To further encourage a love of spelling, Ms. McDermott and Ms. Byrne have been hosting in-school Spelling Bee competitions between 3rd and 4th Class. These competitions are always full of excitement and friendly rivalry, helping students to develop confidence and enthusiasm for words!

## VALUABLE LINKS WITH OUR COMMUNITY

### TY Work Experience

Throughout February, we were delighted to welcome a number of Transition Year students who joined us for their work placements. Many of these students are former pupils of St. Catherine's, so it was especially wonderful to see familiar faces returning to our school.

The Transition Year students brought energy, enthusiasm, and fresh perspectives to our classrooms. Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed engaging with them, and it was a fantastic opportunity for everyone to learn from each other. Their contributions made February an extra special month for our school community.

This partnership with Transition Year students is an invaluable link between St. Catherine's and the wider local school community. It strengthens connections, fosters collaboration, and provides our pupils with role models. We are very grateful for the opportunity to work closely with local schools and to welcome past pupils back into our classrooms.



# GAA IN ACTION

Collaborating with our local GAA club St. Maur's

With some welcome breaks in the rainy weather, we have been delighted to get back outside for our Physical Education lessons. The fresh air and extra space have been a fantastic boost for everyone.

Last Tuesday, we especially enjoyed getting outdoors for our Gaelic Football training session with Coach Paul from St. Maur's GAA Club. The students have been working hard on developing key GAA skills, including kicking, hand passing, soloing and catching. It has been wonderful to see their confidence and teamwork grow each week.

Different classes have had the opportunity to take part in these sessions. Pictured here are the students from Room 7 and Room 8 with their teachers, enjoying their training under the sun and putting their new skills into practice.



## PAINTING WITH TEXTURE

Ms. Boyd and Ms. Comiskey's 2nd and 3rd Classes created some beautiful texture paintings this month. Their artwork was inspired by the novel *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark*, which sparked wonderful creativity and imagination in the classroom.

The students explored different techniques to bring their owls to life. Using forks and a variety of other tools, they carefully created textured feather effects in their paintings. They also experimented with colour mixing, blending different shades to create their own unique brown tones. Well done to all involved!

# A MONTH OF KINDNESS

Practicing our Core Values



**OPEN-MINDEDNESS  
IS LIKE HAVING A  
BIG, OPEN WINDOW  
IN YOUR MIND THAT  
LETS IN ALL SORTS  
OF COOL THINGS.**

In St. Catherine's NS, we continue to uphold our five Core Values that help make our school a fun, safe, and happy place to learn and grow: **Hardworking, Safe, Respectful, Honest, and Kind.**

These values are at the heart of our Code of Behaviour and our BÍ Cineálta Policy.

The month of February, our Wellbeing Team lead our focus on the Core Value of Kindness with a particular focus on the character traits associated with being kind like **Open-mindedness.**

There are numerous ways we can promote kindness within our school, both in the yard and in the classroom. Adhering to our Code of Behaviour plays a vital role in ensuring our safety.

As always, our Wellbeing Team runs a special initiative where students who demonstrate the Core Value of the month get their names added to our **Core Value Wall.** All children who were spotted being kind this month were entered into a raffle, and winners were announced at assembly last Friday.

Here are our lucky winners for February and well done to everyone for their hard work being kind this month.

# SAY YES TO LANGUAGES

Spanish comes to St. Catherine's

St. Catherine's was very fortunate to receive a grant to pilot the Say Yes to Languages initiative, a primary languages programme supported by Ireland's Strategy for Foreign Languages in Education (Languages Connect 2017-2026). The Say Yes to Languages module gives pupils in primary schools the opportunity to explore modern foreign languages in a fun and engaging way, alongside English and Irish, and participating schools receive government funding to support the initiative.

This programme is helping to lay the groundwork for the planned introduction of Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) into the redeveloped Primary Language Curriculum, which is being phased in over the coming years as part of the broader curriculum reform. Ms. Dunne will be leading this in giving Spanish lessons to our 6<sup>th</sup> classes and here is one of many lessons on action with Mr. O'Brien's 6<sup>th</sup> Class.



## MR O'SÉ VISIT

A Dramatic Return

We were delighted to welcome our former principal, Mr. O'Sé, back to St. Catherine's this past week. It was a very special visit for both staff and students alike.

Mr. O'Sé worked with our 3rd to 6th classes, leading engaging workshops filled with drama games and mime activities. As always, his enthusiasm and passion for the arts shone through.

During his time as principal, Mr. O'Sé was a wonderful advocate for music and drama and was always eager to instil a love of the arts in everyone at St. Catherine's.

All of the students thoroughly enjoyed the workshops and benefited greatly from his creativity, energy and expertise. It was a pleasure to have him back in our school community.

# LE CHÉILE DÉ HAOINE

Capturing the Magic of Our Friday Assemblies



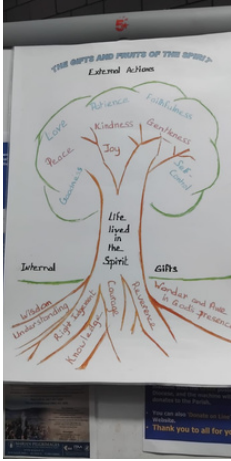
Each Friday throughout February, we proudly continued our weekly assembly tradition. These gatherings provide a wonderful opportunity for us to come together as a whole school community to share important notices and celebrate our ongoing initiatives, including our ANSEO Attendance Programme, our Code of Behaviour, and our Bí Cineálta Policy. A highlight of our assemblies is the opportunity for students to perform. Each week, a senior class and a junior class are selected to showcase their talents. We were treated to a fantastic variety of performances, including songs, dances, poems, and a particularly memorable mime performance by Ms. Gaughan's Senior Infants.

We also enjoyed a special bilingual reading presentation organised by Ms. O'Grady, our EAL teacher. Some of our Portuguese-speaking students confidently read *Kiki Goes to Brazil* for their classmates. It was a wonderful celebration of language and culture, and a great opportunity for students to develop their confidence and public speaking skills. We are very fortunate in St. Catherine's to have such a diverse and vibrant school community.

As always, Ms. Dunne led our assemblies with calming mindful moments, encouraging us to take time to reflect on ourselves, on one another, and on our families. She also shared some beautiful picture books with us, including *Heart and the Bottle* by Oliver Jeffers, which was especially fitting as we marked Valentine's Day.

# CONFIRMATION PREPARATIONS

A Retreat to our local church



As the date for Confirmation for our 5th and 6th class students draws closer, there is a great sense of excitement in the air. Our Confirmation candidates have been busily preparing for this very special milestone in their faith journey.

In their Religion lessons, students have been learning about the Holy Spirit and deepening their understanding of its role in their lives.

As part of the Confirmation programme, the Julian Group kindly invited our students to attend a retreat in St. Maur's Parish Church. During the retreat, the children explored the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in more detail and were given a guided tour of the church. This retreat marked an important and meaningful step in their sacramental preparation, and we are very proud of the commitment and enthusiasm our students have shown as they prepare for their special day.



PARENT'S ASSOCIATION UPDATES

**The Parents' Association Committee**

This is the Parents' Association committee for 2025/26. The committee consists of three elected roles and representatives from each class.

**Officers:**

Chair: Matthew Semple  
 Treasurer: Bryan Moore  
 Secretary: Milena Fuzetto

**Class Representatives:**

Deborah Moore (Junior Infants)  
 Elora Byrne (Senior Infants - Ms. Gaughan)  
 Erin Cartlidge (1st Class - Mrs. McDermott)  
 Lorraine Murphy (2nd Class - Ms. Farrell)  
 Leah Kiernan (3rd Class - Mr. McGrath)  
 Milena Fuzetto (2nd/3rd class - Ms. Boyd/Ms. Comiskey)  
 Tracey Dockrell (4th Class - Ms. Kavanagh)  
 Deborah Moore (5<sup>th</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Class - Ms. Archer)  
 Elora Byrne (5th Class - Ms. Dennis)  
 Nicola Semple (6th Class - Mr. O'Brien)  
 Martina Debenc (6th Class - Mr. Hegarty)  
 Donna Kennedy (Autism Class)  
 Shauna Farrell (Autism Class)

Each class / year has a WhatsApp group to support communication among parents. If you would like to join, please get in touch with your class representative or email the Parents' Association at [chairpersonPA@stcatherinesns.ie](mailto:chairpersonPA@stcatherinesns.ie)



All parents are members of the Parents' Association and are most welcome to attend all meetings. You'll get notification on Aladdin and via email of our meetings, and all meetings have the option to join by Zoom.

The Parents' Association works in partnership with the Principal, Staff, and Board of Management for the benefit of your child. When parents and schools work together, children do better.

A Message from our Parents' Association

**6th Class Leavers Hoodies**

The 2026 design for this year's leaver's hoodies is currently being finalised with our supplier. Each hoodie will feature the school crest on the front, a large '26' on the back and the first names of all six class leavers in the design (inside the two numbers). The good news is that the price of the hoodies will remain at €28 (the same price as last year).

If you are in 6th Class, keep your eyes peeled for further details. We hope to be able to offer a fitting session to make sure everyone gets the rights size. (Design may differ from image shown here).



**Easter Raffle**

Plans are underway for the popular Easter Raffle so if you like chocolate that is egg-shaped, this is the raffle for you! Look out for the raffle ticket sheets which will be sent home in the school bags.



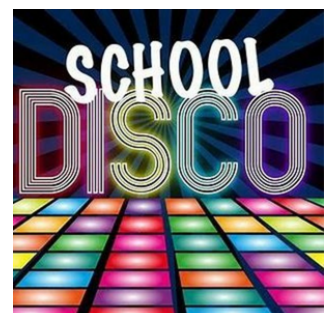
**Parents' Association Meeting**

The parents' association is meeting on Thursday 5th March for a regular meeting. We will be meeting at 7pm via Zoom and all parents (not just the committee are welcome to attend). You can join the meeting, ask a question or just listen in. If you are interested in finding out more about the work of the parents' association, this is a good way to do just that. The meeting will last approximately one hour. To receive the agenda and a Zoom link, please email the chair on [chairpersonPA@stcatherinesns.ie](mailto:chairpersonPA@stcatherinesns.ie)

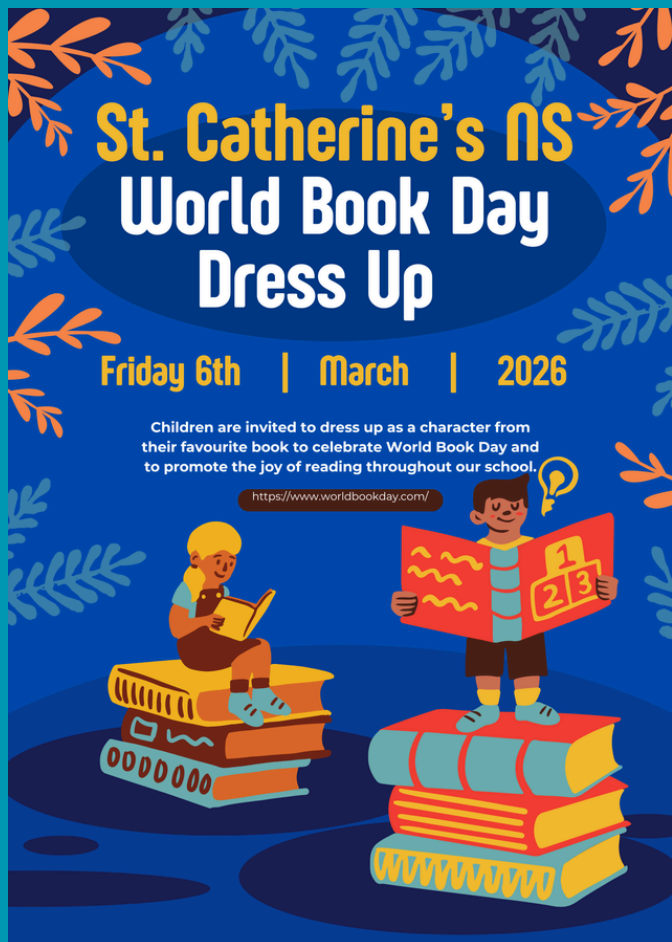
**End of Year Disco**

Regular attendees of the Parents' Association events will have noticed that we didn't run a Christmas Disco at the end of 2025 as occurred in previous years. We know this is very popular so, instead, we are planning to run an end of year disco for the 6th Class Leavers with invitations also offered for children in 2nd through to 6th Class.

There is no date set at this stage, but we hope to bring that to you soon. We do plan, however, to deliver the best school disco in town with the most popular favourite songs alongside the dance and video experience with, hopefully, some surprises. Tickets will be €5 each as in previous years and will include all treats and a drink.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Seachtain na Gaeilge	3	4	5	6 World Book Day	7
8	9 Seachtain na Gaeilge	10 TIMSS Testing in 4 <sup>th</sup> Class	11 Staff Training School Closed	12	13 Green Day Dress Up	14
15	16 School Closed St. Patrick's Day	17 School Closed St. Patrick's Day	18 Book Fair	19 Book Fair	20 Book Fair	21
22	23 Book Fair	24 Book Fair	25	26	27 School Closed @ 12 for Easter Holidays  Easter Raffle	28



**St. Catherine's NS**  
**World Book Day**  
**Dress Up**

Friday 6th | March | 2026

Children are invited to dress up as a character from their favourite book to celebrate World Book Day and to promote the joy of reading throughout our school.

<https://www.worldbookday.com/>

The poster features an illustration of two children sitting on stacks of books. One child is reading a book, and the other is holding a book with numbers on it. The background is blue with orange and white floral patterns.

## BLOOD DONATION CLINIC

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**Rush**  
**St Catherine's National School**  
**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2026**  
**4:50pm – 9:00pm**

Check your eligibility & book your appointment at [giveblood.ie](http://giveblood.ie) or call us on 1800 222 111

[giveblood.ie](http://giveblood.ie)

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