



# St. Patrick's College Newsletter January 2026



Dear Parent/Guardian,  
Welcome to our start of year 2026 Newsletter. As always, it is a great privilege for me to acknowledge all the great work going on in the school. As the saying goes, “a picture is worth a thousand words.” I think the pictures presented throughout our publication will give you a good indication of the variety of initiatives our staff and pupils have been involved in throughout the school year.

At this point, parents of pupils in Years 8-11 have received your child's Christmas report via Satchel One. We hope that you will be pleased with the progress your child is making as we strive to support their every need.

So as we begin 2026, we wish you all a happy and successful New Year and thank you all for your continued support.

## St. Patrick's College Mentoring Scheme



At St. Patrick's we recognise that the transition from Primary School to Secondary School is a significant and formative stage in the social and educational life of each of our pupils. It is important to us that this transition is managed successfully so pupils can enjoy and profit from their time at school. This is where the Mentoring Programme comes in. On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September, our Year Eight pupils met up with their mentors and enjoyed some icebreaking activities.

Our mentors have been learning how to be an effective Peer Mentor and will achieve an OCN Level One Certificate for their diligence and commitment to this cause. They spent their time with Year 8 getting to know each other and covering important topics such as bullying, sharing problems, settling into

school life and other issues that may arise in their first year at St. Patrick's.



The mentors continue to meet with our Year 8 in Life-skills classes to help, support and motivate them throughout their first year. Mrs Keenan led the workshop with the help of Year 13 mentors. The morning was very productive, and the pupils are confident in the fact that they have a role model to help them through their transition year.

## Diocesan Novena Art Competition

Congratulations to Kenzoey Pepito, Nicola Sredzinska and Kasie Naungayan, who represented our school in the Diocesan Novena Art Competition in September. The pupils received a certificate of participation and a Sacred Heart medal from Bishop Alan McGuckian. Our picture shows Kasie and Kenzoey with their certificates and medals.



## University Roadshow



In October the Year 14 Students enjoyed the University Roadshow. This is an event which aims to increase accessibility for higher education providers to meet Sixth Form students who are thinking of the next step in their educational career. The students gained an invaluable insight into the application process, university life and future career paths.



## The Ireland Funds Initiative



Congratulations to Tierna Reynolds who was selected by the Ireland Funds Initiative to receive an annual scholarship to help cover the costs of books, accommodation and other key expenses. The No Mind Left Behind initiative has been developed by the Ireland Funds to help support promising young people to complete their college education.

We wish Tierna every success in her degree in Sport, Physical Activity and Health at Ulster University.

## Mary Queen of Peace Mural



On 17<sup>th</sup> September our Year 14 Art class visited Mary Queen of Peace Primary School in Martinstown, Glenravel to help paint a mural on the side of their mobile classroom. The students were

led by local artist and PTA member Laura Lok, who guided them through the process.

The students enjoyed working on a live community arts project and soaking up the buzz of the primary school environment.

On behalf of everyone at St Patrick's College, we would like to say Thank You to everyone at Mary Queen of Peace for making us feel so welcome during our visit.

## Jamie Beamish visits St Patrick's

In October we welcomed Waterford actor Jamie Beamish to St Patrick's.



Jamie, who will be familiar to viewers of Derry Girls and Bridgerton, delivered a superb workshop to our Performing Arts students, speaking about his own experiences, challenges and how to succeed in the industry.

Talking about how young people today can have a successful career in the performing arts, Jamie stated that our pupils need not only look at his story, but also that of St Patrick's own Liam Neeson.

Thank you, Jamie, for an excellent talk that truly inspired and encouraged our Performing Arts students.

## c21 Workshop

Just days after Jamie Beamish's visit, our Performing Arts Department welcomed the c21 Theatre Company, who brought "Under the Lights", written by Maria Connelly, starring John Travers and directed by our past pupil Stephen Kelly.



St Patrick's Performing Arts students were joined for the performance by students from St Conor's College, Slemish College and Cambridge House Grammar School.

The students watched one actor play all of the characters in this amazing show which highlights the seriousness of head injuries in sport.



The students thoroughly enjoyed the show and even got to take part on a Q&A session afterwards with the professionals!

## Opening School Mass

The Opening School Year Mass is a very important time in the school calendar when the whole school community comes together to celebrate the Eucharist.



This year the Mass took place on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September in All Saints' Church.

This setting enabled the pupils to realise the importance of the school within the Parish community and it gave them the opportunity to pray for God's assistance as they began a new academic year. Our sincere thanks to our school chaplain, Fr McGinnity who celebrated the beautiful Mass and encouraged us to live by the words of St Carlo Acutis, "Original, not a photocopy".





Many thanks to our students who read, took part in the offertory and the members of the choir who enhanced the reverence of our Mass.

## Prize Day

On Friday October 17<sup>th</sup> the College celebrated its annual prizegiving ceremony.

This year's Guest Speaker was past pupil Johanna Montgomery, who gave an inspirational speech to the College's young people, congratulating them on all of the successes they have achieved in the past year, and urging them to continue to strive to be the best that they can.



Johanna spoke of her experiences at St Patrick's and her early years in the

workplace, and encouraged the pupils to always be optimistic and to have fun! Johanna is a businesswoman who has been running her own interior design company for many years. The students were impressed by the motivation and determination she expressed in her speech.

In the Principal's Address, Mr Fitzpatrick continued the theme of success, saying: "Today is one of the most important days in our school's calendar. It is the day on which we recognise the achievements, and praise the efforts of you, the students.

"Our students have gone on to an impressive range of Higher Education institutions, and we wish all of them well, as they walk out of St Patrick's with excellent qualifications, to continue their educational journey further afield."



Mr Fitzpatrick concluded with the words of our Mission Statement: 'To nurture and value each person's worth through living and practising our faith and our commitment to one another' I would ask all present and past pupils and staff members of our school always to carry this sentiment with you. I hope that in years to come, as you reflect on your time in St Patrick's, you feel proud of what you have achieved and that you continue to live out that sentiment in all that you do, and with everyone you meet."



## Year 14 Formal

In October our Year 14 Formal took place in The Rosspark Hotel. A fabulous time was had by students and staff alike. This memorable occasion was enjoyed by all.



## Year 8 Outdoor Maths Trail



Year 8 had great fun in October during their outdoor Maths Trail designed by Dr McAuley to celebrate Maths Week Ireland.



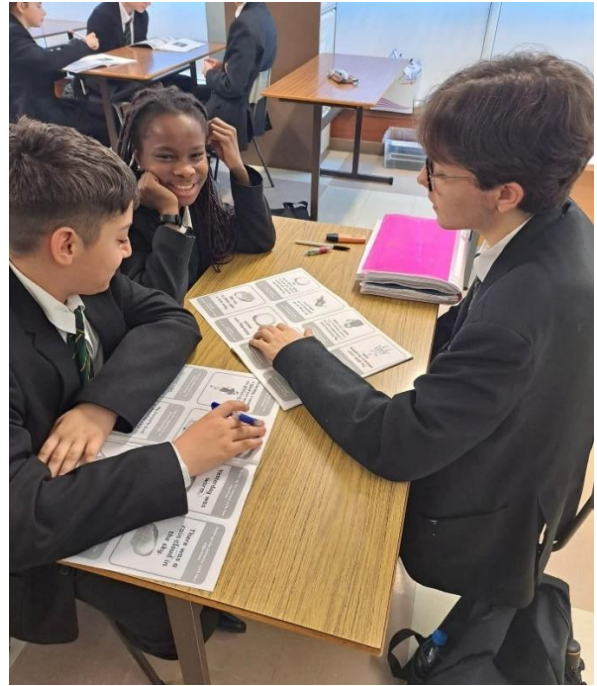


The Trail required Year 8 pupils to use many different skills to complete the variety of tasks.

## Book Week NI



Also in October the Year 8s had a “spook-tacular” time learning a variety of skills as we celebrated Book Week NI. Sixth Form Mentors carried out paired Literacy activities with Year 8 pupils, while Year 9 and 10 pupils shared ideas about “Why we should read” and discussed the benefits of reading.



Our teachers also enjoyed Book Week NI and shared their favourite books with pupils. Many thanks to Mrs Mullan and all the staff who helped facilitate these enjoyable events.

The picture below shows the winners of our Poetry competition. Congratulations to them, and to everyone who took part in this competition!



## CCEA Live Chat with NI Commissioner for Children and Young People

In November members of our School Council took part in a live chat about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



This event was facilitated by Chris Quinn, the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People and CCEA.

Students had the chance to explore and ask questions about issues affecting them and to find out more about how their lives are governed and how they can participate to improve the quality of their own lives.

It helped our young people understand their rights through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Anti-Bullying Week.

Anti-Bullying Week took place from Monday 10th – Friday 14th November, with the theme ‘Power for Good’.

The week began with a whole school assembly, empowering young people to use their Power for Good to safely speak up and raise awareness when they see bullying, either face-to-face or online.



Lasting change needs all of us: from playgrounds to Parliament, our homes to our phones – we all have a part to play.

Together, we can use our Power for Good to end bullying – for good.

## Month of the Holy Souls



We also dedicated this whole-school assembly to remembering our deceased loved ones and presented a book with the names of those we remember fondly and want to include in our prayers. Fr McGinnity joined us for our service praying for the holy souls.



## Teva and Terumo Field Trip

A number of our Year 12 and 13 Science students enjoyed a trip to Teva Pharmaceuticals and Terumo BCT Ltd in November.



Teva is a global pharmaceutical company that develops, produces and markets generic and specialty medicines. It is the world's largest supplier of generic drugs and also focuses on innovative treatments for central nervous system disorders, respiratory conditions and oncology.



Terumo BCT Ltd is part of the global Terumo Corporation, which provides solutions for blood and cell technologies and also has a pharmaceutical solutions division that partners with other companies to develop drug-device combination products.

The students got a tour around both sites, saw lots of laboratory equipment, learned about future career opportunities and met a microbiologist and a chemical analyst. A great and informative day was had by all.

## Christmas Hamper Appeal

Thank you to Miss McBride and our Sixth Form Transition students who oversaw St Patrick's contribution to the Ballymena Rotary Club Christmas Hamper Appeal.



We have contributed to this local community project for many years.

The Rotary Club expressed their thanks to our pupils, parents and staff for our continued support.

## Christmas Dinner Day!

The staff and students enjoyed Christmas Dinner Day on 10<sup>th</sup> December.



Students and staff were all encouraged to wear their Christmas jumpers, which added to the festivity of the occasion!



## P7 Days



In December the College played host to local primary school children who experienced P7 taster days.





The pupils had the opportunity to experience college life and take part in fun-filled activities across the curriculum. These wide-ranging learning activities included team building in PE, baking and decorating snowmen biscuits in HE, painting Christmas decorations in Art, making Christmas cards in ICT and lighting Christmas baubles in Technology.



We look forward to seeing you all again at our Open Night, on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 7pm.

## Mission Christmas 2025

A huge Thank You to everyone who donated to the Cash for Kids NI Mission Christmas Appeal.

All donations will really make a difference and will have helped bring joy this Christmas.



## Improving Attendance



Pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 received festive treats in our last Junior Assembly before the Christmas holiday.







These awards recognise good attendance and excellent attitude and effort during Term One.



It is important to remember that in school every day counts!

## Christmas Carol Service



Our annual Christmas Carol Service took place on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> December.

We listened to carols, prayers and readings about the birth of Jesus in a festive and reflective atmosphere. Thank you to our readers who retold the Christmas Story, alternating with carols sung by our fantastic choir and congregation.



It was a beautiful service, uplifting spirits and promoting themes of love, family and peace, and reminding us of the true message of Christmas.

## Around the World Festival





On 17<sup>th</sup> December we enjoyed another fantastic Around the World Festival.



The aim of our second festival was to share and celebrate the different holidays, traditions and customs observed at this time of the year in the countries some of our pupils come from.



Well done to everyone involved in an enjoyable, informative and inclusive occasion!



## Sports News

### Year 8/9 Football

In October our amalgamated Year 8/9 Soccer team competed in a blitz at Parkhall College with other schools in the MASSFA League.



Some sturdy defending and heroics from goalkeeper Lorcan Donegan ensured three draws in the first half of the blitz. Two narrow defeats followed before the boys finished on a high, with a 2-0 victory over St Killian's, following a poacher's effort from Andrei Pirvu and a well-placed strike from captain Gabriel O'Neill-Clarke.

Special mention to our two debutants in Year 8, Michael Gallagher and Connor Boyle, who have slotted into the team superbly this year.





Players of the Tournament – Lorcan Donegan and Jakub Radziwonka.

Well done, boys!

### **Year 10 NI Cup**



An unfortunate result, as our Year 10 team came up against the previous winners of the U-13 Small Schools' Cup, St Colm's, Draperstown.

The boys were well beaten in the first half; however, great link-up play between Gabriel Carvalho and Cathal Gordon gave Cathal an opportunity to slot the ball home.

The second half saw a better defensive display and the game ended with a towering header from Shea Quinn to close out the game.

Full time: St Patrick's 2 – 8 St Colm's, Draperstown.



Players of the Match – Gabriel Carvalho and Cathal Gordon.

### **Under-16 Soccer**

Our U-16 soccer team had their first outing on 24<sup>th</sup> September, away to St Pius X College, Magherafelt in the first round of the Northern Ireland Cup.



The first half ended 1-1 and our boys went 2-1 up early in the second half. Unfortunately, we were beaten by a



stronger team with the game ending up 5-2 to St Pius X College.

### Year 12 Gaelic



There was success for our Under 16 Gaelic team on 7<sup>th</sup> October when they qualified for the quarter final of the Bearnageeha Cup, following two comfortable victories over All Saints' College, Belfast and Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney.

Then, on 21<sup>st</sup> November, the U-16s played a strong Shimna College at Woodlands, Belfast, with the boys displaying great effort and teamwork.

St Patrick's fought back against two early goals with goals from Connaire Scullion and Conor Tully.

However, Shimna College eventually emerged as convincing winners, although the St Patrick's players all worked hard throughout the match.



### Year 12 MASSFA Cup

Our Year 12 team took part in a soccer blitz on 15<sup>th</sup> October at the Ballymena Showgrounds, competing in a group with Dunclug College, Sperrin Integrated College and St Killian's College.



The boys began the tournament against Dunclug College and showed plenty of eagerness to score. However, it wasn't until the last kick of the game that captain Conor Tully placed a free kick in the top of the net.

The team then found themselves up against Sperrin, in a game where both teams were well organised but could not find a winner. Then, to finish the group stage, the boys were narrowly defeated by St Killian's following a move made after a free kick was given to the opposing team.

St Patrick's finished second in the group, which meant a semi-final against a strong Cambridge House side. The game finished 0-0, which meant penalties. Conor Tully, Oisín Gordon and Ollie Baiki placed their shots carefully and Connaire Scullion superbly saved two shots himself before Liam Slattery scored the winning penalty to finish the game 4-3 in favour of St Patrick's.

Then came the final, a re-match against St Killian's. Sadly, after a hard semi-final, our boys could not compete with a lack of subs, and stamina became an issue. The final finished 1-0 after a rocket from St Killian's.

Well done to all our boys on an excellent tournament, once again showing how hard work pays off for our soccer players.

Players of the tournament – Conor Tully and Liam Slattery.

## **NETBALL**



Our Year 9 Netball team took part in the NEBBSA tournament on 18<sup>th</sup> November at Ulster University Coleraine's Sports Centre. There were some very closely contested matches, but unfortunately, we didn't qualify out of the group stage. However, the commitment of the players was very evident in all of their matches.

## **Basketball**

On 9<sup>th</sup> December our Junior and Senior teams hosted Parkhall in the Sports Hall for our second set of friendly games, rounding out the term in style.



Our junior team bounced back from their previous defeat to win their game 24-7 against Parkhall. Performances of the match were Max Zaporowicz for his strong defensive display and Russell Gabon for making a range of quick drives on the fast break.

This was followed by a strong display from our senior team, who had to work hard against a strong Parkhall side. The team began to display their quality in the second quarter, however, and Efe Ejeta led the team to an impressive 65-43 victory.

A special mention must go to Ollie Baiki, Leo Binoy and Andile Ndlovu, who supported the Parkhall team during the game.

Many thanks go to our coaches so far this season, Barry Gillan who has worked with the Juniors and Efe Ejeta, who has worked alongside Mr Lunnun with the Seniors.

**We look forward to lots more activities and events in Terms Two and Three!**