



Scoil Aireagail Insights

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

September October 2024



Welcome to the first edition of *Scoil Aireagail Insights!* This term has been an exciting one for our school community, filled with new developments, academic successes, and a host of vibrant activities. From the opening of new facilities to the return of sports, events, and student initiatives, there's so much to celebrate. Our students and staff have been busy making the most of every opportunity.

Read on to discover highlights from across the school and what's in store for the coming months!



Excellence in Education

Care
Equality
Community
Respect

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PRINCIPAL HELEN MCTIGHE'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we wrap up the first seven weeks of this new school year, I want to take a moment to share my thoughts and reflections with you. It has been a busy and rewarding start for our students, staff, and school community.

Settling into Routines

The first few weeks are always an important time for students to settle into the rhythm of school life, and I'm pleased to see how quickly everyone has adjusted. Each day, I see young people growing more confident and comfortable in their surroundings, ready to learn and succeed. Our thirty-six new first year students have done particularly well in making the transition to post-primary school, showing enthusiasm and a willingness to embrace new challenges. They have been especially supported in this by our wonderful sixth year Cairdeas mentors.

Learning and Engagement

We have celebrated several important occasions so far this year: the official opening of our new school buildings and school library, our Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate results and our open night for incoming students to name a few. In our classrooms, there has been a palpable energy around learning. Our teachers and SNAs work hard to support your child's learning through active, engaging methodologies as they journey through the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate curricula.

Extracurricular Activities

Beyond academics, our extra-curricular programs have seen a strong level of participation. Clubs, sports teams, and creative arts groups are all up and running. Whether it is on the pitch, in the art room, or during music rehearsals, our students are finding their passions and connecting with peers who share similar interests. I encourage every student to get involved in at least one activity outside of the classroom – it is a wonderful way to build friendships, develop leadership skills, and, of course, have fun!

Student Well-Being

The well-being of our students is always a priority. We are committed to providing a supportive environment where every student feels safe, valued, and has a sense of belonging. If your child is facing any challenges, whether academic or personal, please contact us. We are here to help.

Communication and Partnership

Lastly, I want to thank you, our parents, and guardians, for your continued partnership. Your involvement, whether through parent-teacher meetings, the Parents Association, school celebrations, or simply supporting your child's learning at home, makes a tremendous difference. Open lines of communication between school and home are essential for the success of our students, and we appreciate your engagement and feedback.

As we move forward, I am excited about the months ahead. There will be challenges, as there always are, but I am confident we will meet them together.

Thank you for your ongoing support. I look forward to seeing how much our students will achieve in the coming months.

Warm regards,

Helen McTighe

Principal





STUDENT PARTICIPATION



Together We Thrive!

Student Prefects

We are thrilled to introduce our new school prefects: Marie-Therése Aylward, Mark Power, Erin Walsh, and Patrick Dungan. These exceptional students will serve as leaders and ambassadors, representing their peers and upholding the school's values. In each edition of *Aireagail Insights*, we'll feature one of our prefects—this week, Erin Walsh shares her insights on the importance of listening and her advice to younger students: enjoy school, try new things, and always put yourself forward!

Interview with our 5th Year Prefect Erin Walsh

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

Listening skills are extremely important. Prefects act as a liaison between students and teachers and listening to what the students want is the best way to represent them.

Do you have any advice for younger students?

Enjoy your time at school! It's the only time in your life where you'll spend every day with your friends. Do your best, but always make sure to have fun.

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

Try everything! Even if you think you won't enjoy it, it's worth a shot. The best way to learn is by doing, and never be afraid to put yourself forward. Even if you don't get the position you want, like on student council or a sports team, no one will ever judge you for trying your best.

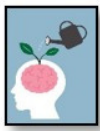
Who is someone you look up to or admire, and what qualities do they possess that you find inspiring?

I really admire Iain Liam Ward, an Irish TikTokker diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. Despite having only a year left, he's using his time to raise as much money as possible for cancer research. His positive outlook on life is truly inspiring, and his journey is worth following.

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

My favourite memory has been the homeless sleepout we organised last year. It was so much fun to sleep out with our whole year, but even more rewarding to see months of planning come together for something everyone could enjoy.





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Music

At Scoil Aireagail, our *Tuesday Tunes* sessions have become a weekly highlight, showcasing the incredible talents of our music students. Each week, they treat us to live performances, sharing their love for song and music with the entire school community. Whether it's a beautiful solo or a lively group piece, these sessions are filled with creativity and passion. You can catch all the performances on our Instagram page, so be sure to check it out and support our talented musicians! **Gaelge** Tá áthas orainn a



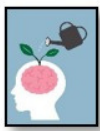
fhógairt go mbeidh Scoil Aireagail ag glacadh páirte i scéim Gaelbhrtach i mbliana! Beidh orainn uile ár ndícheall a dhéanamh chun an Ghaeilge a chur chun cinn, ní hamháin sa scoil ach sa phobal freisin. Táimid ag tnúth le bliain lán d'imeachtaí éagsúla, agus tá súil againn go mbeidh sibh linn. Déanaimid ceiliúradh ar an teanga gach lá—mar a rinneamar le déanaí nuair a labhraíomar Gaeilge ar feadh an lae, agus bhí sé chomh héasca le húllóg! Míle buíochas leis an bhfoireann Gaelbhrtach i gCeatharlach as an gceardlann iontach a d'eagraigh siad dúinn. Bhí craic againn le déanaí ag imirt cluichí trí mheán na Gaeilge, ullmhaithe ag an gcoiste Gaelbhrtach. Beatha teanga í a labhairt!



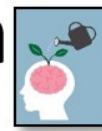
Art

Our Art students have been busy with creative and educational activities recently. Fifth and Sixth Years visited Dublin to explore the National Gallery and the Hugh Lane Art Gallery, where they enjoyed a diverse collection of works, from Irish painter Jack B. Yeats to European impressionists like Monet. Meanwhile, Fifth Year students took their learning outdoors to study Pre-Christian Ireland by visiting the local Ballyboodan Ogham Stone, and later created abstract lino prints inspired by Stone Age motifs. Congratulations to our Third Year student who painted a beautiful bodhrán for the music room, and to the Second Year Art students who transformed a garden wall with a vibrant mural on the **flowers**, of 'biodiversity.' Their colourful butterflies, and bees, along with recycled car hubcap sculptures, have turned the sensory garden into a welcoming and creative space for all.





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English

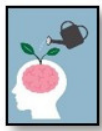
We are excited to announce the opening of our new school library, a vibrant space brimming with an extensive selection of books that cater to the diverse interests of our teens across multiple genres. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate this important milestone—it was truly a wonderful success! Our library is more than just a place to borrow books; it serves as a welcoming haven that encourages students to engage with reading, an essential practice that fosters lifelong literacy skills. Just a reminder that the book club/library will be open every Monday for borrowing, returning, or simply exploring our fantastic collection. We look forward to welcoming you all!



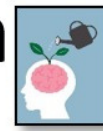
Geography

Our Transition Year students have been actively engaged in the Global Schools Programme with @SLIWaterford, an initiative of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network that supports UNESCO's Global Action Program on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Through this program, students are exploring the music industry's impact on climate change and are excited to visit local primary schools in November to share their insights and inspire positive action. Additionally, they recently focused on the issue of fast fashion in Geography class, where our Climate Literacy facilitator, Therese, helped deepen their understanding of its harmful effects on the environment and the difficult conditions faced by garment workers. This initiative empowers students with the knowledge, values, and skills needed to address the challenges of our century and contribute to a more sustainable and prosperous world.





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TY Trips

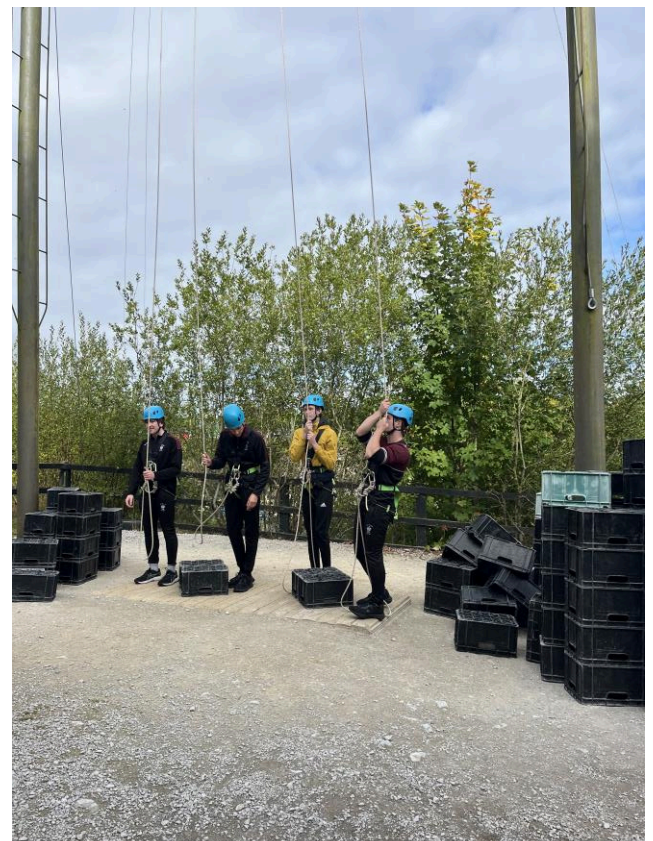
Ella Kearney Reflection Kilkenny Activity Centre

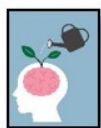
Reflecting on our first trip to the Kilkenny Activity Centre, we had an absolute blast! After arriving and getting geared up for paintballing, we dove right into the action with five thrilling rounds, filled with laughter and friendly competition. Each game had its unique challenges, which kept us on our toes. After paintballing, we transitioned to bubble soccer, where we playfully knocked each other around, creating a fun and chaotic atmosphere. By the end of the day, we were tired and hungry, so we enjoyed a scenic walk to the castle park, where we had lunch and shared stories about our favourite moments. Overall, it was a fantastic day that set a positive tone for the year ahead. **Ballyhass**

Our next adventure took us to Ballyhass in Co. Cork, where many of us were excited to try new activities. After an early start on the bus, we arrived and were warmly welcomed by the staff, who briefed us on the rules and safety measures. We split into two groups to tackle zip-lining and crate stacking, both of which were exhilarating experiences. After that, we tried our hand at axe throwing, culminating in a friendly competition that brought out our competitive spirits. The day continued with a trek to the water course, where we donned wetsuits and life jackets. The warm weather made it the perfect day for water fun, and we splashed around, enjoying every moment. This trip was not only a thrilling adventure but also an excellent opportunity for us to bond as a year group.

Ploughing Championships

Our most recent outing to the Ploughing Championships in Ratheniska, Co. Laois, was another memorable experience. We set off early to avoid traffic and enjoyed beautiful weather throughout the day. Upon arrival, we received our tickets and were briefed on our meeting point, creating an air of excitement. As we navigated through the bustling crowds, we explored numerous stalls, collecting freebies like pens, stickers, and bracelets. One of the highlights was getting a photo with Marty Mone, which added an element of fun to our day. The vibrant atmosphere and engaging displays made it an enjoyable experience. By the end of the day, we were tired but happy, riding back on the bus with music and laughter, reflecting on our fantastic adventures. Each trip has strengthened our connections, and we look forward to more exciting outings in the future!





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Careers

Our sixth-year students and their parents attended an informative "Life after the Leaving Certificate" talk hosted by Guidance Counsellors Jim O'Connor and Helen McTighe. The session featured insights from Ger Long, a parent and Head of the Department of Accounting and Economics at SETU Waterford, providing valuable perspectives on further education options. Additionally, Virginia Bohan from KCETB engaged with our enthusiastic sixth-year students, discussing the "earn while you learn" apprenticeship model. This alternative pathway to traditional education allows students to gain practical experience while earning a wage. These initiatives have equipped our students with crucial information as they prepare for their future careers.



Study Skills

In recent weeks, our Junior and Senior Cycle students had the opportunity to participate in a series of engaging workshops hosted by Inspire Education, centered on the theme of "Study Skills Made Simple." These interactive sessions provided students with valuable strategies for effective learning, including time management techniques, note-taking methods, and memory enhancement tips. By learning how to set achievable goals and maintain motivation, students are now better equipped to tackle their studies with confidence. The workshops also emphasized the importance of a positive mindset and offered practical tools to help students stay organized and focused on their academic journey. We look forward to seeing the positive impact these skills will have on our students' learning experiences!



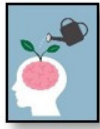
After School Study

Study continues after school on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings from 4 to 6 pm! Spaces are still available, so don't miss this great opportunity to focus on your studies and get your homework done. Starting your study routine early in the year is a key to success in future exams!

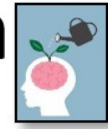
CBA Workshops

Our 2nd Year students have completed the AIB Future Sparks CBA Skills Workshop, focusing on essential academic skills. They explored the importance of Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) and developed skills in time management, research, and organization. We look forward to seeing how they apply these skills in their CBA projects!





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KCETB Student of the Year

In September, our 6th Year Student of the Year from the Class of 2024, Kieran Crowley, attended the KCETB Student of the Year Awards alongside our principal, Helen McTighe, and deputy principal, Shane Fallon. We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to Kieran on this incredible achievement. His journey at Scoil Aireagail has been characterized by dedication, resilience, and a ~~excell~~ passion for learning. Kieran has excelled academically and has been a remarkable role model and source of inspiration for his peers. Well done, Kieran!



Leaving Certificate Results

Congratulations to the Class of 2024 on receiving their Leaving Certificate results! They have now embarked on the next stage of their education and professional lives. Their hard work and dedication have truly paid off, marking the beginning of an exciting journey ahead. We wish them the best of luck in all their future endeavours. Graduates of Scoil Aireagail are articulate, confident, creative, and well-rounded individuals—much more than just a number. We are incredibly proud of each and every one of them.



Junior Certificate Results

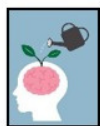
Congratulations to all our Junior Cycle students who recently received their results! These results reflect hard work and dedication, as well as the strong partnership between students, parents, and staff at Scoil Aireagail. Along the way, key skills such as critical thinking, effective communication, and resilience have been developed, which will be invaluable in the future. Well done to everyone involved!



JUNIOR AND LEAVING CERTIFICATE OCTOBER HOUSE EXAMS

Our third and sixth year students are completing their October house exams this week. These exams help our students prepare for their final exams in June. Students will receive important feedback from their teachers following the exams which will allow students to identify their strengths and highlight weaknesses. This gives them the opportunity to take the necessary steps to continue improving.





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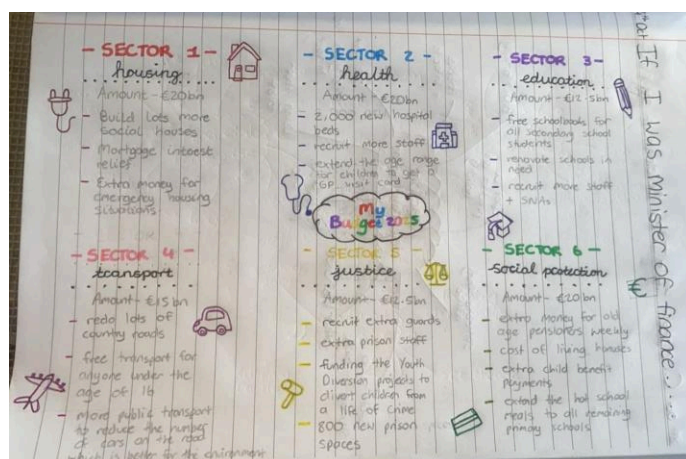
Maths

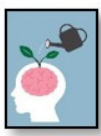
Last week, Scoil Aireagail celebrated Maths Week with a series of fun and engaging activities designed to inspire a love for mathematics! Students tackled exciting puzzles, participated in a whole school maths quiz, and took part in various numeracy challenges and competitions. The energy throughout the school was fantastic, fostering the importance of creativity in daily life. A huge thank you to the Maths Department for organizing such a wonderful week—your efforts truly made this event a memorable experience for everyone!



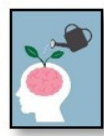
Business

Junior Cycle business students have had a fantastic and busy term diving into the exciting world of economics! They explored the government's role in the economy and got to analyse Budget 2025. The discussions around taxes were not just about numbers; they highlighted why paying taxes helps build our communities and provides essential services. By engaging with these topics, students are not only learning but also discovering how they can become responsible and informed citizens in a fun way!





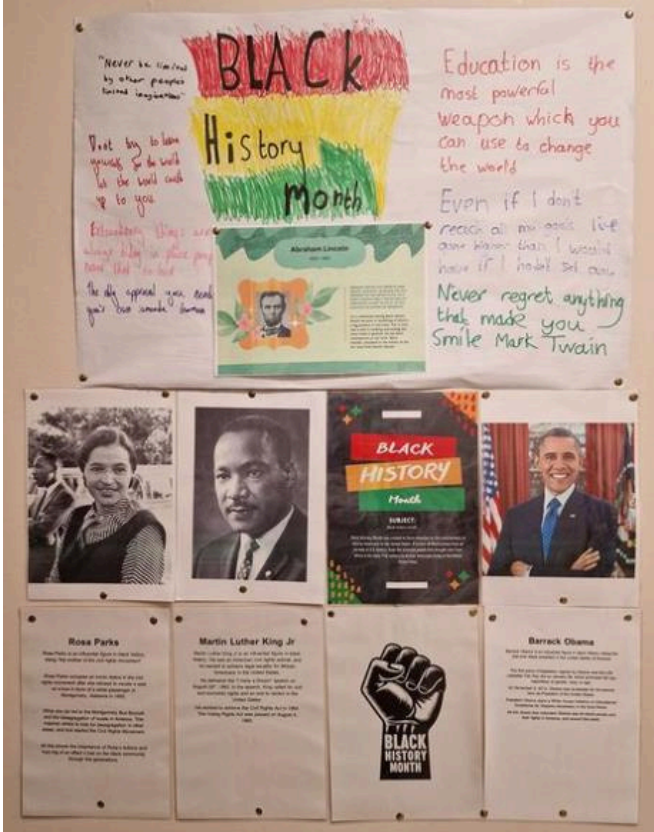
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History

Our Transition Year students have been busy creating powerful posters for Black History Month, combining History and English lessons to honour and celebrate this important month!



Certificate of Merit Recipients

A big congratulations goes to the incredible 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Year students who have been awarded the Certificate of Merit for their fantastic achievements in the Positive Behaviour Initiative. Their commitment to improving classwork, homework, behaviour, and participation in extra-curricular activities truly inspires everyone at the school. The hard work and dedication displayed by these students are commendable and serve as a shining example for their peers.



Science

Our 2nd Year students have been busy growing crystals in science class.





SPORTS ROUNDUP

Celebrating Team Spirit, Talent, and Triumph



Junior Camogie Match Report - 24th September

On September 24th, our Junior Camogie team travelled to Hacketstown for their Leinster Junior Camogie Championship match. Despite a challenging start, where Hacketstown took an early lead, the Scoil Aireagail girls displayed remarkable resilience. Trailing by four points at halftime, they entered the second half reinvigorated. Key performances included Saoirse Walsh's consistent free-taking and an impressive goal from Leah Davis, narrowing the gap to just one point. Grace Fitzpatrick shone in the centre back position, earning numerous nominations for player of the match. In a thrilling finish, Leah Davis scored again just before the final whistle, securing a well-deserved draw at 2-07 each. **Scoil Aireagail abú!**

Aireagail abú!

Final Score: 2-07 to 2-07

Scorers: Leah Davis - 1-02, Cara Coogan - 1-03, Saoirse Walsh - 0-02

Report and photos by Cameron Walshe; Stats by John Sommers - TY GAA Future Leaders.



Senior Hurling Match Report - Scoil Aireagail vs. Comeragh College

Recently, Scoil Aireagail secured a hard-fought victory over Comeragh College in a thrilling hurling match played in challenging weather conditions. Despite heavy rain and strong winds, our team rose to the occasion, finishing with a score of 4-19 to 3-10. The match kicked off with an early goal from Mikey Dunne, though Comeragh quickly equalized. Adapting well to the tough conditions, Scoil Aireagail dominated the first half, leading 3-7 to 1-5 at halftime, thanks in part to Matthew Murphy's excellent clearances. The second half saw our half-forward line, led by Cathal Coogan, maintain the pressure and deliver impressive long-range scores. Comeragh fought valiantly until the final whistle, but Scoil Aireagail emerged victorious with a well-deserved win.

Final Score: 4-19 to 3-10

Scorers: Mikey Dunne (1-1), Eoin Aylward (1-3), and Cathal Coogan (0-9).

Man of the Match: Matthew Murphy

Report by Caoimhe Corcoran; Stats by Grace Fitzpatrick, GAA Future Leaders.



Junior Hurling Match Report

Recently, Scoil Aireagail's junior team faced a tough Mountmellick side in a challenging encounter. While the scoreboard did not favour us, the team's determination was commendable. Mountmellick's offense applied early pressure, but our defence, led by Danny Somers and goalkeeper Cian Franks, made crucial tackles and saves. Scoil Aireagail found its rhythm midway through the first half, with Sam Mansfield and Mikey Dunne contributing a combined total of 3-6. Despite the loss, the team fought hard and is focused on their next game, with Mikey Dunne named Man of the Match. *Report by Caoimhe Corcoran; Stats by Rory Aylward GAA Future Leaders.*

Picture to the left

CELEBRATING OUR NEW BUILDINGS

At the start of the school term, we were thrilled to celebrate the official opening of our two brand-new, state-of-the-art school buildings, a €6.6m investment in the future of Scoil Aireagail.

This modern facility marks an exciting new chapter for our school community, offering cutting-edge classrooms, enhanced learning spaces, and upgraded facilities that will benefit both current and future students.

The investment in these new buildings reflects our ongoing commitment to providing a high-quality learning environment, supporting both academic and personal growth. We look forward to seeing our students thrive in this new space and build on the strong foundation already established at Scoil Aireagail. Thank you to all who made this project a reality!





PARENTS HUB



Together in Learning, Together in Growth

Supporting Your Student at Home

As a parent, your support is crucial in your child's educational journey, especially when preparing for exams, managing dyslexia, or dealing with anxiety. Here are some practical tips to help at home.

Supporting Studying

Encourage good study habits by creating a balanced study plan that includes relaxation. Promote healthy habits like regular meals, hydration, and enough sleep.

Key Points:

- **Establish a Routine:** Create a study timetable with breaks.
- **Encourage Exercise:** Physical activity helps reduce stress and improves focus.
- **Set Achievable Goals:** Work together to set realistic short- and long-term goals.
- **Stay Positive:** Celebrate small successes to maintain motivation.

Regular check-ins and praise can help reduce study-related anxiety.

Supporting Dyslexia

Dyslexia can present challenges, but a positive environment is key. Discuss dyslexia openly to help your child understand their learning difference and engage in paired reading to boost literacy and confidence.

Key Points:

- **Read Together:** Spend time on paired reading activities.
- **Use Technology:** Encourage typing for schoolwork.
- **Limit Homework Time:** Keep sessions productive and communicate with teachers if needed.
- **Be Supportive:** Help without taking over homework tasks.

Engage in regular conversations and activities to build self-esteem.

Supporting Anxiety

Anxiety is common in young people, especially regarding schoolwork. Listen to your child's concerns and help them express their worries. Break tasks into smaller steps to make challenges more manageable.

Key Points:

- **Talk About Feelings:** Validate their emotions.
- **Break Down Tasks:** Divide larger tasks into manageable parts.
- **Model Calmness:** Manage your own stress to help them.
- **Create a Routine:** Include relaxation and social time.

If anxiety impacts daily activities, consider seeking support from a GP or mental health professional.

By focusing on your child's unique needs, you can help them navigate school life with confidence and success. Your encouragement truly makes a difference.

For additional help and support, visit our new Parents Hub on the school webpage!



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



Celebrating Diversity, Building Connections

Welcoming Our International Students to Scoil Aireagail

This year, Scoil Aireagail is delighted to welcome a diverse group of international students from various corners of Europe. Each student brings ~~their~~ ~~perspective~~ their unique experiences and perspectives, enriching our community. Here's a glimpse into their journeys and thoughts about their time here so far. **Noémi from Slovakia** chose

Ireland to improve her English and explore Irish culture. She finds the differences in the school systems fascinating, noting that classes start earlier back home and are generally more structured. Noémi enjoys Biology and Agriculture Science, ~~appreciating~~ ~~the~~ appreciating the experiments. While she misses her family and the warmer weather, she loves the welcoming atmosphere at Scoil Aireagail.

Jakub from the Czech Republic is here to learn English and experience life in a smaller school setting. He notes that his school back home has over 1,000 students, making our community feel much more intimate. Jakub's favourite subject is Construction, where he enjoys working with wood. He misses the convenience of public transport back home but looks forward to traveling around Ireland during his stay.

Thea from Germany wanted to spend her exchange year in an English-speaking country without venturing too far from home. She appreciates the friendly environment at Scoil Aireagail and finds the smaller school size comforting. Thea enjoys Math and Art, and she is particularly interested in Business, a subject she hadn't studied before. She is excited about experiencing the festive season here, having already planned activities for Christmas.

Maria from Spain chose Ireland for its proximity to home and the opportunity to improve her English. She enjoys PE and has noticed differences in school hours and building sizes compared to her school in Spain. Maria feels grateful for the warm welcome she has received from both staff and students, which has made her transition smoother.

Caterina, also from Spain, was inspired to study here after her sisters had a similar experience. She finds that the level of English instruction in Ireland is higher than in Spain, which is beneficial for her. Caterina misses her family, friends, and basketball, but she appreciates how supportive her classmates and teachers have been.

Ignacio from Spain is excited to explore the beauty of Ireland. He enjoys Wood Technology and has been surprised by the differences in school routines, such as the use of mobile phones and lockers. Ignacio looks forward to winning the soccer league with his Irish team, a testament to his eagerness to engage with the local culture.

We are thrilled to have these international students join our Scoil Aireagail family and are excited to see how their experiences will shape our school community this year. Their unique stories and backgrounds contribute to the vibrant tapestry of life at Scoil Aireagail, fostering friendship and understanding across cultures



IMPORTANT DATES

	October Mid-Term Break Monday 28th October 2024 – Friday 1st November 2024 inclusive	
7 Weeks	Thursday, 14th November	3rd Year Parent/Teacher/ Student meeting (4:15pm – 6:45pm)
	Sunday, 1st December	Christmas Market
	Friday, 6th December	School Closed
	Wednesday, 11th – Tuesday, 17th December	Christmas Examinations (1st, 2nd, TY, 5th Years)
	Friday, 20th December	School closes for Christmas, Last day of term
	Christmas Break Monday 23rd December 2024 – Friday 3rd January 2025 inclusive	





Christmas Market

**Sunday, 1st December
from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

**Music, baking, crafts and an
abundance of Christmas cheer.**

**Scoil Aireagail, Ballyhale,
Kilkenny, R95AH30**

You will find unique and handmade gifts for your loved ones, delicious treats for yourself, and festive tunes to get you in the holiday mood. Don't miss this opportunity to support our local community and celebrate the season of giving. We look forward to seeing you there!