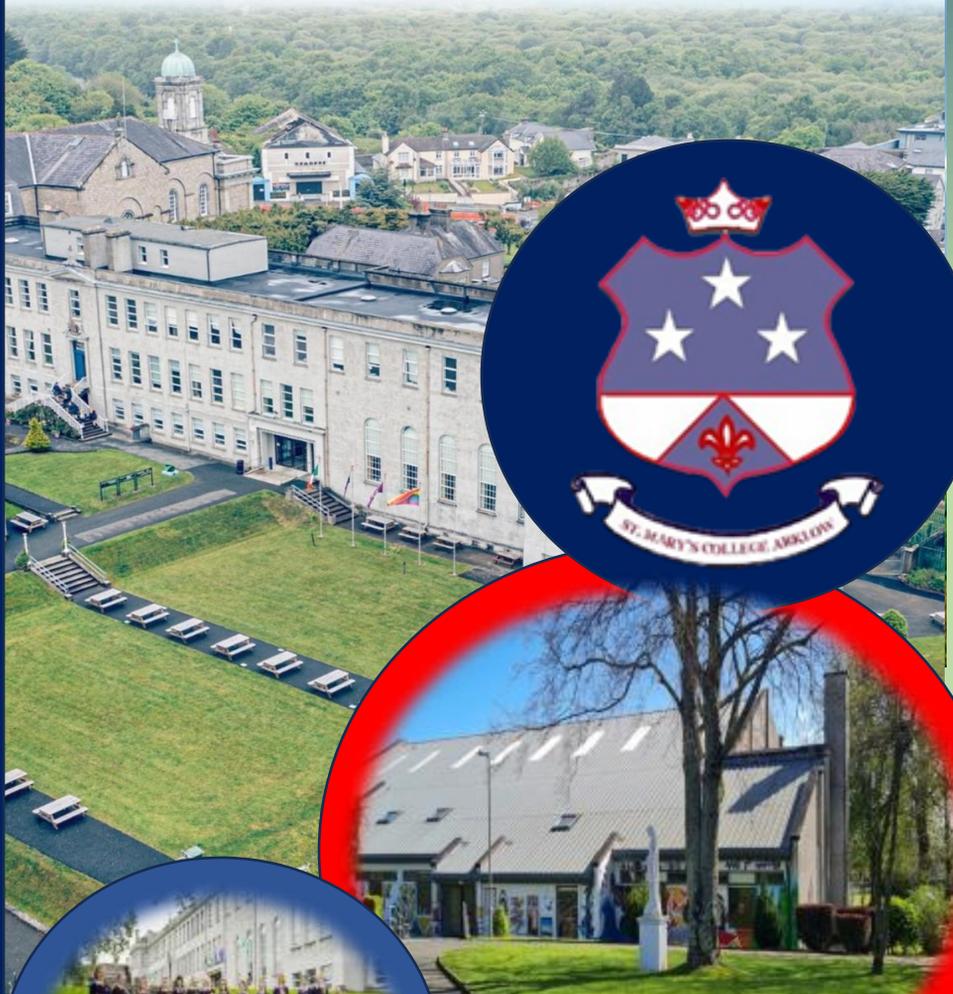


ANNUAL REPORT 2024 2025



St. Mary's College
Arklow, Co. Wicklow



Welcome



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Social Media

Connect with us!

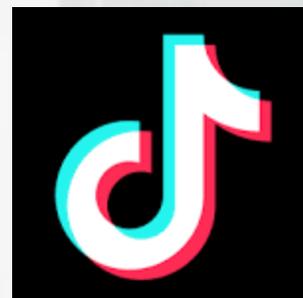
- Facebook
- St. Mary's College Arklow



- Instagram
- @stmarysarklow



- TikTok
- @stmaryscollegear
klow



- X
- @SMCArklow



CEIST



St. Mary's College is a Catholic Secondary School for girls under the Trusteeship of CEIST and welcomes students of all persuasions. We are committed to educating the whole person to her full potential in a caring, supportive, and joyful environment in partnership with parents and community. CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish School Trust) is a newly formed organisation consisting of a group of religious orders, including the Sisters of Mercy, which was set up to pass on their educational heritage to lay colleagues. To mark this significant occasion, Oana Gaftoi, (Leaving Cert class of 2009) was selected to undertake a large painting that would symbolise the spirit of CEIST. This painting is now on display on the main corridor and is greatly admired. Many thanks to Oana for all her beautiful work .



Sr. Catherine McCauley





St. Mary's College
Est. 1881
RECEPTION

History of St. Mary's College



The sisters of Mercy came to Arklow from Rathdrum in 1881 and began an apostolate in education. In 1903 the Sisters opened a boarding school to facilitate students who lived great distances from the school. In the mid 50's the boarding school was extended and a new building, Maris Stella, was erected to provide day education for the local population. Assessing the trends of development in economic and population growth, the Sisters perceived the way forward for Arklow was to facilitate the provision of increased day education and accordingly phased out the boarding school in the 1970's. Cluain Mhuire building was opened in 1985 and in 2022 a suite of new state of the art science labs were built on to the Maris Stella Building.



St. Mary's Convent, Arklow.



A Game of Hockey,
Convent of our Lady of Mercy, St. Mary's, Arklow.



Aims

- To foster an awareness of the dignity and uniqueness of each person by promoting the self-esteem of each student.
- To develop the full potential of each student aesthetically, academically, spiritually, and physically.
- To develop good relations between staff and students and between students, in the daily life of the school.
- To provide stimulating challenges for all students through a wide range of activities.
- To use every opportunity to improve and maintain the physical and social environment in the school.
- To develop good links between the school, the home, and the community, making full use of the specialist services in the community for advice and support
- To facilitate and develop informed, loving, discerning students who have a sense of social responsibility and a sensitive active response to human need in keeping with the Catholic Ethos of the school.

Mercy Philosophy of Education Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalized. It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect, and joy. Mercy education is committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, staff, parents, and the wider community

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ give meaning and purpose to our lives.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person

We respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person.

Creating Community

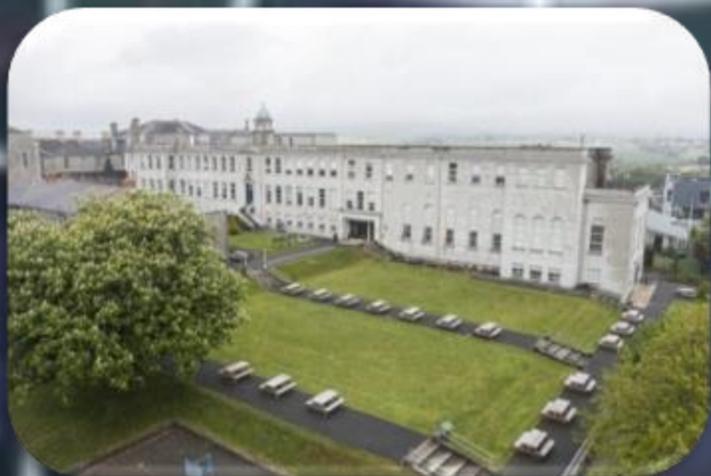
Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.

Being Just and Responsible

We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.

St. Mary's College Campus







St. Mary's College Uniform



- Our official school uniform comprises of the following:



School Uniform



School Trousers



P.E. Tracksuit



School Coat



School Blazer

St. Mary's College



Principals Address



It is with great pride and a deep sense of gratitude that I reflect on another remarkable year at St Mary's College, Arklow. As we look back on the academic year, it is clear that our school community continues to grow stronger, more inclusive, and more committed to excellence in all aspects of education.

One of our proudest achievements this year was being awarded Champion School status as part of our School of Sanctuary journey. St Mary's College is now officially the first school in County Wicklow to receive this prestigious recognition. This award reflects our unwavering dedication to creating a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of background or circumstance. The entire school community – students, staff, and parents – embraced this journey with compassion and purpose, and this milestone is a testament to their efforts. We also welcomed the opportunity to engage in a Whole School Evaluation (WSE) earlier this year. The evaluation affirmed the very high standards of teaching, learning, and care that define our school. Inspectors noted the positive and respectful relationships between staff and students, the strong leadership evident across all levels, and the commitment to continuous improvement that is embedded in our culture. The feedback from the WSE highlighted many areas of commendable practice, reinforcing our confidence in the direction we are taking as a school.

This year, we also bid a fond farewell to two highly respected and long-serving colleagues – Ms Siobhán Doyle and Ms Breda Dunbar. Ms Doyle, a dedicated teacher of German and English as well as our PRO, brought creativity, dedication, and a commitment to excellence to every aspect of her work. .

Ms Dunbar, teacher of Business, Maths, and SEN, is known for her steadfast commitment to student support and pastoral care. Her warm and caring approach ensured she could get the best out of students, even those who found school and academic work challenging. Both can look back with pride and satisfaction on wonderful careers that touched the lives of countless students over the years. We thank them sincerely and wish them every happiness and fulfilment in their retirement.

Our co-curricular life also continued to flourish this year. Congratulations to the many teams and clubs who brought energy, talent, and sportsmanship to every competition. A special mention goes to our Junior Rugby Team, who reached the final of the Leinster Junior Cup for the second consecutive year, their commitment and team spirit were exemplary and a source of great pride for the school. Our soccer, GAA, Camogie, Basketball and Athletics squads continue to thrive and we look forward to ongoing high levels of participation and success in the years ahead.

At the heart of all of this success is the unwavering commitment of our staff, whose dedication both in the classroom and in the wide array of extra-curricular activities is the foundation upon which our school thrives. The sheer breadth of opportunities and achievements are detailed throughout this report. Without the selfless effort of so many of our staff, the student experience would not be nearly as rich, rewarding, or inspiring. I offer my sincere thanks to each and every one of them for their professionalism, passion, and tireless work throughout the year.

As we continue to build on these successes, I want to sincerely thank our dedicated staff, supportive parents, and above all, our incredible students. Each member of our school community plays a vital role in shaping the unique spirit of St Mary's College – a spirit defined by excellence, kindness, and a deep commitment to one another.

Mr. Ward.

Vice Principals Address



End-of-year moments invite us to reflect again upon another year in St Mary's College. As with every year in our school this one rapidly brought its usual pace, energy and momentum, all of it a reminder that school life is broader than any single activity. Alongside these visible moments, there's the quieter work that matters just as much. Staff-led planning groups have continued to shape the direction of the school, strengthening our School Self-Evaluation, initiating our BÍ Cinéalta policy, analysing academic trends, and flourishing of our School of Sanctuary, all significant steps forward in how we support all students. These developments speak to a school that is willing to reflect, adjust, and improve. Much of this rests on strong collaboration. Staff continue to give generously of their time and expertise and continue to support our students' curricular, co- and extra-curricular learning.

This year also brought moments of reflection and loss, as we marked the passing of two much-loved former colleagues, Ms Eileen Dunbar and Sr Maria Goretti. Both women dedicated themselves with quiet conviction to the life and spirit of St Mary's College, each bringing her own unique depth of character and unwavering commitment to our shared ethos. Their influence endures in the values we uphold and the community they helped to shape. They were two colleagues who, in particular, shaped my own understanding that ethos can be lived out through a combination of high standards, humility, and a healthy dose of good humour.

At the heart of everything we do is an ethos of compassion and respect, which reflects our unique characteristic spirit shared across the entire school community. Our endeavors are continual; we know that expectations change and needs shift. However, I am reminded of the dedication, spirit and zeal of the founding Sisters of Mercy and of the undoubted challenges which they encountered creating a solid foundation for all of us to build upon in 2025-26.

Thank you to everyone across the entire school community for your dedication and contributions this year. Next year is full of opportunity indeed. I will be thinking of you all in the weeks ahead, and I hope the summer brings joy, growth, and the time to return refreshed for the new term in autumn.

Mr. Hicks

Teaching Staff

Most counties in the Republic of Ireland are represented on our staff. All teachers are college graduates, and many have completed further studies or post-graduate programmes and continually engage in on going CPD. There is a wide diversity of disciplines within our teachers' qualifications, which allows the school to offer an extensive range of subjects to the students.

The following is a list of all the teachers:

- Roisin McGrath History and Irish
- Abbie Molloy Maths and ICT
- Aisling Molloy English and French
- Joanne Logue English and Geography
- Conor Mansell Maths and P.E.
- Susan Masterson German and French
- Moya McGrathDoyle Economics, Business, Politics and Society, English, L.C.V.P
- Charlotte Murray Art and Visual Art
- Niamh Ní Bhroin History and Maths
- Breda O'Connor Maths and C.S.P.E
- Elizabeth O'Dea English, Religion, TY coordinator
- Eileen O'Neill English and Religion
- Valerie Power Geography and P.E.
- Goretta Rochford Home Economics and Religion
- Michaela Smyth Irish and Music
- Joanne Stapleton AEN Co-Ordinator, Politics and Society and History
- Sandra Carr Geography and Irish
- Ian Carter Art and Visual Art
- Sheila Clancy English and History
- Eve Conaty Guidance and English
- Irene Cosgrove History and English
- Aislinn Cullen French and English
- Gary Donovan Applied Maths, Maths, Physics and Science
- Maureen Doyle Biology and Science
- Siobhan Doyle English and German
- Breda Dunbar Business Studies and Maths
- Joanne English Biology and Science
- Karen Fanning Religion and History
- Angela Flynn Career Guidance and German
- Chloe Giltrap English and French
- Mary Hegarty Home Economics and Irish
- Bríd Hempenstall Science and Chemistry
- Regina Hurd Learning Support, ASD Co-Ordinator
- Jacintha Lipsett Biology and Science
- Daniel Verveen Maths, Chemistry and ICT
- Ciaran Deay Religion and English
- Gina Potts Learning Support, ASD Class Teacher
- Aoife O Brein Irish and Home Economics

Staff

First Aiders:

- Maureen Doyle, Conor Mansell, Brid Hemenstall, Freda Mooney, Joanne Logue, Daniell Verveen .

Support Staff:

- Mrs. Erika Ravenscroft Secretary
- Mrs. Jean Kenny Accounts Secretary
- Mrs. Louise McMahon Special Needs Assistant
- Mrs. Helen Cosgrove Special Needs Assistant
- Mrs. Catherine Byrne Special Needs Assistant
- Mrs. Eileen Keogh Special Needs Assistant
- Mr. Michael Dunne Caretaker
- Mr. Eric Dudek Grounds man
- Ms. Christine Steel Music

Canteen: (GetFresh Catering)

- Mr. Russell Cashman Chef
- Mrs. Mary Fennell Canteen
- Ms. Tersea Nolan
- Ms. Donna Doyle

Board of Management:

Trustee Nominees:

Ms. Paula McLoughlin (Chairperson)

Mr. John Byrne

Mr. Jonathan O'Toole

Mrs. Mary Dalton

Parent Nominees:

Mr. Richard Malone

Ms. Kathy Van Eskbeck

Teacher Nominees:

Ms. Susan Masterson

Ms. Eimear Ryan

Secretary to the Board of Management: Mr. Aidan Ward

Recording Secretary: Ms. Jean Kenny

Student Leadership

Our student leaders, Head Girl Ava Doyle and Vice Deputy Head Girl Saoirse Chell, have shown incredible dedication and commitment throughout the year. Ava has led with confidence, positivity, and compassion, setting an excellent example for her peers, while Saoirse has brought energy, creativity, and reliability to every responsibility she has taken on. Together, they have supported school events, represented our student body with pride, and worked tirelessly to make our community stronger and more inclusive. Their teamwork, leadership, and determination have left a lasting impact, and we are grateful for the amazing work they have done in helping to shape such a successful year.



Student Leadership

Form 2 Digital Reps



Form 3 Digital Reps



Form 6 Prefects & Vice Prefects



Form 5 Prefects & Vice Prefects



Form 4 Prefects & Vice Prefects



Form 3 Prefects & Vice Prefects



Form 2 Prefects & Vice Prefects



Form 1 Prefects & Vice Prefects



Student Council



The Student Council had a very busy time this year addressing students' concerns and working diligently in the background to address these concerns.

Some of the accomplishments achieved this year include:

- The re-introduction of the bell
- Petitioned for new doors in some bathrooms
- Helped with Anti-Bullying Policy (Bí Céinealta)
- Fixed clocks in locker rooms
- Supported local charity i.e. Arklow Cancer Support
- Christmas Visit to Asgard Nursing Home
- Raised concerns about P.E kit



Student Council members met with Student Council members from Arklow CBS and Glenart to share ideas regarding events and ideas they have organised throughout the school year. The girls came up with strategies that each Student Council could implement in their own school. Local Cllr Peir Leonard also paid a visit to the conference where each Student Council had prepared questions regarding local issues and Youth Voice.

Our Form 6 Student Council leaders got the opportunity to visit Arklow Cancer support on Friday with Ms. Molloy and witness firsthand the services and supports offered by this amazing local charity. The girls really enjoyed the visit and St. Mary's were delighted to support this charity with another very successful Pink Day in school.



Ceiliuradh CEIST



We celebrated Ceiliuradh CEIST 2025 along with all the CEIST schools around the country. Our School of Sanctuary committee members reminded us of the rich diversity in our school when they took to the intercom this morning welcoming everyone to school in a variety of the languages spoken by our students.

Also in keeping with the theme of the Ceiliuradh CEIST (Home, School, Parish) and the Ceist Charter value of 'Creating Community' we were joined by the prefects of each class along with the representatives of the Sisters of Mercy and many of our retired colleagues. All were gathered to celebrate the planting of two apple trees in honour of Sr Maria Goretti with a beautiful prayer service before Valerie Power and Celine Harty planted the trees assisted by Chloe Byrne and Rachel Wolohan. We were delighted to have Lily and Maria Byrne at the ceremony. As grandmother and mother of Rachel Wolohan respectively, they represent the current and former student body. It was a wonderful day of celebration highlighting the importance of our school community and our CEIST community nationwide.



Class of 2025



Est. 1881
RECEPTION



Open Day

Our annual Open Day took place on Tuesday when all prospective students and their parents and guardians were welcomed onto our beautiful campus. Perspective students and parents took a guided tour of our facilities including our new state of the art Science labs, our classrooms and practical rooms and our extensive sports facilities.

Our school prospectus and enrolment information was available on the day Our Principal's Address in the Concert Hall at 4.45pm proved to be very informative and successful..



Form 1 Sports Camp

In September, our Form 1 students enjoyed an afternoon of extra-curricular sports in glorious sunshine, introducing them to the wide range of sports available in St Mary's and providing a chance to sample some activities in advance of signing up for at least one activity. Thank you to all the teachers and TY students who assisted in demonstrating key skills and helped with the signing up process. It was a fabulous day, form 1 students got the opportunity to make new friends and enjoy settling into their new school.



Sr. M Regis Award

Congratulations to Lana Bilen who is the winner of the Sr. M Regis award for the Best Leaving Cert Results this year. Lana credits a rigorous study routine throughout 6th Year along with the support and encouragement of her teachers for her exam success.



I am overjoyed with my results, reaching 625 points through consistent hard work and focus. Now, as I finish secondary school, I'm excited to begin studying Biological and Biomedical Sciences at Trinity College Dublin, with a clear goal of becoming a biochemist.

Lana was presented with the award at our assembly later in the year. We wish her every success in Trinity and in her future career.

Catholic Schools Week 2024



During Catholic Schools Week our first years have been busy thinking about what it means to be part of a Catholic School. They used their hands to represent five key aspects they have been focusing on throughout the week, Friendship, Locality, Faith, School and Family. Their hands hold significance akin to their Catholic ethos, guiding actions with the purpose and care. As a Catholic School week ends, we pray that good values continue to shape our days ahead.



Catholic Schools
United in Faith and Community



School of Sanctuary



St. Mary's College, Arklow

**CHAMPION
SCHOOL OF SANCTUARY!**



Your hard work and dedication really shine.
Congratulations!



School of Sanctuary

St. Mary's College has officially been awarded *Champion School of Sanctuary* status, a recognition of our commitment to fostering inclusion and welcome for all. Over the past year, our Sanctuary Committee has continued to build on our School of Sanctuary work, deepening our efforts to create a truly inclusive environment.

We hosted our first *Culture Day* in November, a celebration of the many nationalities and cultures in our school. We also fundraised for the Immigrant Council of Ireland by taking part in *Wear Red Day*, raising awareness and showing solidarity.

In April, we proudly put ourselves forward for *Champion* status, hosting a special School of Sanctuary Monitoring Visit. Visitors from Schools of Sanctuary Ireland, SETU, Carlow College, local and national representatives, as well as teachers and students from other schools, joined us for the day. Our student committee led a tour and shared how our school celebrates diversity. The visit culminated in a powerful *Cultural Showcase*, with a flag parade, personal stories, poetry in different languages, traditional dance, and cultural traditions.

We are incredibly proud of our brave and talented students who took part and look forward to continuing our journey as a *Champion School of Sanctuary*, promoting a culture of welcome, inclusion, and respect for all.

We also look forward to attending the awards ceremony on 19th September in Wexford.



Culture Day

On Friday, November 15th, we proudly hosted our very first Culture Day, an incredible celebration of the rich diversity within our school community. Students from 22 of the 39 cultures represented in our school came together to showcase their heritage through vibrant displays of flags, music, traditional dress, fascinating facts, and delicious food samples. The concert hall buzzed with excitement and curiosity as students explored the exhibits, joined by enthusiastic visitors from our local primary school, SS Michael & Peter JNS. We were also honored to welcome Tiffy Allen, the National Coordinator of Places of Sanctuary Ireland, whose visit made the occasion even more special and underscored our commitment to being a true School of Sanctuary. A heartfelt thank you goes to our dedicated School of Sanctuary committee and to all the students who worked so hard to bring their culture to life. A special word of thanks to the parents who went to such great effort to prepare and transport the food, traditional items, and artifacts for display—it truly made the day unforgettable. We are immensely proud of our students and the rich tapestry of cultures they represent. Please see our Gallery for more photos of the day. We can't wait to make Culture Day an annual tradition!



Our Form 1 and TY students had the privilege of hearing from two incredible guest speakers as part of our commitment as a School of Sanctuary.

Tiffy, the coordinator of Schools of Sanctuary, spoke to us about the programme and provided valuable insights into migration and the global refugee crisis. She also highlighted where Ireland stands on this crisis and emphasised the importance of getting accurate information, as there is a lot of misinformation surrounding the topic.



We were also honoured to welcome Olga, a Sanctuary Ambassador, who shared her personal journey as a refugee in Ireland. Having fled Ukraine in 2022, Olga's story offered a powerful first hand perspective on the challenges faced by those seeking refuge.

This talk was a thought-provoking reminder of the struggles refugees endure and the importance of empathy, understanding, and kindness in our community.



St. Mary's College School Lotto



St. Mary's College Arklow Fundraiser Lotto

Your support makes a real difference

Jackpot increases every week plus a weekly winner prize

Play

Pick 4 numbers

The same numbers will be played for you each week

Pay

**1 line for €2.50, 2 lines for €4
or 3 Lines for €5**

Maximum 3 lines per person

Win

Match 4 numbers to win
the Jackpot

Welcome to the St. Mary's College, Arklow fundraiser lotto. This new fundraising initiative will raise money to improve our sporting facilities for the benefit of all students across our PE, extra curricular programmes and the wider community. Our ambition is to provide fit for purpose all weather sports fields on campus for the enjoyment of all our students.

We hope that the weekly option of 1 line for €2.50 will allow everybody to contribute. Please pass the word on and invite friends and family.

It would be hugely appreciated if you can contribute €5 for 3 lines, and you never know you might just win!

Thank you so much.

Aidan Ward, Principal and the Parents' Association

Join Now

Scan the QR code
or go to our website



<https://www.ourfundraiser.ie/org/stmarysarklow>

Junior Cycle

The focus goes beyond the assessment of knowledge and facts and allows students to develop a wide range of skills and abilities including creativity, collaboration, and the application of knowledge in a variety of different settings.

Courses available to Students

The new Junior Cycle represents a new approach to teaching, learning, assessment and reporting and centers around 8 principles, 8 key skills and 24 statements of learning.

In St Mary's College, we are committed to ensuring that each student is encouraged and challenged to realise their full potential and to aspire to excellence in all aspects of their lives. The new Junior Cycle places a significant emphasis on student wellbeing and seeks to develop the skills and resources to enable the student to provide and take responsibility for their own wellbeing throughout their lives.

The assessment of student progress will take place through a blend of Classroom Based Assessments and Terminal Examinations across the Junior Cycle. Upon completion of the Junior Cycle, students will receive a Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement which acknowledges their achievements across a range of assessments while also acknowledging student achievements across other aspects of school life [Other Areas of Learning] including extra and co-curricular activities, involvement in school pastoral and outreach programmes .

Core Examination Subjects (studied by all students)

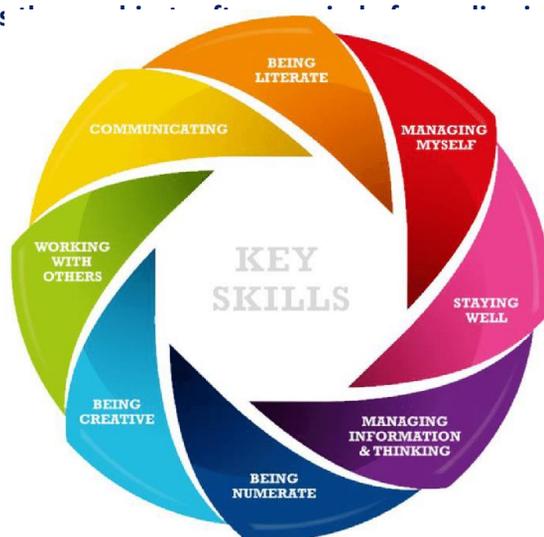
- Irish [unless eligible for DES Irish Exemption under the terms of CL 53/2019]
- English
- Mathematics
- History
- Geography
- Religious Education

Optional Examination Subjects Each student selects First Year

- French • German
- Home Economics • Business
- Art • Science
- Music

Wellbeing Programme - (followed by all students)

- Social, Personal and Health Education [SPHE]
- Civic, Social and Political Education [CSPE]
- Physical Education • French
- Digital Literacy • Gaeilge
- Choir Senior Cycle • History
- Art, Craft, Design • German
- Accounting • Geography
- Business Studies • English
- Biology • Chemistry



Senior Cycle

Senior cycle is founded on a commitment to educational achievement of the highest standard for all students, commensurate with their individual abilities. To support students as they shape their own future, there is an emphasis on the development of knowledge and deep understanding; on students taking responsibility for their own learning; on the acquisition of key skills; and on the processes of learning. The broad curriculum, with some opportunities for specialisation, supports continuity from junior cycle and sets out to meet the needs of students, some of whom have special educational needs, but all of whom share a wide range of learning interests, aptitudes, and talents.

We offer a wide variety of subjects in St. Mary's College,

- Art, Craft, Design
- German
- Accounting
- History
- Business Studies
- Home Economics
- Biology
- Mathematics
- Chemistry
- Music
- English
- Physical Education
- French
- Politics & Society
- Gaeilge
- Religious Education
- Geography
- Science
- Social, Personal & Health Education Careers

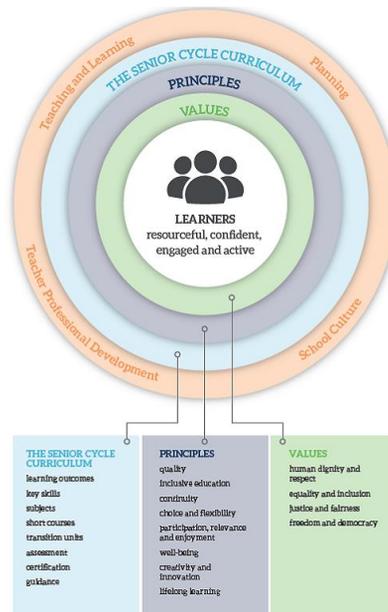


Figure 1: Overview of senior cycle

All subjects are offered at Higher Level. Every effort is made to secure a student's first preference. Parents/Guardians and students are advised of subject choices at a specially convened meeting each year. Class and individual advice is also provided by the Career Guidance Teacher.

Policy Review

The following policies were reviewed during the year:

- Anti Bullying Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Bi Cinealta Policy

Wellbeing

- Wellbeing for students and the school community at St. Mary's College in Arklow involves creating a supportive and nurturing environment that promotes academic growth, personal development, and overall well-being. We offer 400 hours of wellbeing as per guidelines from the Department of Education. Here are some aspects of wellbeing that are implemented at St. Mary's College:
- Academic Support: Provide students with access to academic resources, including tutoring programs, study groups, and additional assistance for students who may be struggling in certain subjects. We encourage a growth mindset and foster a love for learning among students.
- Mental Health and Emotional Support. St. Mary's promote awareness of mental health issues through workshops, seminars, and regular communication with students and parents. Individual sessions with the guidance counsellors is also available.
- Physical Health and Wellness: St. Mary's encourages physical fitness and wellness among students through physical education classes, sports teams, and extracurricular activities. Promote healthy habits, such as nutritious eating, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep.
- Community Engagement: St. Mary's foster a sense of community within the school by organising events, clubs, and initiatives that promote inclusivity and a sense of belonging. Encourage students to participate in community service projects and engage with local organisations to develop empathy, compassion, and social responsibility.
- Parent Involvement: St. Mary's encourage active participation from parents or guardians in their children's education and school activities. Provide opportunities for parents to engage with the school community through regular communication, parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and volunteer opportunities.
- Bullying Prevention: St. Mary's has implemented anti-bullying policies and programs that create a safe and respectful environment for all students. Train staff members to identify and address instances of bullying promptly and provide support to both victims and perpetrators.
- Career Guidance and College Preparation: St. Mary's offer career guidance services to help students explore their interests, talents, and potential career paths. Provide resources and support for college applications, scholarship opportunities, and vocational training programs.
- Positive Discipline and Conflict Resolution: St. Mary's have established a framework for positive discipline that promotes fairness, respect, and understanding. Teach students effective conflict resolution skills, emphasising empathy, communication, and compromise.
- Technology Integration: St. Mary's have incorporated technology into the learning process to enhance engagement and facilitate innovative teaching methods. Provide access to digital resources and educational platforms that support personalized learning and skill development.
- Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: St. Mary's regularly assess the effectiveness of wellbeing initiatives through feedback from students, parents, and staff. Use this feedback to refine existing programs and develop new strategies to address emerging challenges.

Wellbeing



Inspectors Report

Whole-School Evaluation (WSE) report for St. Mary's College, Arklow, conducted by the Department of Education in October 2024 and published January 2025. This comprehensive evaluation assesses the school's management, leadership, teaching, learning, and student wellbeing.

Summarised Key Findings:

School Leadership and Management

Governance and Leadership: The school's leadership demonstrates a clear vision and commitment to continuous improvement.

Policy Implementation: Effective policies are in place, particularly concerning child protection and anti-bullying measures.

Communication: There is open and effective communication between the school's management, staff, and the wider school community

Teaching and Learning

Quality of Teaching: The quality of teaching was found to be good or very good in the majority of lessons observed.

Student Engagement: Students are actively engaged in their learning, with lessons designed to promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Assessment Practices: Teachers employ a variety of assessment methods to monitor and support student progress.

3. Student Wellbeing

Support Structures: The school has robust support systems to promote student wellbeing, including guidance counseling and pastoral care.

Inclusive Environment: An inclusive and respectful school culture is evident, fostering a positive learning environment for all students.

Recommendations

Enhance Collaborative Practices: Encourage greater collaboration among teachers to share best practices and resources.

Professional Development: Provide ongoing professional development opportunities focused on innovative teaching methodologies.

Student Voice: Further develop mechanisms to incorporate student feedback into school planning and decision-making processes.

Additional Educational Needs

St. Mary's College welcomes students with additional educational needs and strives to meet the needs of all our students in an enriching, inclusive environment, in line with our school ethos. We recognise the right of students with additional needs to be educated in a mainstream school and are delighted to have an ASD class, which supports this. We understand the importance of genuine communication and partnership with parents, students, relevant primary schools, and outside agencies in planning and delivering on our inclusive model of education.

We use the Continuum of Support Framework to identify and support children with additional needs, prioritizing those with most need. Like this framework, we recognise that educational needs occur along a continuum, ranging from mild to severe and from transient to long-term and that students require different levels of support depending on their identified additional needs. By using this framework, it helps us implement a staged approach to ensure that our support and interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support and are informed by careful monitoring of progress.

The AEN Coordinator and AEN Team, including SNAs, work with subject teachers, tutors, Year Heads and Guidance Counsellors to support the teaching, learning and wellbeing processes in the school and to ensure students with additional educational needs can reach their potential; personally, socially, and academically.

Neurodiversity Week The school proudly celebrates Neurodiversity Week, which took place this year from March 21st 27th and was one of eleven schools in the country to take part in the weeklong event. Neurodiversity refers to the differences in the way that our brains are wired which means that some people may struggle to do things that others find easy. It is about recognizing that everyone's brain works differently. Students got the opportunity to learn more about the different ways of thinking, learning, and interacting with the world, as well as the challenges and strengths associated with dyslexia, dyspraxia, autism, and ADHD.

Students in Second Year participated in a workshop on zoom organized by All Abilities Ireland. They watched a presentation and took part in creative exercises, which developed an awareness of brain differences and function. It was a wonderful week where teachers and students alike got a much better insight into what life is like for the students in our school who experience these strengths and challenges A special word of thanks to MS Stapleton and the AEN Team of MS Molloy, Ms. Hurd, MS Dunbar, Ms. Cosgrove and Ms. McMahon for their work in putting together the reflections and awareness campaign across the school.

Room 8 Room 3 - ASD CLASS

- We are on our third year of offering our students the opportunity to access a Special Autism class. We were very fortunate to be able to open our second class in Room 3 in September. There are currently 8 students in the two classes, one Form 2 student, four Form 3 students, one Form 4 student and two Forms 6 students. The two Leaving Certificate girls were at S.t Mary's since the beginning of Secondary school. We also have a few students who spend some time in here throughout the day and a few other students who come to Room 8 at breaktimes or if they need some down time throughout the day. Our home base classes are in Room 3 and Room 8, and each student has their own workstation which they can use during the day or during Learning Support classes.
- The girls all have their own lockers which are located in the bathrooms adjoining Room 8. These bathrooms are used exclusively by students in Room 3 and 8, and there is a very calm atmosphere there. We are very fortunate to be able to have use of Room 6, where we have a little sensory/relaxing space for the girls who need downtime. This room is open to some students from mainstream classes also, where they can show the teacher a card if things become too overwhelming for them. They will come to Room 8 and sign into the book before relaxing in the sensory room. All students from Room 3 and 8 attend mainstream classes, some more than others. Each student has her own timetable, and her programme is designed around what she is capable and comfortable with. All students are exempt from Irish and will generally be in Room 3 or 8 at these times for Learning Support or Life Skills. We have had a fantastic year in Room 3 and 8 and have had many highlights. We have cooked snacks and lunches in our newly built kitchen in Room 3.
- We have made a number of trips to cafés, the post office and library during LifeSkills, and our TYs had many great experiences throughout the year. During neurodiversity week in March some of our students explained very clearly over the intercom to the rest of the school what it is like to be Autistic. This week ended with our very popular cake sale that the students ran themselves. The money raised this year went to the Dyslexia Ireland.
- A number of the girls in Rm 3 and 8 have been involved in extra curricular activities, including badminton, chess and film club. We ended a great year with our annual trip to the Duck pond, followed by a lovely lunch in Bridgewater.

Guidance Counselling

Department members: Angela Flynn and Eve Conaty.

The role of coordinator of department is interchangeable between Angela Flynn and Eve Conaty. There is .92 of an allocation currently for the guidance counsellor and this role is shared in a job share arrangement. Angela and Eve are both present on campus on Tuesdays, Eve covers Mondays and Thursdays; Angela covers Wednesdays and Fridays. Time constraints, the move to 1 hour classes and the increasing mental health issues impacts on the service. The variety of topics and time-related pressure which accompanies some tasks lends itself to working on a collegiate basis.

St Mary's College has a wide and varied student cohort, in terms of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, academic interests and abilities, vocational expectations and post-secondary educational aspirations. St Mary's College is an extremely busy work environment for guidance counsellors. On a day by day and week by week basis, the planned events and actions related to timetabled classes, individual student appointments, care-meetings etc. are added to in an on-going fashion by incidental meetings with Management, Year Heads, Subject Teachers, Emergency student referrals, and AEN Department collaboration. One-to-One Guidance. All students in St. Mary's College have access to a guidance counsellor on a one-to-one basis if they require for three main reasons

Personal and Social: This encompasses developmental skills crucial to the students' personal growth and wellbeing which impact their education and careers focus, e.g. self-awareness, decision making skills, coping strategies during times of emotional difficulty.

Educational: This is developmental and would include such areas as subject/course choices, subject level, motivation and learning, study skills, learning related problems, psychometric testing.

Vocational: includes areas such as employment rights and duties, job opportunities, vocational education and training, further education, job and interview preparation, career research and career / course information, and assessment tools to assist with decision making in this area.

Planning and Preparation

Weekly planning meetings take place between Ms. Flynn and Ms. Conaty. These were used to review Guidance Provision to all year groups and individual students and plan classes, activities and psychometric testing. Weekly meetings between the Guidance Department and school management are held, whereby both individual student needs and those of the whole school are discussed. Both guidance counsellors attended supervision times during the year. Both Guidance Counsellors continue to engage in regular CPD events to remain abreast of developments in our area.

GUIDANCE PROVISION AT JUNIOR CYCLE

Introduction of Junior Cycle Guidance Related Learning Programme. We continued to roll out the introduction of the NCGE developed Junior Cycle Guidance Related Learning Programme that began in 2020/21 with first year students, This year lessons were delivered to all students from Form 1 to Form 3.

Guidance Counselling

GUIDANCE PROVISION AT SENIOR CYCLE

Form 4

Transition year students completed My Future Choices career and aptitude testing in January and were provided with individual printed reports and follow up discussion and review workshops with Ms. Flynn during class time. They also receive classroom and individual assistance in making subject choices for senior cycle. Other elements of the Guidance Curriculum are delivered to Form 4 students by the TY co-ordinator Ms. O'Dea. All TY students completed career investigations and work experience. Individual students attended Guidance Counselling sessions for personal, educational and vocational guidance. All students completed the Myfuturechoices workbook as part of the psychometric and interest profiling. Furthermore, the results of these set of tests are now uploaded to their student files on VS Ware.

Form 5

Each form 5 class received 6 classes of career guidance. The purpose of these classes is to encourage self-reflection and exploration in terms of students' own interests, aptitudes and abilities; to bring these various aspects together to consider what path(s) they may take and to provide the opportunity for students to become familiar with research tools relating to career guidance

The 5th year module relies heavily on self-reflection in order to help students explore the above topics and how they relate to individual's future options. All 5th years also completed LCVP modules this year.

Form 6

All sixth years take Career Guidance for one hour each week. Students are informed in class and individual meetings were scheduled to support students with the following –

HEAR/DARE applications

Scholarships

CAO applications

PLC applications

UCAS applications

European Colleges and Courses

Apprenticeships

Grants and other bursaries



Transition Year

Transition Year Co-Ordinator: Elizabeth O'Dea

Transition Year Core Team: Ian Carter Conor Mansell Abbie Molloy

Year Head: Elaine Sweeney

Planning & Preparation:

The Core Team began planning the programme in March 2024 and held regular planning meetings throughout the academic year.

Assessment & Learning:

The aims of the Transition Year Programme include learning new skills for maturity, senior cycle and adult life. Therefore, the programme and its assessment methods focus on giving students opportunities to:

- take responsibility for their own learning
- develop increased social competence
- practise inter-disciplinary skills
- build confidence and resilience by trying new things

Transition Year students build up credits throughout the year through:

- subject and module assessments
- programme participation
- developing an E-Portfolio
- work experience evaluations & reflections
- end of year interview

These credits are collated to comprise a TY award for each student. The students' participation and achievements are celebrated at a Graduation ceremony in May.

Students' TY timetables rotate every two months to allow students a wide breadth of experiences. The subjects are made up of three main elements:

core subjects (English, Irish, Maths, RE, languages, Microsoft)

Leaving Certificate sampling

TY specific modules

We are hugely indebted to the talents and generosity of our staff to be able to offer an innovative variety of TY specific modules such as: Floristry, Young Scientist, GAA Future Leaders, Coding, Chinese Studies, Performance Arts, Sustainable Design, Mini-Company, Philosophy, European Studies, Global Studies, Interior Design, Bodyright, Child Care and so on.

We also enjoyed working with outside facilitators as part of our timetable. This allowed students to sample Rugby, Dance and TRX each week and to go out in the community to experience new settings.

Transition Year

Teaching & Learning Focus

The Core Team continue to monitor recent years' focus on inclusion and creating the correct conditions for the development of interpersonal skills. The chosen strategies, namely multiple class lists, seating plans, lessons that promote pro-social behaviours etc, received positive feedback from students in their one-to-one meetings with the Co-ordinator.

The Core Team led an audit of our current Programme, to assess what changes are needed to bring it in line with the new TY Programme Statement. The Co-ordinator attended an Oide webinar in September. The Co-ordinator and Deputy Principal attended CPD at Enniscorthy Education Centre in November and the Co-ordinator travelled to Enniscorthy again in the Spring for the final CPD in the series. The Core Team presented to school leadership and led the staff in a workshop in January and February, respectively. This audit has generated new ideas for TY going forward and revealed small changes that will bring our programme into line with the new Statement. The innovations we have introduced over the past five years have placed us in an excellent position to satisfy the needs of the new statement.



Some of the main focuses of the TY Programme Statement include:

- Link to new Senior Cycle
- Student Portfolio
- Final Reflection Piece
- Career Readiness
- Student led collaborative action on sustainability
- Community/Social Involvement/Placement
- Acknowledging & celebrating a range of student achievements

There are elements of all of the above in our current Programme and the Core Team will continue to develop strategies to lead the slight shifts in focus required. For example, the Core Team continue to personalise the TY Journal and will include accessible one page worksheets on all the Student Dimensions of the new Programme Statement, in order to make the changes tangible for both students and staff.

Transition Year

Student Voice

The students chose the theme of FRIENDSHIP as their theme. The class Tutors facilitated a display of this theme, representing every student in the year.

A student Friendship Committee was formed to promote the theme. The Committee organised a day of events in January, to re-boot the theme for the new year. The year group was divided into different groupings to provide opportunities to talk with new people. These groups played a games tournament in the town.



A student media team collated bulletins describing Significant Learning Events. The group also set up an Instagram account. The team also engaged in whole school events, such as conducting interviews with the participants of Culture Day. We were delighted to welcome past pupil and journalist Meghan O'Hallorhan back to St. Mary's, to do a workshop with the Media Team, inspiring their approach.

Throughout the year, the students made a number of suggestions to the Core Team relating to events in the programme. Some of the Significant Learning Events scheduled in May were in direct response to these suggestions by the students.

Students were given class time on a regular basis to review the Significant Learning Events and modules.

We also built on the success of the last number of years whereby more and more of the graduation night is planned and performed by the students. Two students presented the Graduation ceremony while twenty seven students made speeches. Student teams also prepared a slideshow, two musical items and a 'Mock Awards'.

Community Engagement

The TY programme included collaborations with other organisations in our community through rotating timetabled modules: Paired Reading at St. John's SNS and Sunbeam House. In our Gaisce programme and Geography module, we collaborated with the CBS and Tidy Towns for community clean ups.

We also worked with Wicklow County Council and Sports Partnership Ireland to offer a BadmintonTEEN coaching course to a group of students. The selected students received coaching accreditation from Badminton Ireland, attended the Irish Badminton Open and then used their skills to coach Form 2 Wellbeing classes, as well as run a session with our Sunbeam colleagues. Following on from this success, we secured an introduction to Tennis programme where students attended Arklow Lawn Tennis Club for twelve weeks.

The Co-Ordinator, a representative from the AEN Team and two representative students, attended the launch of Arklow Autism Friendly town initiative at the Arklow Bay in April. We look forward to supporting the campaign in the months ahead.

Finally, the real changes brought about by our collaboration with Sunbeam Services were acknowledged in an AIB Future Sparks Award. This award acknowledges the work the students and our friends at Sunbeam Services have done to campaign for social justice in our community. We were delighted to accept this award from AIB at the TY Graduation in May.

Transition Year



TY with Sunbeam & Cllr. Miriam Murphy at Arklow Municipal District Chamber

Significant Learning Events

Off – Campus Events/Tours

- Gaisce Practice hike, Arklow
- SHINE Festival, inspiring and empowering young women
- Croke Park, Dublin
- Model EU at St. Killian's German School for EU Studies students
- Teen Turn for Young Scientist students
- Secret Tour, Dublin
- Sci Fest, Carlow
- Google, Dublin
- BT Young Scientist, RDS
- PE Expo, Carlow
- Kayaking, Arklow
- European Ambassador Schools Programme Awards at Europe House, Dublin
- Asian Harvest Chinese Studies Celebration
- Fighting Words Creative Writing Workshop, Arklow Library
- Badminton Open, National Indoor Arena
- Introduction to Tennis course, Arklow Tennis Club
- Microsoft Finalists, Microsoft Dreamspace Dublin



Transition Year

Overnight Tours

- Adventure Hike and overnight stay at Glendalough Hostel
- Carlingford Adventure Centre

Guest Speakers

- Joy Winston, Gaisce Development Officer
- Fiona Downs, Volunteer Wicklow
- Jill Lush, Enterprise Board
- Meghan O'Hallorhan, journalist with News Talk
- The National Parks Geography and Ecology of Glendalough
- Viewpoint Advocacy Group, Sunbeam Services
- Speech & Language Therapist, Sunbeam Services
- Marie Keating Foundation Cancer Prevention
- CPR Demo by Arklow First Responders in association with Coral Leisure
- Billy Kelleher, MEP



On-Site Courses/Workshops/Events

- Induction & Battle of the TY Classes
- Coding Camp five day course
- BadminTEEN coaching course with Badminton Ireland
- Code Plus Women in Tech Webinar
- Friendship Day, organized by student Friendship Committee
- Self-Defence Course with Close Encounters
- Law Education Day & mock trial with Law Ed
- African Drumming & Dance Day with Jaba Jaba Jembe
- Think Languages Capoeira workshop celebrating sharing languages and cultures
- Career Profiling & Aptitude Testing & results with school guidance team
- Dave's Jungle, Zoo & Reptile Show
- Exhibition Evening
- Portfolio Interviews
- St. Mary's Sci Fest
- Mini EPAS Interviews for Junior European Ambassadors
- Irish Aid Global Development Workshop
- RNL Workshop
- Mini Company School Fair
- European Studies School Food Fair
- GAA Future Leaders Festival for TYs
- Sunbeam tea party & fun Badminton
- Healthy Relationships Workshop with Anu, Bray Women's Refuge
- Debunking the Myths, RCSI sexual health webinar
- Engineering Workshop with Eirgrid
- Liadain O'Sullivan Law Graduate, series of debating/public speaking workshops

Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme



Department Members:

- Deirdre Dalton, Moya McGrath–Doyle, Sandra Carr.
- All 5th year students entering senior cycle from September 2023, regardless of subject choice, qualify to participate in the Leaving Certificate Programme. (except for the Applied Maths class) There were three 6th year LCVP classes

Planning & Preparation

- Detailed schemes of work for the delivery of the Link Modules are on the LCVP Department SharePoint.
- Schemes of work are updated with new resources on ongoing basis. Sharing of learning experiences & resources and ongoing collaboration has always been key to the delivery of the LCVP Link Modules.

Meetings:

- Subject planning meetings were held in late August to review and revise the schemes of work for the three LCVP year groups. Meetings (formal & informal) are held on a regular basis throughout the year to review progress on term schemes of work and student progress on portfolio work. Ongoing collaboration and support are key to the delivery of the LCVP activities and LCVP portfolio preparation.

Assessment & Learning

- Students type up portfolio reports on a range of practical and vocational activities that they engage in as part of the Link Modules. Link Modules teachers use formative assessment when correcting these reports and giving feedback to students. Students then use this feedback to improve their portfolio report to maximise grade potential for final portfolio submission.
- Students focus on exam questions based on relevant vocational activities once these activities have been completed. This exam question work is part of the debrief and reflection work, post-activity.
- 5th year students do a Summer exam comprising of Link Module exam questions.
- 6th year students do a mock LCVP Link Modules exam.
- The portfolio of reports is submitted to SEC in early March of 6th year and is worth 60% of the final Leaving Certificate subject grade.
- The written exam element of the Leaving Certificate assessment takes place in early May of 6th year. This written exam comprises 40% of the final Leaving Certificate subject grade.

Gaeilge

Department Members: Róisín McGrath, Aislinn Cullen, Sandy Carr, Michaela Smyth, Mary Dalton, Cillian O Boyle, Aoife O Brien

PME Student Teachers : Eimear Kavanagh, Katie Cooke

Planning Meetings: The Irish Department meet both formally and informally. We updated our plans at the beginning of the year. We regularly touched base regarding different year groups – with ideas regarding assessments and changes we would make to future plans on experiences with the various groups.

Assessment: Students are assessed with end of chapter tests or small projects, both group and individual, with individual class Kahoot quizzes, close exercises and exam paperwork to assess their knowledge of each topic. Students completed presentations and roleplays as part of assessments. Written opinion pieces and grammar exercises are also practiced as it is a big component of the Junior Cycle Exam.

Junior Certificate Level: Second Year Students are divided into higher and ordinary level classes in September of third year. Students developed their written, aural and oral skills throughout the year. Second year students completed CBA 1 this year and Third Year Students completed CBA2 this year. They completed their Mock Exam in February.

Transition Year: Students continued to develop their written and aural skills throughout the year. In preparation for Leaving Cert, a large emphasis was put on developing their oral skills and in developing a love for Irish literature through studying drama, poetry and a specialist module on Irish folklore. The classes got to appreciate the use of the Irish language through Seachtain na Gaeilge and through creating posters, quizzes and through collaborating with one another. The assessment element included an oral exam, presenting projects and through exams during the Year.

Senior Cycle Level Fifth Year: A significant amount of the course is now completed, with students taking a listening, essay question and oral exam on top of their scheduled written summer exam. Students completed an oral, aural and written examination at the end of the year.

Sixth Year: The sixth years completed their orals over the Easter break which is 40% of their exam. They worked very hard in the lead up to the exams in June.

Gaeilge 24: Gaeilge 24 happened on the 14th of November this year with 30 students taking part in the challenge. Students raised money for Conradh na Gaeilge through speaking Gaeilge for an entire 24 hours. **Seachtain na Gaeilge:** Seachtain na Gaeilge was packed with events this year including a first year céilí with the CBS, a Tráth na gCeist for the second years and a morning of cóisir agus craic with the 5th years. There was also in class activities like jewellery making, quizzes, music and song. As per recent years we had a trad session at lunch time during the week also. **Ciorcal Cainte:** The Ciorcal met on Thursday lunchtimes for caint agus comhra with their peers proved useful especially in the lead up to oral exams. **Díospóireacht:** A junior team took part in Díospóireacht Gael Linn. They practiced every Monday lunch time and got through to the Leinster final.

Gaeilge



English

Department Members: Sheila Clancy, Siobhan Doyle, Chloe Giltrap, Tim Hicks, Joanne Logue, Aisling Molloy, Elizabeth O’Dea, Eileen O’Neill

English is a compulsory subject studied at both Junior and Senior Cycle, with some students also receiving additional tuition and guidance from the Learning Support Team. Junior Cycle students are grouped according to the principle of mixed ability. Transition Year students are taught in mixed ability classes. At Leaving Certificate level, students are streamed into either Higher or Ordinary Level classes in fifth year, with students encouraged to take Higher Level where possible. The Higher Level classes are formed by assigning an equal number of students from each grade cohort (according to descriptors awarded in the new Junior Cycle examination) to each class. Concurrent classes at Senior Cycle are appreciated to allow movement between levels and to allow opportunities for teachers to share resources or to team-teach when possible.

Planning & Preparation : A number of formal and informal meetings were held during the year. In these meetings we selected suitable texts for our classes, especially at Leaving Certificate level as the texts change on an annual basis. Subject Learning and Assessment Review meetings (SLAR) were held to share exemplars of student work and collaborate on grades for classroom-based assessments (CBAs)

Assessment: Christmas and summer examinations are set collaboratively by teachers for each year group with all students in a year group taking the same exam. Provision is made for students of all academic levels. These exams complement assessment by teachers on a daily and weekly basis from written assignments, oral presentations and project work. Two CBAs take place at Junior Cycle, one in second year (Oral presentation) and one in third year (a collection of texts). A broad range of poetry, novels, drama, non-literary texts as well as digital media form a core component of the curriculum. In addition, narrative and personal writing form an essential element of the course. The curriculum sets out clear expectations for students, across the three integrated strands of oral language, reading and writing.

Transition Year :An objective of Transition Year is to afford students the opportunity to develop a more personal appreciation of the English language and literature. While focus is maintained on reading, writing, and the study of drama, fiction, and poetry, students engaged in a diverse range of modules, such as Creative Writing. Oral literacy is built into many TY modules with students working on their presentation skills across the programme. TY students also took part in Fighting Words creative writing workshops. In addition, they engaged in film studies, oral presentation of projects and writing book reviews. Many students included examples of projects they had completed in English in their TY portfolios. Transition Year students became very involved in the local library where they did work experience. They also worked as literacy mentors to primary school students in St. John’s N.S. as part of a Paired Reading module. A group of TY students also attended debating mentoring tutorials with form student and Law Graduate, Liadain O’Suilleabhan.

‘King Lear’ at the Gate Theatre : In March, the Form 6 students attended a performance of ‘King Lear’ at the Gate Theatre to support their understanding of and personal engagement with the play. This title was chosen by all Higher-Level teachers as the students’ single text since it was possible to bring the students to view a performance of the play. This will benefit the students’ essay writing as they can now compare and contrast the act of reading a play versus seeing a performance and gain a greater understanding of the dramatic process.

English

World Book Day: To celebrate World Book Day on March 6th, our first-year students attended a creative writing workshop hosted by Arklow library. Ruth Frances Long, a published local author, spoke about the recent success of the romantasy genre and shared valuable insights into the writing process and the world of publishing. Long is the author of *A Crack in Everything*, amongst other acclaimed works. This was a fantastic opportunity for students to explore new approaches to creative writing and storytelling.

Senior Cycle: Leaving Certificate English invites students into rich experiences with language so that they become fluent and thoughtful users of language and more aware of its significance in their lives. It develops a range of literacy and oral skills in a variety of areas, personal, social, and cultural. Students develop a wide range of skills and concepts. These will allow them to interpret and enjoy a range of material so that they become independent learners who can operate independently in the world beyond the school. At Senior level, students study a broad range of texts; film, drama, novels and poetry as well as the timeless Shakespeare classics.

Science Research Associates (SRA) literacy programme for 1st years: Throughout the school year, each class group engaged with the SRA literacy programme. This literacy reading programme is designed to promote independent reading, build confidence, and improve comprehension across a range of abilities.

They read independently at an appropriate level and pace to complete comprehension and vocabulary questions. They self-corrected using key cards and tracked their progress using record sheets. This allowed them to reflect on their learning and continue honing their SQR reading strategy (S = Survey, Q = Question, R = Read).

This programme is implemented to support reading fluency, vocabulary development and self-monitoring skills, while encouraging personal engagement with texts. Over the course of several weeks, students took ownership over their reading progress in a structured and enjoyable way.

Read for Pleasure, Read for Life : Our Drop Everything and Read initiative has continued to be a success with our Junior and Transition Year classes. Following on from its success in previous years and due to popular demand, we now allocate thirty minutes class time each week to reading for pleasure. Students may bring their own book or choose one from our library.

School Library Creative Writing Competitions: This year our Library Committee & St Vincent de Paul group held a writing competition before Christmas. The theme was 'The Wonder of Christmas' and students were asked to submit a piece of writing which conveyed the message that Christmas may not be the same for everybody. With a high standard of entries, our three winners ranged from Form 5 to Form 1.

Maths

Department Members

Niamh Ní Bhroin, Abbie Molloy, Eimear Ryan, Breda O'Connor, Breda Dunbar, Conor Mansell, Gary Donovan, Lora Doyle

Planning and Preparation:

Department members met regularly to discuss planning and course progressions as well as devising and refining learning experiences for various classes.

Assessment and Learning

The maths department liaise closely to set common end-of-topic tests for relevant year groups.

House exams are held at both Christmas and Summer.

Mock examinations are held in February for Form 3 and Form 6.

Junior Cycle

Planning documents in Sharepoint give detailed sequential breakdown of topics covered.

CBA'S

The Second Years completed CBA 1 over a three-week period from March 25th - April 11th. CBA 1 is a mathematical investigation where students come up with a problem which will show their knowledge of some of the maths topics which have been covered in class. Students chose a wide variety of problems and engaged very well with the assessment.

Third year students completed CBA 1 also when they were in Form 2 – due to covid there is only a requirement for one CBA to be completed over the two years. This investigation was completed over a three-week period during the 2023/24 academic year. SLAR has been held and results entered on VShare.

Practical Skills Gained

- Ability to research, read, analyse and extract key information
- Thinking creatively and critically
- Learning to interpret and analyse numerical data
- Managing finances
- Exploring options and alternatives
- Working and learning with others
- Problem solving skills

Transition Year

Our Transition years are currently banded comprising of two higher level classes and one ordinary level class. This allows us to better cater to their learning needs and to provide a suitable challenge. The classes currently undertake three modules and rotate to a different teacher at the end of each module. The higher-level groups study an Applied Mathematics

Module as well as an Algebra/Problem Solving Module. The Ordinary level class availed of opportunities to revisit and improve on many of their junior cycle skills and procedures, as well as exploring many new practical topics and their applications in real life. An emphasis was also placed on improving logic and problem-solving skills. Students were also afforded the opportunity to complete project work on a chosen topic in maths. Some project topics were 'Maths in Sport', 'Women in Maths' and 'Geometry in the Real World'. Examples of student work can be seen below.

Maths

Senior Cycle

Planning documents on SharePoint give a detailed sequential breakdown of topics covered.

Applied Mathematics – Applied Mathematics is taken as an extra subject (8th Subject) for pupils at St Marys with a particular aptitude or interest in Mathematics. Pupils study the subject for two periods a week during 5th Year and continue this during 6th year but with an additional one hour lesson afterschool.

Our current 6th years are the third cohort to study the new Applied Mathematics curriculum which has seen them undertake course work worth 20% of their overall grade. The new curriculum also allows for no choice on the final paper which is a big departure from the traditional course.

Pupils are also given a taster course of Applied Mathematics in Transition Year to allow them to gain insight and experience in the subject before choosing their subjects.

Students are streamed into higher-level and ordinary-level in 5th year based on Junior Cycle levels and results. This usually leads to two higher-level and two ordinary-level classes in 5th year. Both pairs of classes are mixed ability groups with one of the higher-level classes becoming an ordinary-level class in 6th year to facilitate students that no longer wish to continue at higher level. This class becomes a fast-paced ordinary-level class. Teachers of

both classes ensure a common scheme of work so that students joining the ordinary-level class have not missed any topics.

Additional Educational Needs

Support to students with additional educational needs takes the form of classroom support for all, group or individual withdrawal or in-class teaching. Subject teachers have first-line responsibility for the educational needs of all students in their classes. They are informed of the educational needs of their students and teach accordingly by implementing teaching approaches and methodologies that facilitate the meaningful inclusion of students with additional educational needs. Support teachers work with students while liaising with the class maths teacher and with close reference to specific needs, targets and strategies in the individual support files.

Initiatives

The Maths Learning Centre reopened this academic year and was held every Monday during lunchtime. Students from all year groups attended to seek help with specific topics or questions.

The Maths Learning Centre was introduced by the maths department in 2023-2024 and was continued this year. Every Monday, during lunchtime, a group of maths teachers make themselves available to assist students with any mathematical difficulties they may have. It works as a drop-in centre where a student might “drop in” for a few minutes or the entire duration of the period, to ask assistance on a particular question or topic. The striking feature of the Maths Learning Centre to date is the wide range of student abilities that are presenting for assistance. Students from Leaving Cert Higher Level to our First-Year students are availing of this opportunity on a weekly basis. It is a safe space for any student questions on any maths topic and benefits the student who may not be comfortable in asking the question in a whole class situation.

Maths

Pi Quiz 2025

Eight of our students attended the annual Junior Cycle Pi Quiz in Glenart College in March. They got to put to minds to the test amongst a field of very skilled mathematicians from a number of schools. They reprPi Quiz 2025



St. Mary's
Presents:



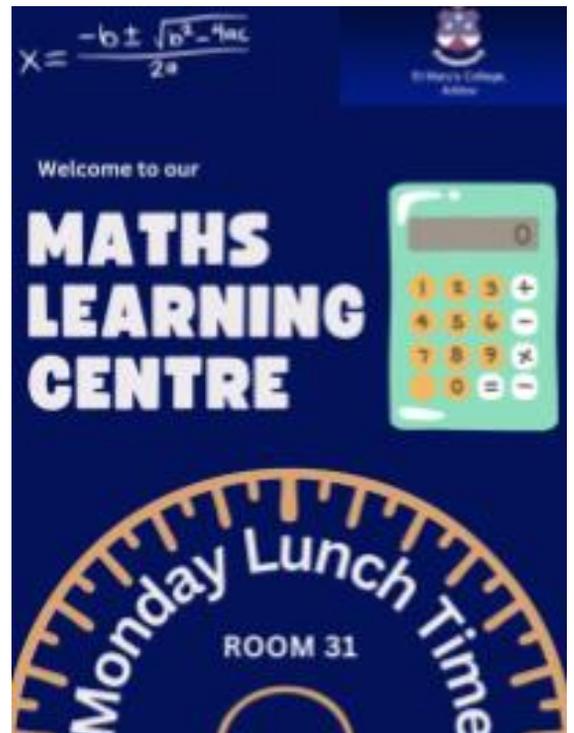
When: Thursday 17/04/24

Time: 12:15

Place: Room 26



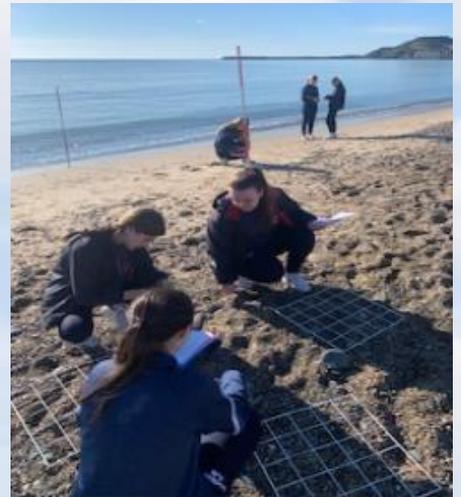
★ Prize: Cartoon Voucher ★



Geography

Department Members: Valerie Power, Laura Reck, Sandra Carr

Planning meetings: The Geography department met both formally and informally. We updated our plans at the beginning of the year. We regularly touched base regarding different year groups with ideas regarding assessment and CBAs. We had a SLAR for CBA1 'Geography in the News' for our second years in April 2025. They chose a recent significant geographical event from the past 12 months, where they linked processes studied in the book to real life events and researched the Social, Economic and Environmental impacts as well as the Geographical processes involved. Third year students were exempt from CBA2 this year. **Assessment:** • Students are assessed with end of chapter tests or projects, both group and individual, with individual class kahoot quizzes, cloze exercises and group discussions to assess their knowledge of each topic. • Students also take Christmas and Summer exams – with State Exam classes sitting mocks in February and the State Exams in June. **Senior Cycle:** • The number of students opting to take leaving certificate geography is higher than ever. This is a testament to the popularity of the subject and success rates in academic achievement.



Third year students performed well in their mocks and are encouraged by the recent announcement from the Minister of Education regarding grade percentage bands. The hope is that more students will gain distinction or higher merit due to the reforms.

The geographical investigation took place on South Beach Arklow on 17th September 2025.

Students investigated the coastal processes of transportation and deposition. A successful fieldtrip was enjoyed by all, and completed projects will be digitally uploaded to the SEC. **Junior Cycle:** The first years studied Physical Geography along with learning to read and interpret OS Maps.

Second years had a busy year covering weather, climate, population and migration topics along with completing their CBA 1.

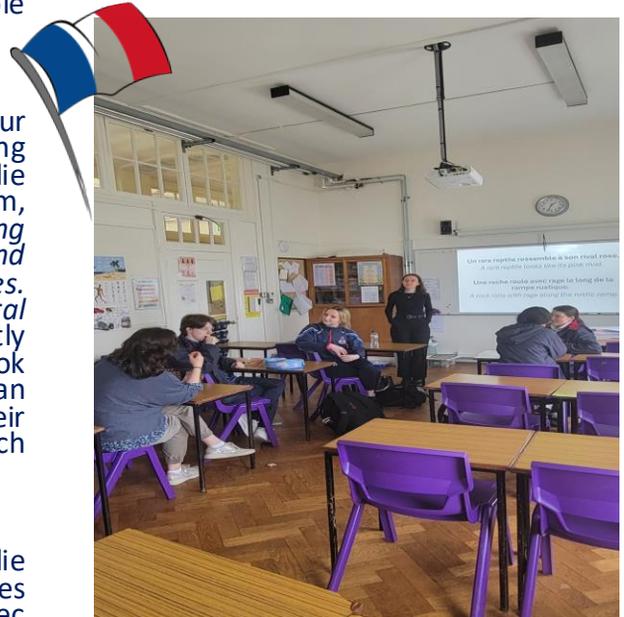
French

Learning Outcomes in Spoken Interaction in MFL 2024-25

This year, particular emphasis has been placed on developing students' confidence and competence in spoken interaction. Through focused classroom practice, students are supported in achieving learning outcomes which encourage them to engage in conversation using simple phrases and sentences to express feelings, opinions, and information. A variety of interactive activities—such as paired dialogues, mini role-plays, and short presentations—have been integrated into lessons, helping students to become more comfortable communicating in real time.

We are fortunate to have Julie Collombar, our enthusiastic French language assistant, working with all year groups to enrich this focus. Julie brings energy and authenticity to the classroom, supporting MFL learning outcomes *by encouraging students to communicate effectively and appropriately for different audiences and purposes. Her dynamic approach has included games, oral drills, and informal chats that students greatly enjoy.* In addition, the French Club, which took place every Wednesday at lunchtime, provided an informal space for students to practise their spoken French while exploring aspects of French culture in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

Grâce à l'énergie et à la gentillesse de Julie Collombar et Samantha Pendlebury tous les groupes ont eu l'occasion de parler français avec plus de confiance et de plaisir. Un grand merci à Julie pour tout son enthousiasme, sa générosité et son sourire merveilleux !

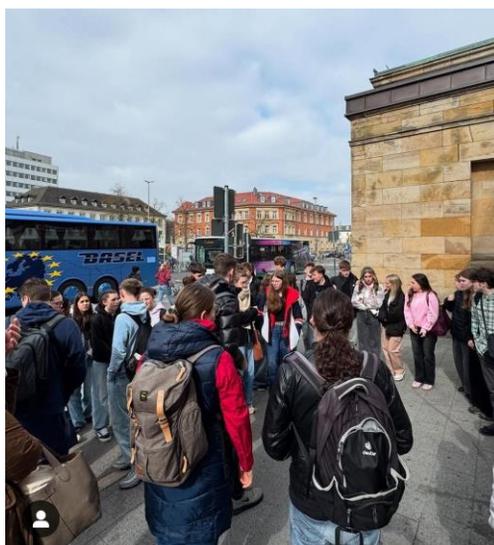


German

Department Members: Siobhan Doyle, Susan Masterson, Angela Flynn.

German Exchange:

In March, we teamed up with the CBS and 9 of our students travelled to the Ursuline Secondary School in Würzburg for a week long language exchange. Our students attended classes, visited local sites and spent time improving their German with their host families. In April, the German students came to our school for a week and enjoyed camogie lessons, a historical walking tour of Arklow, a reception with the local town council and trips to Dublin and Glendalough. Many life long friendships were forged and our girls can't wait to return to Würzburg next year.



Classroom activities:

Back in the classroom, we took part in the European Language Day, hosted German breakfasts, and kept up to date with German current affairs in our senior classes. For Open Day our students cooked sausages to welcome visitors to the language room and shared their experience of learning a language. Our TY students took part in a fashion show at the end of the year, making TikTok videos of each other describing their 'specially selected' outfits. We ended the year with the news that we'd be welcoming a German Language Assistant in September and look forward to working with them in the next academic year.

Business

Department members: Moya McGrath-Doyle, Deirdre Dalton, Breda Dunbar, Eimear Ryan and Lora Doyle.

The Business Studies Department at St. Mary's College continues to offer a dynamic and engaging learning experience across both Junior and Senior Cycle. Throughout the year, students participated in a range of innovative initiatives that supported both curriculum learning and real-world application. Junior Cycle students explored key themes such as enterprise, economics, and sustainability. Our 1st Year students designed impactful posters to raise awareness about sustainability, demonstrating creativity and a strong sense of social responsibility. Classes also conducted in-depth research into how businesses can operate sustainably, linking classroom theory with contemporary global challenges. At Senior Cycle, students continued to develop critical thinking and analytical skills, with a focus on ethical business practices and current economic issues.

A particular highlight this year was students' exploration of the National Budget. They researched its contents and gained a deeper understanding of how government decisions impact individuals, households, and businesses across the country. This provided valuable insight into public finance and encouraged students to think critically about the economic environment they live in.

The department remains committed to fostering business acumen, environmental awareness, and active citizenship in all our students.

Transition Year Student Enterprise Programme

25 TY students participated in the Student Enterprise Programme over the course of the year. Eleven different mini-companies were set up during September and October. Products produced included home baked cakes and treats, hot chocolate bomb kits, home-made body scrubs, stickers and keychains, and wooden decorated discs. While all businesses sold goods through social media the girls also organised two major sales events. The first event was a Christmas Fair in the school in November and then in December the class organised an afternoon in the local Bridgewater Shopping Centre. Over the course of the year the class had three mentoring sessions with Jill Lush from County Wicklow Enterprise Board – these proved very helpful to help generate business ideas, to provide guidance on marketing strategies and finally to guide them through the preparation of a Business Report. Well done to all of our budding entrepreneurs.



Politics and Society

Department Members: Moya McGrath-Doyle, Joanne Stapleton.
5th year and 6th year class.

Our 6th Year Politics class had the unique opportunity to meet Tánaiste Micheál Martin in Arklow. He engaged deeply with the students, showing great interest in their insights and ideas. It was an inspiring experience for the girls to contribute their voices to the political conversation and to witness the election campaign up close. A truly memorable day for all involved!



We were honoured to welcome Malcolm Byrne as a guest speaker today. Our students thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to engage with him in meaningful discussions about politics. His insights and approachable style inspired lively conversations and deepened their understanding of the subject. It was an invaluable experience for everyone involved many thanks to Malcolm for taking time out of his election campaign to visit us here in St. Mary's.



We had a special visit from the Sinn Fein leader Mary Lou McDonald. She gave an insightful talk to the students which was enjoyed by all.

History

Department Members: Bella Byrne, Sheila Clancy, Ciaran Deay, Karen Fanning, Eimear Kavanagh, Roisin Mc Grath, Niamh Ní Bhroin & Joanne Stapleton.

Provision of the subject in the school.

History is taught at all levels in the school. It is a compulsory subject at Junior Cycle level. It is an optional subject at Leaving Certificate level and there is currently one 5th & one 6th year LC History class. All TY students get a 10 week TY module. A small resource room is available to the Department. All resources are kept here including DVDs, slides, books, and posters. There is also a Department noticeboard.

Planning and Preparation

Formal and informal meetings were held during the year to discuss planning, resources, CBAs, RSRs, assessment and to share relevant information. The biannual trip to Derry for LC History students did not take place but it is hoped to resume it next year. Teachers discussed the year's work and assessment with emphasis on a common approach. The new Junior Cycle style of teaching was also discussed and teachers availed of courses and webinars dedicated to the teaching of this new course.

Teaching and Learning.

Teachers continued to use a wide variety of resources and methodologies in their teaching as well as differentiation, as appropriate. Activities may include direct instruction from the teacher, pair work or group work. The availability of You Tube in classrooms has enhanced the teaching of history as short clips are available on most topics. Teachers use Teams to share links, videos, images, PowerPoints, and other material. Students are encouraged to visit historical sites and events. Students develop new research and historical skills whilst doing CBAs and RSRs. Students completed course work, as per all specifications and are prepared for JC & LC exams. All TY students and Second Year students enjoyed a walking tour of Arklow's historical sites, led by local historian, Jim Rees.

Assessment

Students were assessed during a variety of mediums throughout the year and at the end of each topic. Students sat written papers at Christmas and Summer in 1st, 2nd, 5th year. 3rd & 6th students sat Mock exams. TY students were assessed by project and oral presentation. All JC & LC History students completed course 51 work, CBAs and RSRs, as per specifications. SLARs were held, and all guidelines were followed.

Form 1 participate in 'The Big Dig'

The academic year got off to a busy start when our Form 1 students got to test out what it is like to be an archaeologist today thanks to the @schoolofirisharchaeology who put on "The Big Dig" workshop.

They were shown different artefacts that have been discovered throughout Ireland thanks to the work of archaeologists. They then got a chance to see what they could discover themselves by spending some time in the specially made dig site full of artefacts and interesting items.

This was a great way to link into our study of the past.

History



Second Year Students Learn about the History of their Town

In advance of completing their Classroom Based Assessment, our second-year students enjoyed a tour of Arklow where local historian Jim Reese informed the girls about the historical nature of the town. Students visited the ruins of Arklow Castle where they heard the legend of the ghost of the drummer boy who is said to have haunted the site. They also visited the historic statue of Fr Murphy and learned of the town's significant role in the 1798 Rebellion.



History

Third Years visit Glasnevin Cemetery

Our third year History students enjoyed a trip to the historic Glasnevin Cemetery in March, where they had a guided tour of the cemetery which features the graves of Michael Collins, Daniel O’Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell, Eamonn De Valera, Countess Markiewicz and many more. This visit will prove very beneficial, in terms of their understanding and appreciation of Irish History and their preparation for the Junior Cycle.



F5 History Timeline

This year, Form 5 students explored history like never before — constructing vivid, interactive timelines that brought historical events to life through innovative and fun learning strategies.



Form 6 History complete their RSR

Our Form 6 History class chose a variety of topics for the research study component of the course, varying from family, local, national and international history. They carried out detailed research including visits to the National Archive, interviews with historians and family members along with visits to our local library.



3 Jane Meet the Descendant of Irish Revolutionary Michael Dwyer

The 3 Jane History class were delighted to meet John Buggy on Sept 12th. John is a great, great, great grandson of Michael Dwyer, Wicklow rebel and hero from the 1798 Rebellion. John, visiting from Australia, spoke to the girls about Dwyer's life after he was transported there and how his legacy lives on and is commemorated in Sydney. It was a very memorable visit for all. Well Done to the girls for their engagement and interesting questions.

Science

The Transition Year students in the Young Scientists / Scifest class took part in four Competitions in the school year 2024 / 2025.

Scifest / Teen Turn 2024

The Transition Young Scientist / Scifest class took part in an after schools programme called Teen Turn. This is a charity that promotes girls in STEM.

The students spent every Friday evening from 4.30-6.30 in school preparing projects that they had an interest in, with the assistance of Teen Turn Mentors, both online & in person.

All the projects were submitted to BT Young Scientist. The students worked on their projects for 12 weeks, both inside and outside school. They showcased their projects at the Scifest competition in December at IBM, in Dublin. There were 120 competitors from all over Ireland and St Marys took home two awards on the day.

Aoife O'Neill won 3rd in her category & the Eirgrid Award for her project on Kinetic flooring..

Erin Mills won for her project on Drug Therapies.



BT Young Scientist 2025

Four of the Projects went on to represent St Mary's at BT Young Scientist competition in January 2025.

Jadesola Fatus for her project on Period Poverty. Flow Forward – a one stop hub to Period poverty.

Kirsty Weldon for her Project on Wrist wellness – a device to aid users with previous injuries.

Erin Mills for her project on Drug Therapies: Breaking the cycle: Evaluating the investment in non-addictive alternatives to current medications

Aoife O'Neill for her project on Kinetic Flooring. One Step at a Time; Should We Invest in Kinetic Flooring in Ireland?

Alice Giles from form 5 was also successful with her entry on how moss can eliminate pollution in our rivers.

The girls spent 4 days explaining their projects to thousands of people. They met the President of Ireland, The Taoiseach, the Tanaiste and many other politicians who were blown away by their projects.

Aoife O'Neill was successful in Securing a highly commended for her project on Kinetic Flooring.

Science



Aoife Oneill and Erin Mills meeting the President.



Jadesola Fatus with TD Malcom Byrne.



Kristie Weldon



The BT Girls with the Tanaiste



The BT girls with the Taoiseach

Science

Three of the groups from the Teen turn / Scifest class were asked to showcase their projects at the PE XPO at Sports Ireland Campus in Dublin. Sadhbh Ward, Chloe Byrne & Robyn Keogh attended with their project title VO2 Max :Train Smart, Avoid your next injury. Moya Dempsey & Kate O Sullivan showcased their Project called Row Roe recovery. Kirsty Weldon showcased her project on Wrist Wellness. The students had a great day at the event and met Kellie Harrington.



Sadhbh Ward & Chloe Byrne



Moya, Sadhbh, Chloe & Kirsty

Chemistry

Irish Science Teachers Association Senior Science Quiz 2024

On Thursday, 14th November, three teams represented St. Mary's College at the ISTA Senior Science Quiz in Gorey Community School along with their teacher, Ms. Hemenstall. The evening was enjoyed by all students and featured questions from the Physics, Chemistry, and Biology Leaving Certificate curriculum.

The three teams that competed in the Regional Quiz were made up of - Team A consisting of Tara McLoughlin, Anna Kenny, and Aisling Flusk, Team B consisting of Carrie Short, Áine Kelly, and Maja Kostka, and Team C consisting of Fifi Bentley, Anna Basinska, and Emma Seckington.

There were many prizes won on the night including Studyclix vouchers, selection boxes, books vouchers and Studyclix socks, and the quiz was enjoyed by all!



Art

This year we had the completion of different NAPD funded projects. Stephen Considine worked with our senior Art students on a new school mural. The theme was looking deeper and how we often wear a mask to cover how we are feeling and how we want the world to see us. The students really enjoyed the collaborative process with Stephen and the designing stages of the work. We are very proud of the finished work.



Art

The TY Sustainable Design class worked with the Lott family in 'Remembering Nadine', a fashion show in remembrance of our past pupil Nadine Lott. Nadine was tragically murdered in 2019. Nadine loved fashion, and the events were a huge success. St. Mary's were delighted to be part of such special events in our town to honour Nadine's memory.

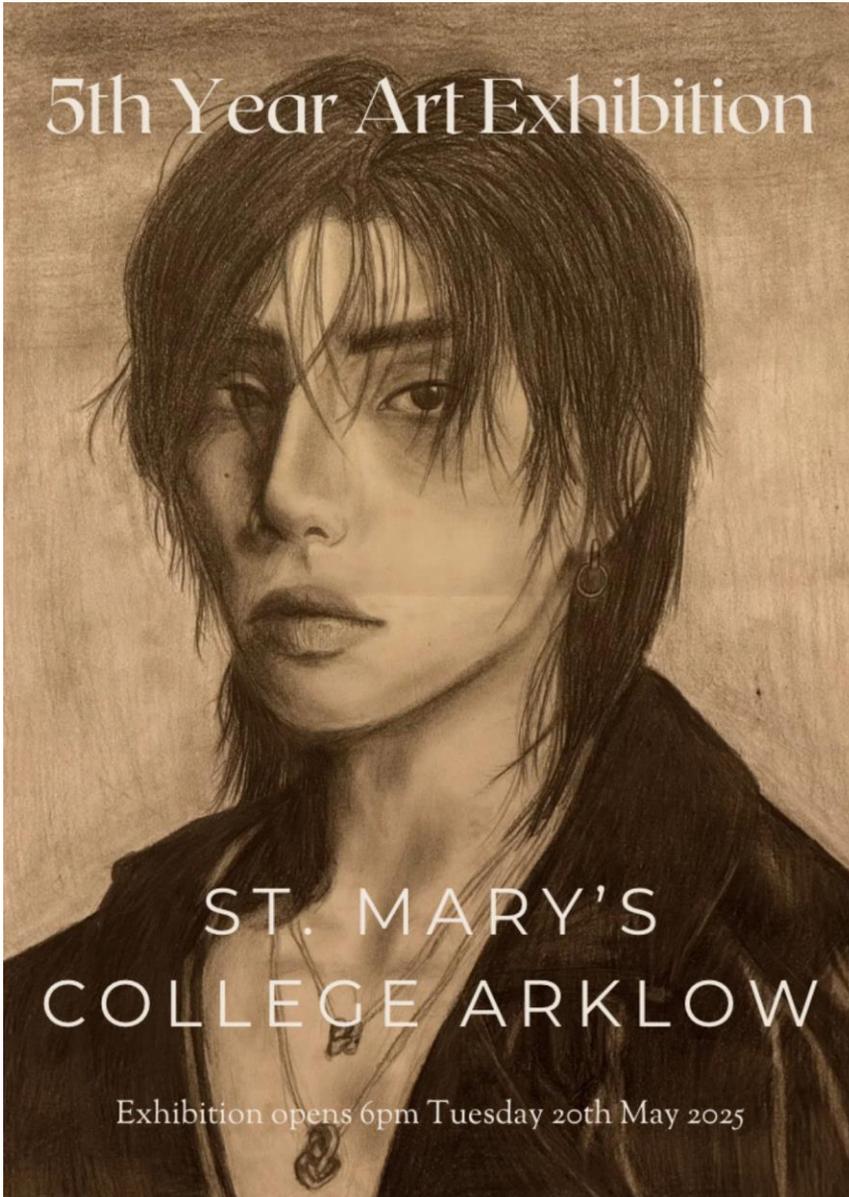
TY students worked with Caithriona King as part of a creative engagement workshop. Galway based Cathriona is an award winning milliner and is an expert in her field. The students had a great day of creative designing with her.



TY students took part in a BLAST initiative, where they worked with Wexford artist Trish Middleton. They explored a sense of place and created a mixed media map of Arklow using fibre, needle felting and paint. The work proudly hanging in place in Maris Stella.



Art



TY students Blathnaid Gunawardana and Helena Freiin Von Tiesenhausen, from the Sustainable Design class made it to the national final of the ReLove Fashion competition, held in the ReDiscovery Centre in Ballymun. A huge achievement for the girls, they created a boned corset and matching skirt embellished with roses and beads.



To finish out our Form 5 year, Mr Carter and Ms Murray's classes curated and presented their work for exhibition in the Arklow Library.

Our Form 3 Art students finished the year with a collaborative mural with the junior students of SS Michael and Peter Junior school. The students added vibrancy and fun to the walls of the junior playground and enjoyed the experience of working with the primary school.



Music

Department Members:

Michaela Smyth, Laura Reck, Christine Steele

Planning Meetings:



The music department meet both formally and informally. We updated our plans at the beginning of the year. We touch base regularly regarding assessments, practical's, School Musical, orchestra, choir, traditional music group and changes we would make to the future plans based on experiences with the various groups. M. Smyth and M. Reck completed two SLAR meetings for both 2nd and 3rd year CBA's. Meetings were held in preparation for Arklow Music Festival and graduation services.

Assessment:

Students are assessed with end of chapter tests or small projects, both groups and individual as well as class exercises and exam paper work to assess their knowledge of each topic. Students are assessed on practical work throughout each year. Students have a class a week dedicated to practical and complete a practical assessment at Christmas and Summer. Composing exercises are also practiced as it is a significant component of their Junior Cycle and Leaving Cert. exam.

Students take Christmas and Summer exams- with State Exam classes sitting Mocks in February and the State Exams in June. Practical exams for Leaving Cert. music students took place on Thursday 3rd & Friday 4th of April. Junior cycle students were examined for their Practical's on 25th & 26th of March.

Assessment:

Students are assessed using the following formative and summative assessment methods: Continuous assessment (CBA's), practical exams, project work, end of term exams.

Junior Cycle

First year students settled in very well this year. There are two classes in first year. They completed sampling for 6 weeks before choosing this subject. Students worked on practical work learning the recorder and ukulele and also playing all their own various instruments. This engaging and dynamic programme introduced students to topics such as Music theory, instruments of the orchestra, Irish Music, music performance and composition and TV and Film music.

Second year students completed CBA1 this year. They will be the 4th group to take the new Junior Cycle paper. Their CBA was a 'Compositional Portfolio'. The portfolio included a collection of student's musical ideas in many different styles and through different mediums. Students are beginning to become more familiar with the new format of the exam. Students worked on their practical throughout the year in preparation for the state exam next year. Students composed Music in response to a stimulus, to advertise a product, to accompany an existing text and to convey a particular mood. It was a really enjoyable experience for students as it allowed them to explore their musical identity through their unique and creative compositions. Students worked on improving their composing and aural skills throughout the year. Students had a visit from professional traditional player Mark Redmond as part of Irish traditional music on their junior cycle course. Students had the opportunity to try out some instruments.

Music



Third year students completed their CBA2 this year- the 'Programme Note'. There were 2 classes of 3rd yr music this year. This 'Programme note' is linked to their Practical exam and included information about their pieces. The students worked on their practical's throughout the year, culminating in their Practical exam on March 25th & 26th . Students this year performed two pieces of their choosing and an unseen test. Students developed their listening, composition, and performance skills over the course of the year. This group of students are the 4th set of students to sit the new Junior Cycle music exam this June.

Music

Transition year students completed an 8-week module. They were introduced to a wide range of topics and concepts within Music. They started their music classes with the creation of a class playlist – this was used throughout the module as background music whilst completing both individual and group work tasks. They then delved into the world of musical theatre, analysing and critiquing one musical performance focusing in on costumes, lighting, staging, along with other elements of performance. Other topics covered were basic music theory, music therapy, film music and rap. The TY students performed a rap as part of their graduation in May. Finally, students improved their confidence and performance skills by learning the ukulele – they particularly enjoyed playing the ukulele as a whole class group.

Fifth year students started the year off by revising basic music theory and elements of music to prepare them for the unheard music listening question. They studied two set works - 'Sgt.

Peppers Lonely Herts Club band', 'She's Leaving Home' and 'When I'm 64' by the Beatles, and Mozart's Piano Concerto no.23. They particularly enjoyed discovering a number of different recording techniques used by the Beatles. We then moved onto composition. This gave students an opportunity to practice their creativity in creating melodies and harmonies. Finally, students were introduced to the topic of Irish Music. We looked at traditional instruments and features, sean nos singing and ceili bands. Students also completed a total of three Irish Music essays.

Sixth year students continued with composition, focusing on questions from past papers and minor melodies and harmonies. The students also studied Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet Fantasy, Bach Cantata by JS Bach and Gerald Barry's 'Piano Quartet No.1. Students developed their aural skills through a variety of genres and a range of topics within Irish Music such as Ornamentation, Regional Styles, Fusions, Irish composers and songwriters. Students completed their practical exam on the 3rd & 4th of April.



Both 5th & 6th year music students had the opportunity to go to the Wexford Opera house this year to enjoy a show. The girls had a great day out and it was very educational in relation to stage management and developing their listening skills with the orchestral instruments.



Extra-Curricular Activities



Crochet Club

Our new student led 'Crochet Club' got off to a great start in the Art room today. Skilled students were on hand to teach a room full of students and staff alike. A talented crochet artist, Polly Daly Merrigan led the group with Sandra Berus and Ruby Doyle also helping to teach the skill. We are looking forward to seeing the work develop in a relaxed and fun environment.



School Initiatives



St. Mary's College Students speak with Declan Meehan on East Coast FM about their surprise meeting with Michael D Higgins.



SHROVE TUESDAY - 4TH MARCH Pancakes & Prayers

COME TO THE PRAYER ROOM DURING LUNCH,
HAVE A PANCAKE AND WRITE A PRAYER PETITION FOR LENT.



€1 DONATION PER PANCAKE

ALL FUNDS RAISED WILL BE DONATED TO ARKLOW SVP

Sports Day

St. Mary's College held its much-anticipated Sports Day on [insert date], bringing together students, staff, for a fun-filled day of activity, teamwork, and school spirit. The event took place on the school grounds and featured a wide range of activities, from traditional track and field events to novelty races and team challenges.

Highlights of the day included the 100m and 400m sprints, long jump, relay races, and the ever-popular tug-of-war. Novelty events such as the sack race, three-legged race, and obstacle course added to the fun and gave everyone a chance to get involved, regardless of athletic ability.

Students from all year groups participated enthusiastically, showing great sportsmanship, energy, and encouragement for their peers. House teams competed for points, adding an extra layer of friendly rivalry and excitement throughout the day.

Staff also got involved, with a teachers' relay and some light-hearted challenges that had everyone cheering. The day concluded with an awards presentation, celebrating both individual performances and team achievements.

A big thank you goes to the PE department and organising committee for their excellent planning, as well as to all staff and volunteers who helped make the event such a success. It was a fantastic celebration of school spirit, physical activity, and community at St. Mary's College.



Sports Day



Sports Day

Sports Day was a fun and exciting event for everyone involved. The students especially enjoyed the delicious ice cream from the ice cream van, which was a real treat on a warm day. Laughter and cheer filled the air as they celebrated their achievements with a sweet reward. A big thank you goes to Ms. Ní Bhróin for organising such a memorable and enjoyable day for all!



International Women's day



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Soccer

Well done to our u15 soccer team who won 7-1 in their divisional quarter final

Goalscorers: Zuzanna Rybak, Lucy Shortall Doyle, Emily Christopher, Lucy Russell and Sophie Scanlon and Caoimhe Kinsella.

St. Mary's u15 soccer team have enjoyed a successful January winning both of their games against Creagh College and Gorey ETSS. They finished top of the regional group and will now progress to the knockout stages of the competition.

Goalscorers from both games: Emily Christopher, Lucy Shortall Doyle, Sophie Scanlon, Harper Fitzgerald, Sophia Werder, Zuzanna Rybak, Sophie Hurley, Zoe Walsh and Lucy Russell.

Congratulations to 5th year student Eve Fitzpatrick, on being resigned by Wexford FC for another season with their u17 & u19 squads. Eve is a talented and experienced goalkeeper who shows great leadership qualities here on our school teams. Her school team mates and all of us at St Mary's College wish her the best of luck for the coming LOI season.



Congratulations to Form 2 student Lucy Doyle on signing for Waterford FC's U17 squad for the coming LOI season. Lucy made her competitive debut in Waterford's first game against CK United. Lucy has already made an impact, with the 14 year old scoring a goal and two assists on her first outing. Best wishes from all at St. Mary's!

Tennis

Tennis has grown into a popular and well-loved extracurricular sport at St. Mary's College, with great interest shown by students across all year groups. The number of players has increased steadily, reflecting the enthusiasm and enjoyment students have found in the game. This year, one of the highlights was a fun and competitive tennis blitz held in May at Arklow Lawn Tennis Club. Students had the opportunity to showcase their skills, enjoy friendly matches, and build team spirit in a fantastic setting.



St. Mary's Ski Trip 2025

The students of St. Mary's College, embarked on an unforgettable ski trip to Austria. Surrounded by breathtaking alpine scenery, they spent their days learning to ski, exploring the snowy slopes, and enjoying the fresh mountain air. Whether they were beginners or seasoned skiers, everyone had the chance to improve their skills and take on new challenges. In the evenings, the group took part in fun activities, making memories and new friendships along the way. It was a truly enriching experience, both on and off the slopes. A heartfelt thank you to the staff and organisers who made this amazing trip possible!



Golf

Golf at St. Mary's College had a fantastic year, with growing interest and great participation from students. Throughout the season, our players enjoyed friendly competition against local schools including CBS, Glenart College, and Gaelcholáiste na Mara. Matches were held at both Arklow and Woodenbridge Golf Clubs, providing excellent opportunities for students to develop their skills on top-class courses. As the year progressed, golf became more popular than ever, with noticeable improvement in players' confidence and technique.



It was a fabulous day for school golf at Woodenbridge Golf Club on the 10th of March with perfect conditions for an exciting competition. St. Mary's, along with the CBS, Glenart College and Gaelcholáiste na Mara, took part in what was a fantastic display of talent and sportsmanship. Congratulations to Ruby Doyle (Form 2), who claimed first prize in the girls' competition, and to Molly Doyle (Form 5), who secured second place. Well done to all the participants for making it such an enjoyable and competitive event!



Athletics

- Athletics at St. Mary's College Arklow has enjoyed a truly outstanding year, marked by remarkable achievements and continued growth among students. From track and field to cross-country, participation has been at an all-time high, with students demonstrating both talent and commitment. The college celebrated numerous successes at local and regional competitions, reflecting not only the hard work of the athletes but also the dedication of their coaches and mentors. Beyond medals and trophies, what stands out most is the way athletics has fostered teamwork, discipline, and confidence, helping students grow both on and off the field. This year has set a **new standard for sporting excellence at St. Mary's, and the future looks brighter than ever.**



Rugby

St. Mary's Junior Rugby team took another step towards retaining the Leinster Girls Schools Junior Cup when they beat St. Andrew's College in the semi-final at Greystones today. Ellie McCann's back to back tries gave our team the excellent start they needed to play with confidence with Abigail Nugent adding a third try. However St. Andrew's fought back narrowing the lead to 15-12 by half time. Tense competition ensued with more tries from St. Andrew's bringing them close but St. Mary's rose to the challenge of improving their one point lead and after three more tries from Emma Gannon and Abigail Nugent they found themselves in another final with a solid victory of 37-26-Well done to all of our players and coaches! We wish the girls the best of luck in the final when they'll defend their title against Scoil Chr  st R  , Portlaoise.



Well done to all our 1st years who took part in a rugby blitz today at Gorey Rugby Club in freezing conditions. The girls played some excellent rugby. Special thanks to our two TY coaches, Olivia Burke and Mollie O'Leary.



Well done to all Senior Rugby players who travelled to Tullow today to play old rivals St Mary's, New Ross in a 12 -a-side game. A particular mention to six of our international students from Spain who excelled in their first ever competitive rugby match. We may have lost the game but the experience gained will prove invaluable when the 15 a-side competition begins after Christmas.



Badminton

Badminton is back with a bang in South Wicklow & North Wexford. St Marys Badminton Club participated in a fun inclusive blitz with Creagh College, Gorey Educate Together, Gorey Community College and hosted by Glenart College. It was a great morning of play and making new friends with a love of badminton. As the numbers show it's a sport that is growing fast with many plans afoot with participating schools. Well done to all involved!



Remembering Nadine

In November past pupil Nadine Lott was remembered on the 5th anniversary of her tragic death. Family and friends made a fitting tribute to Nadine with the most amazing weekend of fashion, dance, memories and fun. We here in St. Mary's College, were delighted to be part of these very special events, with students eager to support the shows in any way they could. Our budding fashion designers modeled their upcycled designs for guests to view on the night and our art students crafted ceramic Christmas tree decorations to add to the night. All of our very creative, talented students were delighted to be part of such special events remembering Nadine.



Artist Mural – Maris Stella

The students collaborated with local Arklow artist, Stephen Considine. Along with being a hugely talented artist, Stephen is a well-known advocate for promotion of minding your mental health. Over many hours, group discussions with the students developed the theme for the mural. Having a different persona behind a mask was the idea everyone liked. This was developed by the group, and what resulted is a huge mural that mirrors our hidden self. Linking with the local environment, the sea is also a prominent feature.

The mural spans the full height gable of one of our school buildings. Everyone agrees, the new artwork brings colour and joy to our school environment. This work was supported by funding from NAPD and facilitated by the Art Department, Mr Ian Carter and Ms Charlotte Murray.



Camogie

We were delighted to continue with Camogie this year in St. Mary's with both a Senior and a Junior team. This year we entered the Wicklow Schools Competitions. Our Juniors defeated Gaelcholáiste na Mara in their first game which led them to a county final. Our Seniors went straight to the county semi-final after taking part in the final last year. They played Avondale in a friendly in preparation for this and had a good win in that game. 1-5 to 5 points.



Basketball



Well done to our Junior Basketball team who beat Coláiste Dún Isacaigh, Thurles in their semi final. They defended unbelievably keeping the other team to 10 points, going through to the final with a score of 18-10.

Well done to our Form 2 basketball team who had a great win over St David's Greystones today in their league match with a score of 38-13. The team is going from strength to strength and still remain unbeaten this season



Drama Club

Teacher: Elizabeth O'Dea

The Drama Club convened on Friday afternoons after school. In Term 1, we enjoyed a series of workshops focusing on theatre games and stage craft. In Term 2, we worked on a one act play written for young people from the UK's National Theatre Connections anthologies. Senior students led the opening games and warm-up exercises before the club divided into groups to workshop short sections of texts. For a number of weeks, we rehearsed the text as a whole cast. As we continued to welcome new members right up until April, we changed our approach to make space for the newcomers by dividing into smaller groups that performed for each other, in Term 3.

On November 18th, St. Mary's Drama Club took a trip to The Mermaid Theatre in Bray to participate in a workshop run by the Abbey Theatre in conjunction with The Lir. This event aims to promote women in technical theatre roles such as lighting, sound and stage management. At the end of the workshop, the students presented a short production using their new skills, on The Mermaid stage.



Christmas 2024



Members of the school choir, orchestra and Irish traditional music group had a lovely morning performing various Christmas Carols in Bridgewater Shopping Centre today in aid of St. Vincent de Paul.



Mary the ELF



Christmas Concert 2024



End of Year Assembly

The end-of-year assembly at St. Mary's College was a joyful and celebratory occasion, marking the achievements and hard work of students throughout the school year. Awards were presented to students from each class who had excelled in various areas, recognising their dedication, effort, and positive contributions to school life. It was a proud moment for both students and teachers, as individual successes were applauded and celebrated by the entire school community. Senior students received special recognition through academic awards for outstanding performance in individual subjects, highlighting their commitment to excellence. The highlight of the assembly was the announcement of the Overall Student of the Year Award, which was proudly presented to Aisling Flusk for her exceptional dedication, leadership, and academic achievements. The assembly concluded with the exciting introduction of the new incoming student leaders, who will now take on the responsibility of representing and guiding their peers in the coming school year. Well done to all our students, we are so proud of you.



End of year Assembly



Form 6 Student of the Class Awards

End of year Assembly



6th year Rounders v's Teachers

The annual 6th Year versus Teachers rounders game at St. Mary's College was once again a highlight of the school year, bringing energy, laughter, and friendly competition to the field. With excitement running high, the 6th Year students took to the pitch full of determination and school spirit, eager to challenge their teachers in what has become a beloved tradition. The students played with great enthusiasm and teamwork, showing off their athletic abilities and giving the teachers a real run for their money. Despite their best efforts and a few impressive plays, the teachers ultimately claimed victory once again—much to their delight and the amusement of the cheering crowd. But the real focus of the day was fun and celebration, not the scoreboard. The atmosphere was electric, with students from all year groups out to support their peers and enjoy the sunshine. Adding to the festive spirit, the 6th Years wowed everyone by showing off their dancing and gymnastic skills during breaks in the game, bringing both talent and humour to the event. It was a day filled with joy, laughter, and memories that the Class of 2025 will carry with them for years to come.



6th year rounder v's Teachers







EVERY MOMENT IS A NEW BEGINNING.

Elie Wiesel

SALT
effect



It is with great sadness that we heard of the passing of our friend and former colleague, Ms. Eileen Dunbar (affectionately known to her colleagues and many students as Lady Dunbar).

Before retiring in 2018, Eileen taught English and History during her 36 years in St. Mary's. She had a great love of literature and of the past, all of which she imparted to her students along with her demand for both thoroughness and creative expression. Among the many Posts of Responsibility duties performed by Eileen during her career were Year Head, Public Speaking and Debating, PRO, and the organisation of many foreign trips. She was also instrumental in the design and refurbishment of the School Library. Her colleagues valued her advice and collaboration and the style and professionalism she brought to all areas of her work.

A 'Lady' by name and nature, she will be sadly missed by all in our school community but most especially by her beloved husband PJ, her children and grandchildren whom she adored. May Eileen rest in eternal peace.

