



St. Patrick's Secondary School Coláiste an Oileáin

NEWSLETTER



A message from the Principal.

Denis O'Donovan

I am delighted to introduce once again our annual Christmas newsletter which gives us an opportunity to keep you informed of the variety of great work being done in our school and an opportunity to showcase the great work being done by our teachers and their students. The school year began on August 31st when we welcomed 45 students into first year bringing the total number of students in the school to 200. We also welcomed 4 new teachers to the staff bringing the total staff to 20. Our school is a vibrant and dynamic community where a caring and happy environment provides a solid foundation to excellent teaching and learning from the classroom to a variety of opportunities and experiences.

The months of August and September always bring an air of expectancy for the Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate students as they await exam results. 2015 was yet another excellent year for our exam students all who performed superbly well and more importantly each performed to their individual potential.

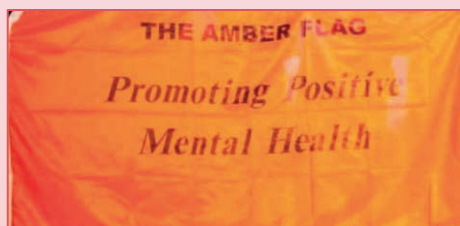
The 2014/2015 school year was an exceptional year on the sporting front winning 2 Munster Colleges football titles, 2 Kerry post Primary schools football titles and for the second year in a row the First years won the All Ireland 'A' basketball title. This is a wonderful list of achievements and behind each cup is a team of young people who have done the school proud, whose commitment and dedication has been exemplary and the experiences and memories will live with them and stand to them always. I wish to thank our dedicated staff who work tirelessly and give so generously of their time to provide the many educational opportunities that are a very important part of our school life. I wish to take this opportunity to wish you and your family every blessing this Christmas and the very best for 2016.

2015 - A Season of Silverware - A School of Champions.



L to R: Donal Geaney 1st Year South West Basketball champions, Jack Daly Munster Colleges U16½ champions, Shay Walsh Munster Colleges U15 Champions, Shane O'Donoghue Kerry Colleges Joe O'Connor Cup Champions, Sean Brosnan Kerry Colleges Brendan O'Shea Cup Champions, Adam Donoghue U16 South West Basketball champions, Garry O'Sullivan 1st year All Ireland 'A' Basketball Champions.

THE AMBER FLAG INITIATIVE - *Promoting Positive Mental Health in the school*



The staff and students of St. Patrick's Secondary School, Castleisland have taken on the task of promoting positive mental health in the school by becoming involved in the **Amber Flag Initiative**.

The Amber Flag Initiative aims to encourage schools, societies and clubs to promote and actively bring about a cultural change in the promotion of positive mental health within the educational system and other organisations. The amber flag initiative will enhance the already good work that is being done where mental

health is concerned by making positive mental health a daily topic of conversation leading to a cultural shift where mental becomes the norm and leading to the breakdown of the stigma that is associated with mental health resulting in individuals seeking help sooner when mental issues arise.

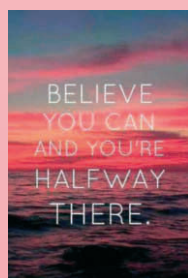
Last term St. Patrick's Secondary School endorsed its commitment to supporting the positive mental health of its students with the launch of *The Amber Flag Initiative*. This initiative was developed by Suicide Aware with the support of The Institute of Guidance Counsellors, Cork GAA and Red FM. The idea behind the initiative is to present clubs, societies and schools all over the country with a clear framework from which to channel and co-ordinate their efforts at improving and encouraging the positive mental health of their members or students.

We began this process in school by establishing an Amber Flag Project Team which includes both teachers and students. The co-ordinator of the project is Mrs. Oonagh Collins (CSPE & SPHE Teacher) who has the support from the Principal, Mr. O'Donovan, Deputy Principal Mr. O'Connor and Guidance Councillor Ms. Rosenberg Polack. The students involved include 17 boys from 3rd year.



The Amber Flag Team.

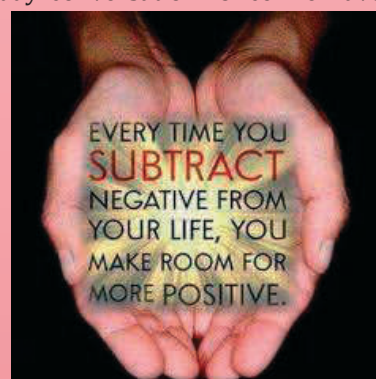
Our Project Team then needed to come up with three tasks, to be completed during the academic year. We decided that our first task would be to design a *Notice Board* which would be located in a central area in our school. The students came up with the idea of a tree for the mural which would contain positive words as the leaves and also came up with a St. Patrick's Positive Mental Health Mascot, *Ollie the Owl*, which is unique to our school. The notice board will display notices, positive messages, news and general information on issues relating to positive mental health and wellbeing along with details of student supports available.



Our second activity was to establish a *Mentoring System*, whereby a senior student will mentor a first year student and make that transition from primary to secondary school smoother. The senior student act as a great support and confidant for the younger pupil. At the moment the students are meeting on a weekly basis and the system is working very well. Our Third planned event for this year is a *Mental Health Awareness Week*, which will take place in the school from the 14th December to the 18th December. Planned activities include a pedal for Pieta, penalty shoot-outs, a smoothie sale and a positive mental health quiz for first and second years. During this week also, five of our students will be on Radio Kerry's Just a Thought each morning at 7.30am to convey a positive thought for the day.

It is hoped that through the process of completing these tasks our students will become more educated and aware of the strategies that they can develop to improve their own wellbeing. We hope that they may perhaps begin to talk more freely about their own mental and emotional health and that they may become more aware of the supports that are available to them. The overall aim is to reduce the taboo or stigma attached to mental health issues which can affect all of us at some time or another. Suicide Aware hopes that in developing an environment of openness and support, students are encouraged to "talk, connect and share" thus making discussion about mental health part of our everyday conversation. Once we have completed our three tasks, the school will be presented with the Amber Flag which will fly prominently outside our school as a symbol of our support for the positive mental health for all of our students. We are aware that small steps can have long term positive effects and we are very excited to 'fly the flag' for our school community's happiness, health and wellbeing

This is a very worthwhile initiative for our school and it will grow and develop in the coming years and we hope that the **Amber Flag** will help to connect and reconnect people in a making a real effort to reduce stigma and improve support and help seeking behaviour among young people and adults. We would encourage other sectors of the community to come on board with us in this initiative and take control of mental health.



GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING

Guidance Counsellor – Ms Rosenberg-Polak



The School has a fully qualified Guidance Counsellor whose remit is to help students make informed personal, educational and career decisions. The Guidance Counsellor will offer students help and support in coping with personal difficulties and academic concerns.

The Guidance & Counselling service provides an “open door” policy to students and all students are informed of the service provided at the beginning of the school year and encouraged to avail of it.

The School's Guidance and Counselling service offers a range of interventions and activities which help the students make choices about their lives. As students go through second level education they will make significant choices related to personal issues, social issues, educational issues and career issues. The Guidance Counsellor is a trained professional with the expertise and knowledge to help students make choices in these three important areas. Guidance and counselling is available to all students from first year to sixth year.

The Guidance Counsellor will provide help and assistance through;

- Consultation
- Assessment
- Information
- Guidance activities
- Referrals



The Role of the Resource Teacher.....Because every student matters

**Fair isn't everybody
getting the same
thing...fair is everybody
getting what they need
in order to be
successful**

In our school the Resource Department provides assistance to meet the needs of students assessed as having special educational needs, learning difficulties or disabilities. The Resource Teacher provides additional support to students who have entered main stream schools and liaises with other teachers and parents in relation to the child's interests and needs. Support is offered in alternative ways. Worksheets and creative activities suited to the students' ability are provided. This allows the resource teacher to focus on specific areas that need addressing. Computers are also used, there are numerous online resources that help improve and examine a student's level of knowledge. It is also important to include a fun element in learning, this helps to keep the students' interested. Whether it is group work or poster making on a specific topic, these methods allow the lessons to be lively and student centred.

There are numerous learning difficulties and disabilities such as ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder), SEBD (Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties), Autism, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia and Hearing Impairment. Some of these disabilities will fall under the General Learning Disabilities category.

The role of the Resource Teacher is assessing and recording a student's needs and progress. Keeping records helps in the processing and communicating the students' understanding of the curriculum. It is important to set realistic targets over specific time periods. The process of setting goals allows students to choose where they want to go in school and what they want to achieve. By knowing what they want to achieve, they know what they have to concentrate on and improve. Goal setting gives students long-term vision and short-term motivation. Students are taught in a separate area. This allows them to be in a safe and comfortable environment which supports their needs. It provides a space where students can learn at a pace suitable to them. The role of the Resource Teacher is an important element within our school environment providing extra support and guidance to students during their time in our school.



FIRST YEARS 2015/2016..... The story so far !

Medal Winners at the First year Post Primary School Football Blitz



First Year Soccer Team 2015/2016

All ready for the Hope Foundation Christmas Shoe Box Appeal.



Kerry Footballer & Sky Sports Living for Sport Athlete Mentor Darren O'Sullivan with First year students.



Getting ready for The Active Schools Programme.



STUDENT COUNCIL 2015/2016



Student Council Members 2015/2016.

Front: Ronnie Mallon 1st year.

Middle: Paddy Flynn 5th year, Art O'Mahony 5th year, Darren O'Donovan 2nd year.

Back: Mr. Hayes Teacher Coordinator, Ethan Reidy 3rd year, David Riordan TY.

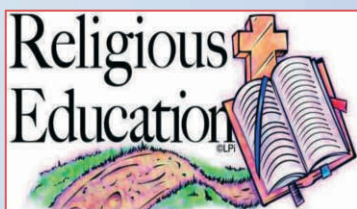
Over the past number of weeks students in our school have been busy selecting members of the study body to represent them on the student council for 2015/16. The student council is an integral part of the school community and provides an opportunity for students to voice their opinions and offer suggestions to many aspects of school life. It is envisaged that the student council would reflect the opinions and ideas of the student population and act as an official link between staff and students on matters of general interest within the school community. There has been quite a large interest amongst the student population in

becoming a member of the representative body as highlighted with keenly contested elections taking place within two year groups, first and Transition year highlighting the appetite that exists amongst students to represent their fellow cohorts.

Over the course of the school year the Council aims to encourage a spirit of co-operation and mutual respect between staff and students and will be holding a number of key events within the school. As part of the 1916 Rising centenary celebrations we will be holding a Commemoration week during Easter week in remembrance of the heroes of 1916. On March 15th 2016 the school will participate in 'Proclamation Day' where we will participate in a number of events. To start the day we will raise the Irish tricolour, followed by a reading of the 1916 Proclamation. In addition to this 1st, 2nd and 5th year history students will participate in the national proclamation competition whereby students create their own proclamation for 2016 that will reflect the values, ideals and aspirations of the generation of 2016. Students will read their proclamations on Proclamation Day as part of the celebrations.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



It has been a busy and productive few months in Religion classes for the students in our school. It all started with the preparation for the beginning of our school year Mass, followed by welcoming our new chaplain Father John Buckley, November Prayer Services and our Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal which are just a few of the highlights. The beginning of the School Year Mass welcomed new musicians from 1st year to the great group of musicians and singers we have already in the school. The Team hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal involved 1st, 2nd and 3rd years and they gathered 60 boxes in total, a great

achievement. The 5th year students are this year taking part in the Ceilúradh na nÓg programme. The students are actively participating in this faith based programme of exploration, action, reflection and presentation. The students are focusing on Religious Art and Architecture and in April will give a presentation based on their work and what they have learned at the Ceilúradh Gathering in Tralee. For the month of Advent students have decorated a Jesse Tree in the school after already displaying their November Remembrance Tree for the month of Holy Souls. The students are currently practising their Christmas Carols for the turning on of the Christmas lights in Castleisland. They are also looking forward to seeing what 2016 may hold for them all.



L.C.V.P. Supporting Local Services & Charities



The sixth year LCVP students' continue their work and the strong tradition in the school of supporting locally based charities and services by donating the proceeds of their annual 'all school' sports day to Glebe Lodge Castleisland. The amount donated this year was €1063.47. Glebe Lodge is a purpose built facility in Castleisland for persons with high dependency and eldercare needs, with respite care also available. Glebe Lodge is part of The Kerry Parents and Friends Association.

The 'all school' sports day is now an annual event in the school and each year the monies raised are donated to various charities and services. Some of the charities that have benefited from the students efforts over the

years include Castleisland Day Care Centre, Bumbleance, Recovery Haven and Build for Life – Cystic Fibrosis. The school along with The Presentation Convent as part of their Joint Transition Year work closely with Glebe Lodge and Castleisland Day Care Centre who provide valuable work experience for the students.

The sports day which is held at the start of the school year is fully organised and run by the sixth year students as part of their LCVP programme providing them with real life experiences and opportunities to develop their organisational skills and have a sense of responsibility. It also creates an awareness of the work that is being done in their community in helping others and the need to support this work. The sports day provides an opportunity for the new first year class to integrate into the school and a chance for staff and students to enjoy a day outside the classroom. A huge thank you to the parents, students, staff and local community who help make this venture a huge success.

Sky Sports – LIVING FOR SPORT PROGRAMME



We are delighted to have signed up to participate in the Sky Sports Living for Sports Programme and delighted to welcome Athlete Mentor Kerry Footballer Darren O'Sullivan to our school. Over the course of the school year Darren will work with our PE teacher Patrick McCarthy and will teach the first year students about **The Six Keys to Success**. These are the six life skills that athletes have identified as enabling them to achieve success in sport. Our athlete mentor Darren and PE teacher Patrick will work with our first year students through the six keys to success to help them valuable life skills. **The six keys to success are; Mental Toughness, Hunger to Achieve, People Skills, Sports and Life Knowledge, Breaking Barriers, Planning for Success.**

These six keys to success are designed to help young people develop valuable life skills that will help them in and outside of school, now and into the future. On his first visit to the school this week Darren introduced the programme to the school and gave an inspiring presentation on the huge influence sport has been to his life to date. Darren grew up in London and played soccer with Queens Park Rangers and moved to Kerry when he was 12 and then started playing Gaelic Football and very quickly he set his sights on the Kerry minor panel. He played with the Kerry minors in 2003 at the age of 17 and reached the All Ireland semi- final and the following year reached the All Ireland final losing to Tyrone. Darren explained how these experiences of defeat were invaluable for him as it instilled a hunger to achieve and laid the foundations for the great career that would follow. Darren highlighted to the students that ever before he experienced success he would have to suffer the heartache of defeat and they will experience similar experiences in life but it will make them stronger. Darren will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to this programme with 4 All Ireland Championships, 6 Munster Championships, 2 National Football league Div1 titles, 1 All Star, 1 County Championship, Selected to represent Ireland in International rules series Vs Australia, Represented Munster in Interprovincial competition. We look forward to having Darren O'Sullivan as our Athlete Mentor and working with him for the year.



TRANSITION YEAR 2015/2016

Tim Long.

Transition Year Coordinator.



T.Y 2015-16 has been a very busy year so far. As always, we design a programme where students are given the opportunity to add to their academic studies but also experience a wide variety of other challenges.

The year started with a very enjoyable teambuilding day in Cappanalea Outdoor Education centre and has continued apace ever since. Students have organised athletics events, learned how to surf, entered into competitions such as Formula 1 in schools, Student Enterprise, BT Young Scientist, and much more besides. Creating a sense of caring about your

local community is a fundamental part of our T.Y. programme. So far this year, students have given freely outside of class time to help out with local events. Some examples include: Castleisland Business Expo, Castleisland Indoor Market to raise money for Kerry Parents and Friends, a local 5k race in Scartaglen to help raise money for Kerry Hospice, the local Christmas craft fair, the Ríocht Christmas market and students also organised a milkshake morning to raise funds for Downs Syndrome Ireland as part of their Young Social Innovator project.

All twenty four Transition Year students are currently in the process of attempting to attain a bronze Gaisce award (The President's Award). For this, they must all learn and develop new personal skills, partake in more voluntary work, challenge themselves with physical recreation and also complete an adventure journey later in the year!

Much praise is due to all of the students for engaging wholeheartedly with the programme but also to the teachers of St. Patrick's and Presentation whose professionalism and enthusiasm contribute immeasurably to the success of the programme. We will continue to harness all of these positive attributes to progress students in as holistic a manner as possible. Our numerous planned events for the remainder of the year and the academic challenges set to students will continue with the overall aim of enriching the experiences of all involved.

Finally, a thank you to Ms Annette Leen and the Principals of both schools for their support in delivering this ever evolving programme.

Castleisland Enterprise Town Expo.....by Jack Lynch TY

On Friday the 13th of November the transition years helped out at the first Enterprise expo in Castleisland. At twenty past one in the afternoon we arrived at the Community centre to help set up. We helped out by setting up the stage and some of the stands. We left the centre at twenty to four and we had to be back at twenty to five. The expo began at 5pm. We spent some time selling our T.Y 2016 calendars to fundraise for our end of year trip. We also sold Christmas cards and Christmas decorations which we made in our Business class in school. Some of the T.Y students stood behind our school stall while others had to hand out slips to enter the schools free draw which was to win a hamper worth €60. We finished up 9pm but we didn't sell everything so we had to return at 11 o'clock the next morning.



On Saturday the 14th of November we returned to the Community centre to sell the rest of our merchandise. Once again some of us stood behind the stall and more of us directed people towards our stall. The expo ended at two o'clock. We did not sell everything but we sold most of our stock. Overall the Expo went very well and we were very happy with our sales and it was a very good experience.

The Killarney Mini Marathon & Surfing in Castlegregory



My Community Placement Experience..... by Ella Kerin



Every Wednesday Group B of our Transition Year class worked at the community garden as part of receiving our Gaisce Bronze medal. We began on the 16th of September, with an introduction to the garden from Willie Reidy. He told us about the plants he had growing there and the insects that live there. We went home with the task of putting together a presentation on a plant that was growing in the garden or activities happening within the garden, present it to local primary schools in our area and be ready by next week.

We came back next Wednesday the 23rd of September, with our presentations in our hands. We planted a few crops, and got a feel around the garden. The following week we had to present our presentations to the local Boys National School. The children seemed to enjoy themselves and we had a great experience of working with a class of younger pupils.

On the 7th of October, the Gaelscoil gave a visit in. We taught them about our plants and they taught us a few words 'as Gaeilge.' Since then we have been cutting hedges and digging up new crops. We really are getting the whole garden experience. We have also filmed our time in the garden with Lisa Fingelton. It is great not to just have the memories in our minds but in film too. It is excellent that we also now know how to edit a film. I think it is fair to say everyone has enjoyed their time in the Community Garden.

Killarney Mini Marathonby Lorraine Hanrahan

On Saturday 19th of September, our TY class went to Killarney to help out at the women's mini-marathon. The race went around the National Park and up by the Demesne. The finish line was just up past Deenagh Lodge Café so we went up there to get set up. We sorted through the medals, removed the packaging from them and put them into boxes. We got the bottles of water and got the milk that was delivered from Lee Strand and stacked them up for the runners. Some of us were assigned to go stewarding along the route of the race and the rest of us were going to hand out the medals, water and fruit to the runners when they passed the finish line. When the runners came into sight we were quick handing out the medals. We congratulated them also.



When all the runners had passed the finish line, we were exhausted. All the medals and water was nearly gone. We took a break and got ice cream and treats. We tidied up the area and put all the litter into the bin. The organisers thanked us greatly and we were only delighted as we had such an enjoyable day.

Our Cappanalea Trip.....by Paul Walsh



On the 4th of September 2015, all students in The T.Y class had their first outing together. We left St. Patricks to embark on a day of team-building and fun. On the bus, the team-building already began as everyone shared both stories and laughs. When we arrived we took the first photo of the day and then we got a talk on what will happen for the day. First up was canoeing!

We received our wetsuits and helmets, with all the gear on, we went to the lake. They gave us our canoes and off we went. In the water, the first few minutes were spent getting familiar with the canoes. We played a game of stuck in the mud, a few people fell out of there canoes, me being one, but the simple excuse was I was getting used to the water early on. They

gave us a tour of the lake and then, before the optional swimming, we had a game of catch while in our canoes. Jack must have thought he was a fish with the amount of times he was in the water! The swimming afterwards was great craic, but it was cold, thankfully I was more accustomed to it compared to the others. The evening activities were different. It was orienteering, a treasure hunt was up first, six of us in one group, my team split up into two groups of three to cover more ground, it worked a treat as we ended up winning it! The 2nd activity was a skipping contest, two out of two for us as we won with more than 100. The third activity was rock climbing, this I enjoyed the most, it was great craic, 3 out of 3. Sadly, we ended up coming third as we failed to finish the final task in the top 2, but this was the only disappointment that day, as it lived up to expectations, actually it exceeded them. Every trip since has been compared to it.

It's safe to say that the objective of team-building was achieved and overall the day was great!

Answering Ireland's Call.....by Adam Donoghue



I have played basketball for my Club, School, County, and Southwest region and have experienced the lows of defeat and the great highs of winning, all great learning experiences. It has been a great honour for me to have represented my Country playing the sport I love. This is my story.

It all began with being selected on the initial panel of 36 for the U15 Irish development squad in November 2013. This panel included three Kerry players one of which was my fellow student Patrick 'Yank' O'Connor. This panel of 36 trained together for 9 months and our first International was against Scotland during Easter 2014 which we won. The first cut to the panel was in August 2014 when 12 players were dropped, I was delighted to survive. Being part of the Irish panel demanded huge commitment as training was frequent and held in either Dublin or Cork at weekends and during holidays. I didn't have time for anything but basketball and my study!!.

The panel was reduced to 18 in September 2014 and by Christmas it was down to 15. We played in Denmark from December 28th to 30th and when we returned from that trip the final 12 were announced as the Irish U16 team and thankfully my name was there.

For the next 7 months we trained hard and visited Luxembourg and Portugal for preparation tournaments and played the top teams which were Belgium, The Netherlands and Tunisia. We played Scotland 3 times in Ireland during the month of July, 2 games in Cork and my own club St. Marys had the privilege of hosting one of these games in Castleisland where we had a huge turnout of more than 300 supporters. I would like to thank them all for their wonderful support.

We left for the European Championships in Bulgaria on August 4th and over the duration of two weeks played nine games playing against each of the following countries, Iceland, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Romania, Czech Republic, Norway, Austria, Scotland and The Netherlands. It was physically draining because in that time we only had two rest days but it was a fantastic experience. It improved my basketball skill level and I would encourage any young player to give it a try.

In action against The Netherlands in Bulgaria, August 2015



A Student Voice.....by Art O'Mahony

Art O'Mahony is currently a member of the ISSU – Irish Second-Level Students' Union Executive



During my time in St Patrick's I have unquestionably witnessed a major advancement in youth participation within our walls. From the launch of our student council in September 2012 to the present day where our cohort of representatives have gone from strength to strength in promoting and advancing the managerial youth wing. As a pupil, I would like to sincerely state my appreciation for our well-established medium for student voice in the school as well as the encouragement from members of staff for advantageous interaction and engagement by all pupils.

Our student council has had an exceptionally successful and busy year. We began the annum on an entrepreneurial note and teamed up with local business Vincent Murphy Sports, where we designed a fresh, stylish sports top produced by O'Neill's, which are currently available in the store. On top of

this, as a democratic organisation we decided to plunge into the depths of the concept and organised a Democracy Week, fronted by Minister for State Jimmy Deenihan and former Tánaiste Dick Spring. On a personal basis, I feel our most significant move was joining ISSU.

Since I was successfully elected to the national executive of the Irish Second-level Students' Union (ISSU) at their AGM last April I have been inundated with exciting work and been granted incredible opportunities. For those of you who are unaware, the union is the umbrella body of student councils throughout Ireland and is therefore the official national voice of Irish second-level students. Through continuous lobbying and work with the Department of Education ISSU has earned its place at the decision-making table and is rapidly growing in size.

As Campaigns and Communications Officer for ISSU I have prioritised the student commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising, the most significant milestone since the state's foundation. The bravery and outstanding loyalty to Ireland by those who partook in the rebellion should never be forgotten, and I believe that the Proclamation of Independence is the ultimate symbol of equality and fairness, which is a foundational principle of the ISSU. I have been planning four national commemorations for Spring 2016, in Dublin, Maynooth, Cork and Sligo where students will have the opportunity to learn and discuss the revolt as well pick the minds of experts who will be delivering key note speeches.



2014/2015 – The year in pictures

Democracy Week 2015



Senior Rugby 2014/2015



Student Banking 2015



Student Awards 2015



Student of the Year 2015 - Conor Browne



Senior Soccer Team 2015/2016



CSPE – Creating Awareness



National Tree Week 2015



4 Time Football Champions 2014/2015



First Year All Ireland 'A' Basketball Champions 2014 & 2015



Second & Third Year Rugby Team 2015/2016

