



Scoil Aireagail Insights

Excellence, care, and respect at the heart of our community



Christmas 2024



Welcome to *Scoil Aireagail Insights – Christmas Edition*! This term, we celebrated the success of our Christmas Market, cheered on our camogie girls as they reached the Leinster final, and watched students across all year groups work hard in their exams. Read on to discover highlights from across the school and what’s in store for the new year ahead. Wishing everyone a joyful Christmas and an exciting start to 2025!



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PRINCIPAL HELEN MCTIGHE'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As the year winds down and we approach the festive season, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the past few months and express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has contributed to making our school such a vibrant and supportive community.

Since Halloween, we have seen incredible teamwork, creativity, and dedication from every corner of our school. From all the learning experiences that brought life to our classrooms and hallways, to the countless activities and achievements that have filled these months, your collective efforts have been really appreciated.

To our wonderful students, thank you for your energy, enthusiasm, and hard work. Whether in the classroom, on the sports field, or during special events like the Christmas market and Winter Concert, you have shown resilience, creativity, and a willingness to support one another. Watching you grow and achieve your goals fills us with immense pride.

To our dedicated staff, thank you for your commitment and hard work for the good of our students. You have gone above and beyond to create a learning environment that is both enriching and welcoming. Your tireless efforts, especially as we navigated the busy end-of-term activities, have not gone unnoticed.

To our supportive parents and guardians, thank you for being our valued partners in education. Your involvement, whether through volunteering, attending school events, or simply cheering on from the sidelines, plays a vital role in the success of our school. Your trust and encouragement are really appreciated. Please take time to celebrate the successes of the year with your child and to express your appreciation to their teachers, SNAs and auxiliary staff who have contributed to making these successes possible.

As we look ahead to the Christmas break, we hope it will be a time of joy, rest, and togetherness for you and your loved ones. May this holiday season bring peace and happiness to your homes, and may the new year be filled with fresh opportunities and bright beginnings.

Thank you once again for being such an integral part of our school community. We look forward to welcoming you back in the new year and continuing our journey together.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Helen McTighe

Principal





STUDENT PARTICIPATION



Together We Thrive!

Student Prefects

In this edition of *Scoil Aireagail Insights*, we continue our prefect interview series, showcasing the exceptional leaders who represent and inspire our school community. This time, we hear from one of our prefects, sharing reflections on their role, advice for younger students, and memorable moments from their time at Scoil Aireagail.

Interview with our 6th Year Prefect Marie-Therése Aylward

What skills do you need for your position as school prefect?

In my opinion, leadership is a very important skill required to be a prefect. You need to maintain excellent academic attendance and lead by example, such as encouraging and motivating fellow students to work towards their goals.

Do you have any advice for younger students?

My advice for younger students is to try your best in school because the six years of secondary school fly by. At the start of the year, set clear and specific goals for yourself to achieve, as this will motivate you to work hard. No matter how hard you work each day, you should feel proud of what you have achieved.

If you could tell your first-year self anything, what would it be?

Looking back on first year, it was cut very short due to COVID-19, as I spent from March into second year attending online classes. If I could tell my first-year self anything, it would be to adapt quickly to the change from primary school to secondary school. Secondary school offers more opportunities to try new subjects or sports.

Who is someone you look up to or admire, and what qualities do they possess that you find inspiring?

I admire my Mam. She makes me believe that I can achieve anything I put my heart and soul into and shows how far hard work can take you. We are both hardworking, and she inspires me to live life to the fullest because life is short.

What has been your favourite memory so far in Scoil Aireagail?

My favourite memory so far in Scoil Aireagail is going to Rome with my classmates in TY. I got to experience incredible tourist attractions and what it's like to spend time away from home, as I had never been to another country before. TY itself helped me develop confidence and become a better person.





Excellence in Education

Empowering Minds, Inspiring Futures



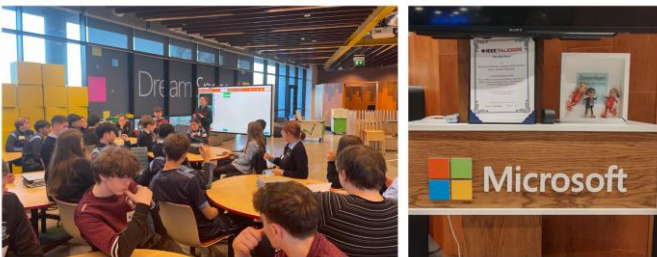
STEM Education

Our Transition Year students recently enjoyed an inspiring day at Microsoft Dream Space in Dublin, a cutting-edge STEM hub. The visit included a tour of Microsoft's facilities and two engaging workshops:

Civil Engineering: Students took on a marble run challenge, using teamwork and problem-solving to create the longest and most effective track.

Software Engineering: Using Microsoft MakeCode Arcade, students programmed their own games, gaining valuable coding skills.

They also explored how technology intersects with fields like business, law, art, and finance, learning about diverse career paths in the tech industry. A huge thank you to Microsoft Dream Space for this incredible opportunity—our students left feeling inspired and empowered for their future careers!



Music

At Scoil Aireagail, Tuesday Tunes has become a much-loved weekly event, celebrating the amazing talents of our music students. From captivating solos to energetic group performances, each session brings creativity and passion to our school community. Don't forget to visit our Instagram page to enjoy all the performances and show your support for our talented musicians!



Winter Concert: A Magical Afternoon of Music and Song

Our Winter Concert was a truly magical event, filled with festive music and song. The afternoon showcased the incredible talents of our music students, with performances ranging from classic carols to contemporary festive tunes, all beautifully filling the church with holiday cheer.

The concert also served as a wonderful opportunity to give back to the community. A **bucket collection** was held in aid of **St. Vincent de Paul (SVP)**, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to this worthy cause. Your generosity will help support those in need within our community.

We were delighted to welcome families, friends, and members of the wider community to share in the festive spirit and celebrate the joy of music. The event was a heartwarming reminder of the power of music to bring people together and spread kindness.

Thank you to everyone who attended and made the event such a success. We look forward to more musical celebrations in the future!

Thank you to all who joined us for this festive musical celebration!





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Gaeilge

Tá an Coiste Gaelbhreach an-ghnóthach arís i mbliana, ag ullmhú imeachtaí iontacha i gcomhair na Nollag. Míle buíochas leo as an obair dhíograiseach! Chomh maith leis sin bhí turas iontach againn go dtí Amharclann Axis i mBaile Átha Cliath. Chonaiceamar 'An Triail' agus chaitheamar an lá ar fad ag labhairt Gaeilge agus thaitin an turas go mór le gach duine.



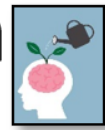
Art

Seven of our Scoil Aireagail art students were awarded prizes in the Thomastown Credit Union Art Competition for their incredible paintings on the theme 'The Joys of Life'. Their creativity and talent were celebrated today as they received their well-deserved prizes. Well done on your amazing work.





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Art

Our 5th Year Art students have beautifully combined history and creativity in their latest project. Taking inspiration from Ireland's Bronze and Iron Age, they explored Beaker People designs and Le Tène motifs to craft stunning modern ceramic pieces. These works highlight their talent and the enduring influence of ancient Irish art, resulting in a captivating blend of tradition and innovation.



English

In November, our 5th Year students enjoyed a fantastic day out at a screening of *Small Things Like These*, a wonderful production filmed in New Ross and part of their Senior Cycle studies. The experience was made even more special as students got to see our very own Mrs. Phelan making her on-screen debut!



Careers

Our 6th Year students had a valuable opportunity to explore future careers and courses during open days at Waterford College of Further Education and South East Technological University. They toured the campuses and attended informative talks on a wide range of fields, including architecture, animal care, forestry, nursing, law, agricultural science, business, and tourism, to name just a few. The day offered great insights to help guide their next steps after Scoil Aireagail.





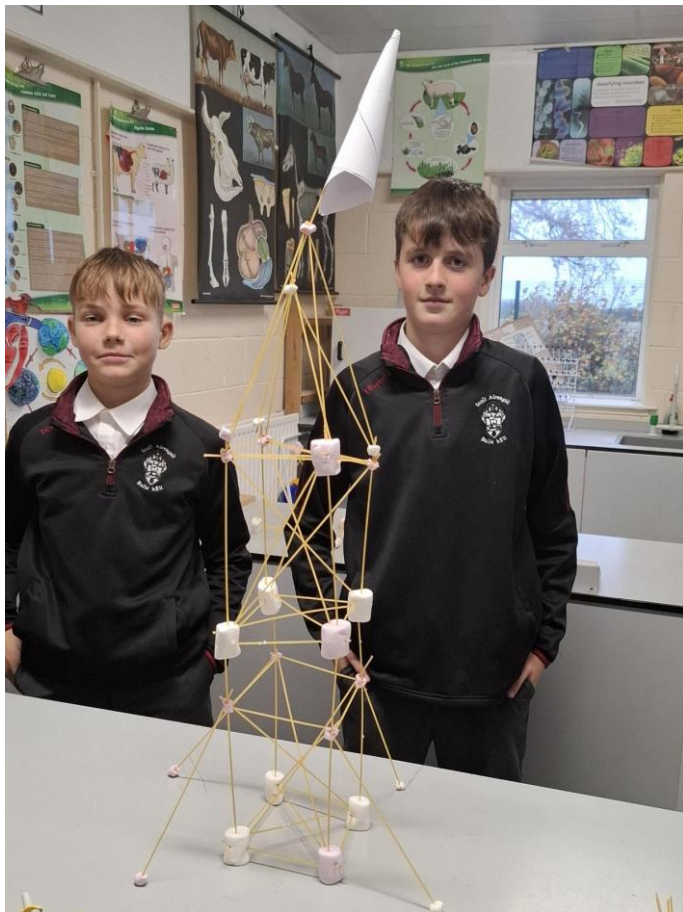
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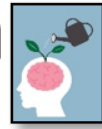
Science

Science Week at Scoil Aireagail, held from November 10th to 17th, was packed with engaging activities and STEM challenges across all year groups. Our 1st Years showcased their engineering skills by constructing bridges and towers from household items, while 2nd Years embarked on an exciting Science Scavenger Hunt around the school. 3rd Years got hands-on by planting classroom vegetables and tackling an Escape Room challenge. Meanwhile, 5th Years created impressive cell division models and participated in both a 'Cells Escape Room' and a quiz. The week was rounded off with plenty of Oobleck experiments and quizzes, making it a fun and educational celebration of science!





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Geography

Well done to our First Year Geography class, who had a blast watching their handmade volcanoes erupt! It was a fun and interactive way to explore the wonders of our world.



French

We recently bid farewell to our French exchange students, Olivia and Lénaële, after a wonderful three weeks of cultural exchange and friendship. Their visit was a fantastic opportunity for our students to immerse themselves in French language and culture, creating lasting memories along the way. We thank Olivia and Lénaële for their time with us and wish them all the best. Vive la France!

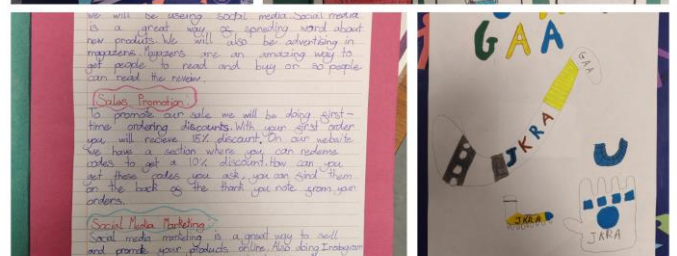


Business

Our 2nd Year Business students have been hard at work this term completing their Junior Cycle Classroom Based Assessment (CBA). This project challenged them to come up with a new product idea and conduct both field and desk market research to test the viability of their concept. Students then developed a comprehensive action plan, including the all-important marketing mix.

This year's projects were diverse and creative, with some fantastic ideas brought to life. We saw a boomerang sliotar designed for GAA players, curly haircare products aimed at enhancing natural curls, durable GAA gear for athletes, and innovative limestone products that offer eco-friendly alternatives for construction. Through this process, students honed key business skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving, and time management.

A huge congratulations to all the students for their hard work and innovative thinking!





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English

Our 1st Year English class got festive and creative by posting Christmas letters to relatives and friends. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about writing postcards and letters while spreading a little holiday cheer. Well done to all involved!



Science

1 Orange has worked hard on their Earth and Space projects over the last few weeks. The results have been fantastic and the pupils have produced some fantastic projects. Well done to all. Some future astronauts and astronomers maybe in our midst.



TY SVP Team Hosts Festive Bake Sale and Bucket Collection

Last Thursday, our TY SVP Team organized a festive Bake Sale, raising funds to create chemo care packs and support Ballyhale St. Vincent de Paul. The event brought the school community together, spreading holiday kindness through delicious treats and generous contributions.

In addition, the SVP team held a bucket collection at our Christmas concert, further boosting support for these meaningful causes.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to these initiatives, helping to make a real difference. Well done to the TY SVP Team for their incredible effort and dedication!

TY Students Kick Off the Festive Season in Style

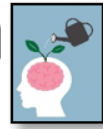
Our Transition Year students embraced the holiday spirit this month with a fun-filled day out. The festivities began with a hilarious comedy show at the Theatre Royal in Waterford, leaving everyone in stitches. The laughter continued as students headed to Winterval's ice skating rink, where they enjoyed some icy fun and festive cheer.

A fantastic start to the season for our TY students!





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Business

As part of College Awareness Week, our 5th Year Business and Transition Year students had an insightful session with Revenue Ireland. They learned about the importance of tax, how to register for their first job, and how to understand payslips. Topics such as tax credits, emergency tax, and the need to keep Revenue accounts up to date were covered. Students also received practical guidance on setting up a MyAccount and avoiding common pitfalls like emergency tax. A big thank you to Revenue Ireland for providing such valuable knowledge to help prepare our students for the working world!



French and Home Economics

Our Transition Year students recently took part in a fun and delicious cross-curricular project that brought together French and Home Economics. On Wednesday, 27th November, students created two classic French dishes—apple tarte tatin and French Toast!

In French class, students learned how to make the traditional apple tarte tatin. "Aujourd'hui, on a préparé les tartes tatin pendant le cours de français. Vous avez besoin des pommes, du beurre, du sucre et de la pâte prête à rouler. C'est un plat traditionnel français, très facile à cuisiner et délicieux à manger," said one of the students. Thanks to Monsieur Carrigan for guiding them through this tasty experience!

Also in November, the students teamed up again in Home Economics to prepare some mouthwatering French Toast. They had a great time whipping up (and devouring!) their creations, enjoying a delicious treat while practicing their French cooking skills.





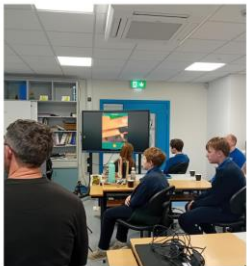
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Art

Our creative cluster schools came together for a stop motion animation workshop in Scoil Aireagail this month. Students from Mullinavat and Ballyhale primary schools joined secondary students from Graiguenamanagh and Ballyhale to showcase their fantastic sets designs and learned how to add sound effects to their stop motion videos created using Lego figures. Thanks to Shane Egan from Kilkenny ETB for running a fun, engaging workshop. Well done to all that took part and all the amazing creativity that was on display.



Geography

This month, our incredible Transition Year students took the lead in a sustainability lesson for 1st Years! They highlighted the alarming impact of fast fashion, such as how long fabrics take to decompose, and the inequalities faced by some countries in addressing climate change. Through this engaging session, our TY students not only shared valuable knowledge but also encouraged the 1st Years to understand the importance of taking small, meaningful actions to make a difference. This hands-on experience helped to foster a deeper awareness of sustainability and its vital role in our world today. Well done to our TY students for their leadership and inspiring their peers!





Excellence in Education



Empowering Minds, Inspiring Futures

Congratulations on Achieving the President's Award – Bronze Gaisce!

A huge congratulations to two of our 5th-year students for achieving the **President's Award – Bronze Gaisce!** This prestigious award is a testament to their hard work, determination, and dedication across a variety of challenges and activities. Their commitment to personal development and perseverance is truly inspiring, and we are incredibly proud of their achievement.

Well done on this fantastic milestone! Your efforts have set an excellent example for others to follow. We look forward to seeing all that you continue to accomplish in the future.



Exciting News: Funding Received for Education for Sustainable Development Project!

We're thrilled to announce that Scoil Aireagail has received funding from the Department of Education to launch our Education for Sustainable Development Project! This initiative will provide a fantastic opportunity for our school community to engage with sustainability in a hands-on way.

With this funding, we will be creating a dedicated space where students can grow organic vegetables, promoting both sustainability and healthy living.

This project will not only teach students about environmental responsibility and sustainable food practices but also give them the chance to actively contribute to the well-being of our school community.

We can't wait to share updates as we bring this exciting project to life. Stay tuned for more information!





SPORTS ROUNDUP

Celebrating Team Spirit, Talent, and Triumph



Camogie Update: A Leinster Final Achievement

Junior Camogie – Leinster Final Bound!

Scoil Aireagail's Junior Camogie team has had a truly remarkable term, culminating in their progression to the Leinster final – a fantastic achievement for our small school! The team displayed incredible resilience and teamwork in their matches.

In their first match against Bagenalstown, our defense, led by the outstanding Grace Fitz, kept Bagenalstown from scoring. Goalkeeper Caoimhe Corcoran made a series of crucial saves, while Leah Davis excelled in attack, scoring 3-1 to help secure the victory. Orla Sutton's performance earned her the Player of the Match award.

Victory Over Dunshaughlin

On December 3rd, Scoil Aireagail faced Dunshaughlin in the Leinster semi-final. Despite an early goal from Dunshaughlin, Scoil Aireagail fought back with determination. Goals from Emma Dempsey, Leah Davis, and Katie Dempsey put us ahead at halftime. In the second half, despite a strong comeback from Dunshaughlin, the team remained composed, with crucial scores from Saoirse Walsh, Cara Coogan, and Leah Davis. Strong defensive work from Grace Fitzpatrick, Orla Sutton, Cate Hoyne, and Saoirse Walsh ensured we held on to our lead and secured the win. Laoch na himeartha – Saoirse Walsh.

A Historic Achievement

Reaching the Leinster final is a monumental achievement for Scoil Aireagail, and the girls' dedication and team spirit have been inspiring. We are incredibly proud of how far they've come, and we wish them the best of luck in the final. Scoil Aireagail abú!

Camógaí: Ceannaireacht i gCeannais Laighean!

Tá foireann camógaí Scoil Aireagail tar éis éirí go mór an téarma seo, agus beidh siad i gcluiche Ceannais Laighean – seo é an t-éacht iontach atá bainte amach ag ár scoil bheag! Taispeánann na cailíní a gcumas, an spiorad foirne, agus an dúthracht a bhí acu i ngach cluiche.

I gcluiche chéad le Baile an Bheagáin, bhí cosaint láidir faoi stiúir Grace Fitz agus sábháilte ag Caoimhe Corcoran, le Leah Davis ag scóráil 3-1 chun an bua a bhaint amach. Bhí Orla Sutton ar fheabhas agus d'éirigh léi an Laoch na himeartha a fháil.

Ar an 3ú Nollaig, tháinig Scoil Aireagail i gcóir i gcoinne Dunshaughlin i gCeannais Chúige Laighean. Cé go bhfuair Dunshaughlin sprioc luath, níor thit Scoil Aireagail isteach.

Le scóráilithe ó Saoirse Walsh, Cara Coogan agus Leah Davis, agus cosaint láidir ó Grace Fitzpatrick, Orla Sutton, Cate Hoyne agus Saoirse Walsh, d'éirigh linn bua a bhaint amach. Laoch na himeartha – Saoirse Walsh.

Tá sé ina éacht stairiúil don scoil agus beidh gach éinne ag tacaíocht leis na cailíní sa Chluiche Ceannais. Go n-éirí libh, Scoil Aireagail abú!





SPORTS ROUNDUP

Celebrating Team Spirit, Talent, and Triumph



Scoil Aireagail Boys Soccer Team Triumphs Over Mooncoin with Teamwork and Skill

In November, Scoil Aireagail's boys soccer team delivered an outstanding performance, securing a well-earned victory over Mooncoin. The team's cohesion and tactical brilliance were evident throughout the match, as they played with intensity and focus, maintaining control from start to finish.

Adam Franks was the standout goalscorer, netting a brilliant finish that gave Scoil Aireagail an early lead. Mikey Dunne's exceptional work in midfield kept Mooncoin's defense on edge, as his speed and creativity resulted in several key crosses and attacking opportunities. Mikey's ability to break through the opposition's lines and link up play made him a constant threat, providing valuable assists for his teammates.

In goal, Ronan Crowley was a rock, keeping a clean sheet with a series of crucial saves. His calmness under pressure and quick reflexes were instrumental in ensuring Mooncoin never got on the scoreboard. Ronan's strong positioning and leadership at the back gave the entire team the confidence and stability they needed to maintain control of the game.

This victory serves as a clear indicator of the progress and potential within the Scoil Aireagail squad. The boys demonstrated fantastic teamwork, and with performances like these, they're set for a promising season ahead. They can be incredibly proud of their collective effort and look forward to building on this strong start in future matches.

Player of the Match: Ronan Crowley

Stats: Ella Kearney

Report: Caoimhe Corcoran & Rory Aylward

GAA Future Leaders



Scoil Aireagail's Future Leaders Programme

Scoil Aireagail is proud to participate in the "Future Leaders Transition Year Programme," a joint initiative by the GAA and Oide. This programme aims to develop leadership, responsibility, and initiative in students through a series of cross-curricular modules.

Students are trained in the skills needed to support Gaelic Games and are challenged to organize both on-field and off-field events for younger students. The programme fosters teamwork, personal growth, and valuable leadership experience for all involved.

A special thank you to our GAA Future Leaders for their dedication in writing match reports, compiling stats, and supporting the school's sports coverage: Ella Kearney (Stats), Caoimhe Corcoran & Rory Aylward (Reports), Sam Mansfield, and to our umpires Dessie O'Connor, Aoibhe Murphy, and John Sommers for their continued support and efforts. Your contributions are truly appreciated!





Cultivating Care

A Commitment to Equality, Respect, and Support



Promoting Healthy Relationships and Personal Safety

We would like to extend our thanks to Siobhan and Angela from Amber Women's Refuge for visiting our school on Tuesday. They led informative and impactful sessions on domestic abuse, healthy relationships, and personal safety.

Through these workshops, our students gained valuable insights into important issues, learning how to recognize the signs of domestic abuse, the importance of healthy relationships, and strategies for maintaining personal safety. The sessions also provided an opportunity to raise awareness, break down stigma, and empower our students to make informed choices when it comes to their relationships and well-being.

We are grateful for this opportunity to engage in such meaningful discussions and equip our students with the knowledge and tools to navigate these important aspects of their lives.



Stand Up Awareness Week at Scoil Aireagail

In November, Scoil Aireagail celebrated **Stand Up Awareness Week**, focusing on promoting inclusion, respect, and kindness. A highlight of the week was our **Rainbow T-Shirt Day**, where students wore colourful t-shirts to show their support for the LGBTQ+ community and stand together in unity.

In addition, SPHE classes focused on how to be an ally, teaching students the importance of respect, kindness, and supporting everyone in our school community.

It was a meaningful week, reinforcing our commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.





Cultivating Care



A Commitment to Equality, Respect, and Support

Anti-Bullying Week at Scoil Aireagail

In November, Scoil Aireagail took part in **Anti-Bullying Week**, a week dedicated to promoting kindness, respect, and standing up against bullying. During this week, we united as a school community to raise awareness about the impact of bullying and the importance of supporting one another.

Throughout the week, students learned about the different forms of bullying—physical, verbal, emotional, and online. We emphasized that bullying is hurtful, intentional behaviour that happens repeatedly and can lead to serious effects, such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and withdrawal from others.

To empower our students, we shared practical steps on how to deal with bullying. We encouraged everyone to speak up by telling a trusted adult, save evidence of bullying (such as screenshots or messages), and seek support from friends or school counsellors. Most importantly, we reminded our students that bullying is never their fault, and we urged them to make kindness their superpower in everything they do.

A special part of the week was the initiative led by our student leaders. These leaders wrote letters of encouragement and advice to **First Year students**, offering words of support and kindness. We would like to thank the **Cairdeas group** for distributing these heartfelt letters and for their role in spreading positivity throughout the school.

Anti-Bullying Week was a powerful reminder of the importance of respect and kindness in our school community, and we will continue to work together to create a safe and welcoming environment for all students.





Cultivating Care



A Commitment to Equality, Respect, and Support

Thank You for Supporting the Team Hope Shoebox Appeal

A huge thank you to all our incredible students for your generosity and kindness in supporting the **Team Hope Shoebox Appeal** this December. Your thoughtful gifts will bring joy and hope to children in disadvantaged areas this Christmas, making a real difference in their lives. We are proud of our students for their compassion and for helping spread Christmas cheer to those in need.



Supporting Our Students on the Ossory Lourdes Trip

This year, our students are fundraising to attend the **Ossory Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes**, which takes place annually in May. As part of the extensive Youth Section of the pilgrimage, Transition Year students from 16 secondary schools across the Diocese travel to Lourdes not only to develop their personal and spiritual lives but also to assist and care for the pilgrims staying in the hospital there.

So far, our students have held successful **bake sales** and a **bucket collection** at our Christmas market, with more fundraising events planned throughout the year. The money raised will help support the students in covering the costs of this invaluable experience.

The trip to Lourdes is an opportunity for our students to learn and grow in many ways. Through their involvement,

they will develop a deeper sense of respect, care, and community. The experience of working as helpers to the assisted pilgrims fosters empathy, responsibility, and teamwork, all while offering a unique chance to reflect on faith, service, and compassion.

This pilgrimage is more than just a trip; it is an opportunity for our students to engage in meaningful service, building skills that will last a lifetime. We encourage everyone to support the fundraisers throughout the year and help make this incredible journey possible for our students.



Young SVP Team Takes Part in Inspiring Workshop

In October, our Young SVP team participated in an inspiring workshop with Debbie. Young St. Vincent de Paul empowers students to make a positive difference in their communities through social action and volunteering. A special thank you to our president, Bridget, co-president, Sarah, and vice president, Grace, for their exceptional leadership in guiding the team!





Cultivating Care



A Commitment to Equality, Respect, and Support

Scoil Aireagail Christmas Market 2024

This year's Christmas Market was a spectacular success, bigger and better than ever! Held on December 1st, it was a day filled with festive cheer, community spirit, and seasonal magic.

The market featured an amazing variety of stalls, including honey from Piltown, bread by Ned, handcrafted gifts, handmade silver jewellery, stained glass decorations, and our own Transition Year students' beautifully crafted candles, wooden items, and birdhouses. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and their hardworking elves made a special appearance, delighting visitors of all ages and spreading Christmas joy throughout the event.

Our music students, led by Ms. Rowe, created a wonderful festive atmosphere with carols and performances, joined by the talented 4th, 5th, and 6th class students from Móin Ruadh Primary School. Their voices added a magical touch to the day and brought everyone together in celebration.

The market also supported a great cause, with a bucket collection raising vital funds for our Lourdes Pilgrimage Fund. This heartfelt effort showcased the generous spirit of our school community, reinforcing the importance of helping others during the festive season.

This year's Christmas Market was a testament to the strength and unity of our school and local community. Families, friends, and neighbors came together to enjoy the season, creating unforgettable memories and fostering a true sense of connection.

A massive thank you to everyone who helped make this year's event so special, from those who organized and participated to everyone who attended. Your support brought the magic of Christmas to life. Wishing you all a joyful and festive holiday season!





Cultivating Care



A Commitment to Equality, Respect, and Support

Focus on the Importance of Attendance

This year, Scoil Aireagail introduced an attendance campaign highlighting the value of punctuality and regular attendance as a key focus of our School Improvement Plan. As part of this, we introduced surprise “Hot Chocolate Mornings” to reward early arrivals and highlight how small delays, like being five minutes late weekly, add up to hours of missed learning.

On one of the coldest mornings in November, students enjoyed their second Hot Chocolate Morning. An infographic shared as part of the campaign shows the serious impact of absences—students with 95% attendance miss 48 classes annually, while 85% attendance leads to over 100 missed classes.

With another Hot Chocolate Morning planned soon, we encourage everyone to stay warm, engaged, and present every day—because every day matters!

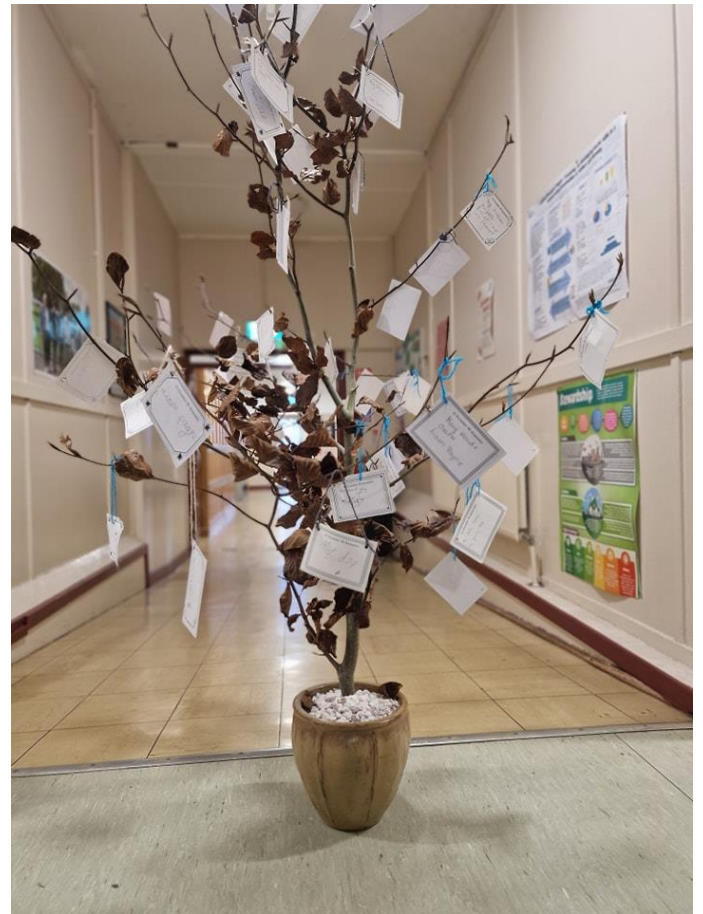
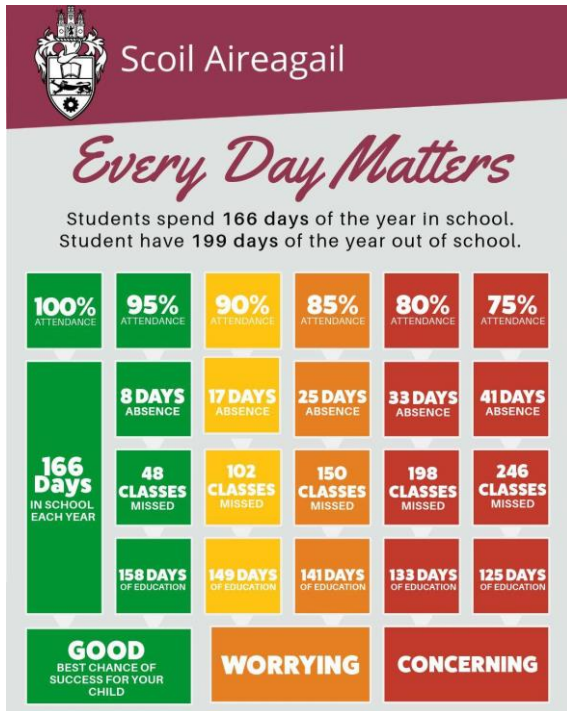
In November, We Remember

Last month, Scoil Aireagail came together as a community to honor and remember loved ones who have passed away. As part of our "In November, We Remember" initiative, students and staff were invited to write the names of their loved ones on remembrance notes and place them on our remembrance tree.

The tree became a beautiful symbol of connection and reflection, filled with heartfelt messages that kept the memory of those we hold dear alive.

We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who participated in this meaningful tribute. Your contributions created a touching display of love and remembrance, reminding us that, as the saying goes, *"Those we love don't go away; they walk beside us every day."*

Together, we ensured that the memories of those who have gone before us were honored with care and respect.





Cultivating Care



A Commitment to Equality, Respect, and Support

Celebrating Leadership: 5th Year student Represents Scoil Aireagail

Congratulations to Winnie McDonagh, who proudly represented Scoil Aireagail in November at the prestigious Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA). Winnie’s hard work, dedication, and outstanding leadership qualities truly inspire us all, and we couldn’t be prouder of her achievement.

RYLA is an intensive leadership experience organized by Rotary clubs and districts. It offers participants the chance to develop their leadership skills, build confidence, and forge meaningful connections—all while having fun. Winnie’s participation in this program reflects her commitment to personal growth and her ability to represent our school community with excellence.

Well done, Winnie, on this fantastic accomplishment. You are a wonderful example of the power of leadership and determination!



Phone-Free Fridays at Scoil Aireagail

This term, Scoil Aireagail introduced **Phone-Free Fridays** as part of our updated phone policy, running from Halloween to Christmas. The initiative encourages students and staff to step away from screens and embrace a tech-free environment, fostering focus and connection within our school community.

The benefits of Phone-Free Fridays are already clear. Taking a break from devices has helped create a more focused and engaged learning atmosphere, reduced distractions, and encouraged students to interact more with one another during breaks. It also promotes mindfulness and the importance of balancing technology use with real-life experiences.

We would like to thank our parents and guardians for their continued support and enthusiasm for this initiative. Your partnership plays a crucial role in its success, and we’re grateful for your encouragement as we work together to create a positive and focused school environment.

Looking ahead, we are excited to develop this initiative further with new ideas next term. Stay tuned as we continue to promote healthy technology habits at Scoil Aireagail!

Scoil Aireagail

Phone-Free Fridays

ST. STEPHEN'S MULTI-DENOMINATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect



Cultivating Care

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Student Council Update

Our Student Council members have had a productive and engaging term, representing the student body with enthusiasm and dedication.

In November, eight Student Council members attended the KCETB Student Council Training at the Springhill Court Hotel in Kilkenny. This enriching experience provided students with the opportunity to explore their roles in depth, develop collaboration skills, and connect with peers from other schools. The event emphasized three key messages: bring your uniqueness, listen, and embrace the opportunity.

Later in the month, Third and Fourth Year members participated in Comhairle na nÓg in Langton's Hotel, Kilkenny. This inspiring event highlighted the value of student voice through dynamic discussions and interactive activities. During the day, participants identified mental health as their priority issue for young people, a topic they plan to explore further in the months ahead.

Student councils play a vital role in giving students a voice within our schools. They provide an important platform for young people to express their ideas, influence decision-making, and contribute to school life. These experiences not only empower students but also foster leadership, teamwork, and a stronger sense of community.

Well done to all our Student Council members for their hard work and commitment this term!

Building Resilience Through the FRIENDS Program

This term, some of our 1st and 2nd Year students at Scoil Aireagail completed the My FRIENDS Youth Resilience Program, a program designed to help students build resilience and improve their emotional well-being.

To mark the program's conclusion, students enjoyed hot chocolate while sharing insights with the next group set to participate. Feedback from students highlighted the value of activities like relaxation exercises, helpful thinking strategies, and deep breathing, alongside useful techniques for managing feelings and worries, with many eager to continue applying these skills in daily life.

Programs like FRIENDS equip students with tools to handle challenges, strengthen relationships, and create a positive school environment. We commend our students for their engagement and look forward to the next term's participants benefiting from this initiative.





PARENTS HUB



Together in Learning, Together in Growth

Supporting Your Student at Home

As we approach the end of the term, it's important to reflect on how we can support our students, especially after events like Anti-Bullying Week, College Week, exams, and Stand Up Awareness Week. Here are some ways you can help your child at home.

Supporting Studying

Encourage good study habits, particularly during exam periods. Help your child balance study with relaxation to stay motivated and focused.

Key Points:

- **Create a Study Plan:** Design a study timetable with breaks.
- **Encourage Mindfulness:** Help manage stress with relaxation techniques.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Acknowledge small wins to maintain motivation.
- **Stay Active:** Encourage regular physical activity to boost energy and reduce stress.

Your support will help your child stay focused and calm during busy times.

Supporting Awareness Weeks

This term, students participated in Anti-Bullying Week and Stand Up Awareness Week, focusing on kindness and inclusion. Continue these conversations at home to reinforce the messages of empathy and support.

Key Points:

- **Discuss Key Messages:** Talk about what they learned during these events.
- **Promote Inclusion:** Encourage acts of kindness.
- **Be a Role Model:** Demonstrate empathy and support.

Fostering inclusivity at home helps reinforce what students experienced during these weeks.

Supporting Mental Well-being

With exams and a busy term, it's essential to check in on your child's mental health. Help them manage stress and create a calm space for study and relaxation.

Key Points:

- **Maintain Open Communication:** Encourage your child to share their feelings.
- **Break Down Tasks:** Divide big tasks into smaller steps.
- **Encourage Breaks:** Regular downtime is important.
- **Create a Safe Space:** Ensure a quiet area for study and relaxation.

If stress or anxiety becomes overwhelming, seek support from teachers or a professional.

Looking Ahead

As we move into the new year, continue to support your child's well-being. Thank you for your ongoing involvement in making our school a place of care and community.

For additional resources, visit our updated Parents Hub on the school website. Let's keep working together for a positive year ahead.

IMPORTANT DATES

Term 2: Monday 6 th January 2025 to Friday 11 th April 2025 inclusive		
6 Weeks	Monday, 6 th January	Term Begins
	Thursday, 9 th January	Christmas Examination- Reports completed on Vsware
	Tuesday, 14 th January	2nd and TY Year Parent/Teacher meeting (4:15pm – 6:45pm)
	Thursday, 16 th January	School Closed: Junior Cycle in-service training online
	20th January – 24th January	Pre-Leaving Certificate and Pre-Junior Cycle Examinations
	Tuesday, 28 th January	School Closed: Senior Cycle in-service training
	Monday, 3 rd February	School Closed: Public Holiday
	Friday, 14 th February	School closes for mid-term break at 12:10 for Staff Anti-Bullying Training
❄ February Mid-Term Break Monday 17th February 2025 – Friday 21st February 2025 inclusive ❄		
7 Weeks	Monday, 24 th February	Term Begins
	Wednesday, 26 th February	Staff Meeting/ Planning (1:30pm – 3:30pm)
	Thursday, 6 th March	1st Year & 6th Parent/Teacher meeting (4:15pm – 6:45pm)
	Monday, 17 th March	School Closed: Public Holiday
	Tuesday, 18 th March	School Closed
	Friday, 11 th April	School closes for Easter, Last day of term
🐣 Easter Break Monday 14th April 2025 – Friday 25th April 2025 inclusive 🐣		

Support Made Simple: Guiding Students to Wellbeing

Our wellbeing team created this infographic as part of our ongoing efforts to improve student wellbeing. As part of our School Improvement Plan, we aim to increase awareness of the support available to students, ensuring that everyone knows who to talk to when they need help. This is one of the key steps in our commitment to creating a supportive and accessible environment for all students.

NEED TO TALK TO SOMEBODY?

Being a teenager can be challenging, and sometimes you may feel overwhelmed. Whether it's exam pressure, anxiety, peer pressure, family issues, or just the ups and downs of growing up, remember that you're not alone. There's always someone to talk to. Here are some people who can support you in School:

Cairdeas
6th Year students supporting 1st Years in their transition to secondary school, offering guidance and friendship.

Guidance Counsellor
The Guidance Counsellor is trained to help with emotional, social, and academic issues. They're a safe person to discuss anything that's on your mind.

Teachers
Teachers are not just there for academics; they care about your wellbeing too and can offer advice or point you to the right resources.

Class Tutor
Your class tutor is there to help you with any school-related concerns and can guide you to additional support if needed.

Friends
Sometimes, a friend can be the best listener. Talking things out with someone who understands can make all the difference.

Year Head
Your Year Head oversees your year group and can help with both academic and personal challenges.

Teacher Mentors
Teachers supporting 6th Years with exams, study planning, and school challenges, while also helping other students.

Scoil Aireagail
Pathway of support



