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Date: 26th June 2025

NEWSLETTER

Volume 7 Edition 2

Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of this year's newsletter. We also invite you to visit our website: <http://stmichaelscastlepollard.scoilnet.ie/blog/> for lots of useful information about our school and details of the activities we take part in. We will have a new website next September and an official school Facebook page which will keep you up to date with all that is happening in our school.

Attendance:

The following are the attendance figures since our return after Christmas; January 88.7%, February 82.8%, March 91.2%, April 94.5%, May 90.8%, June 90.6% (To date). The average attendance for the year is 90.2%, which is a slight increase on last year. Despite January and February having lower attendance levels than normal, all other months have seen improvements. We continue to remind you of the importance of explaining all absences. Please look back at your child's absences for the year and provide a reason for any unexplained absence. This can be easily done through Aladdin.



New Building Update

We submitted our Stage 2B report to the DE last January and still await word as to the progression of the project. We have planning permission in place and initial costs complete. The DEY make require amendments to this report or allow us go to the next stage which would involve final costings and tendering. We have made contact with our local representatives so as to expedite the process. Hopefully we will have construction work commencing in 2026.

Parents Association

We sincerely thank our Parent's Association for all their support and efforts during the year. They have really got involved in so many activities which have greatly benefited our pupils. We hope that more parents can become involved in our PA next year, particularly parents of new pupils to the school.



Street Leagues and Hurling Coaching

Castlepollard Hurling Club joined us in the last term and provided weekly coaching for all class levels. We expect to repeat this practice next year and may add an extra block in September. We are thankful to all the coaches who gave up their time each Friday. Well done to the Meath team, captained by Daniel McCabe who won our Street League this year. His team beat Peadar O'Reilly's Kilkenny team in the final. This competition is very important to our school, having originated in the early 1980's.



Football Blitz

Our inaugural in-school football blitz was won by Westmeath captained by Cormac Halpin. He defeated Peadar O'Reilly's Kerry team in the final where Amy Fagan was on fire in front of goals! Player of the tournament went to Ryan Higgins who was a real team player throughout while Amy Fagan won the top scorer and young player award. This competition really grabbed the imagination of our senior pupils and produced some wonderful games.



ASD Classes

The pupils in our ASD class continue to grow and have progressed well this year. They took part in lots of worthwhile activities this year again including swimming, therapeutic horse riding and wellness classes. They also get involved in all the other activities with their respective class

throughout the term. They regularly enjoy trips around Castlepollard visiting the shops, café and library to name but a few. They also took the local bus to Collinstown one day for a picnic and some ice-cream afterwards! We were all saddened to hear that Bohdan will leave us shortly and will return to his homeland. He will be greatly missed.

Workshops and Events

We had an action-packed 2025 which included GAA coaching, yoga, dance, swimming as well as fitness activities with Niall Fagan. We also welcomed back Niall De Búrca on the final day for some tales. We have utilised DEIS funding for many of these activities, which place less pressure on all our parents as a result. Each of these activities is especially important in their own right and we hope increase pupils' enjoyment of school.

Summer Programme

We will remain open after the final official day of school to facilitate the DEY's Summer Programmes. We have 12 pupils engaging in the Primary School Scheme which involves our pupils with complex needs. This programme will run for a fortnight while 24 pupils (two classes of 12) will take part in our DEIS Camp which will run over one week. We have lots of fun activities planned to include a science show, drama, yoga workshops and a barbeque on the final day. We are sure our participating pupils will gain greatly from the experience.

Charitable Donations

We place a strong emphasis on giving back to others less fortunate than us and again this year we supported several charities. We took part in GOAL's Jersey Day. We engaged in the Christmas Shoebox Appeal as well as walking for ASIAM. We also supported our local SVP through our Christmas raffle which was run by our Student Council. All of these are worthy causes and certainly create greater awareness among our pupils, which we hope they will remember as they mature.



Braveheart of the Wild

On May 27th, our senior classes got the opportunity to perform this year's musical, Braveheart of the Wild, in front of a large crowd in Mullingar Arts Centre. Yet again, there were some memorable performances! It was wonderful to see pupils not normally in the limelight pushing themselves and taking on major roles. Well done to everyone who was involved, and we hope to have this wonderful opportunity again next year.



Student Council

This year our Student Council really got up and running. They held regular meetings with Mr. Renehan to look at ways of improving our school while Leon Saenz spoke to the school each month at assembly about their progress. The pupils organised a Christmas raffle for SVP. They recorded the waste from our hot lunches and also came up with very good ideas to spend the money raised from our Easter Cake sale. This is a wonderful opportunity for pupils to find their voice and help improve our school. We look forward to a new committee next year and expanding on the great work that was done this year.

Someone Like Me Art Competition

Well done to Phoebe Dempsey Krahll and all the pupils of third class who were one of the county winners in the Someone Like Me art competition. Phoebe and Kyle joined Mrs. O'Leary at the award ceremony in Dublin Castle in January. This competition promotes disability awareness and inclusion, which are very important to us in our school.



New Beginnings

We welcome seventeen new junior infants to our mainstream class for the new school year. With a similar number leaving and a few new pupils joining us from other schools, we expect to have around 170 pupils on roll next September. Were this to happen, we could potentially move from six mainstream classes to eight in September 2026 which would be great news in that all classes would be single streamed. We will be sad to say goodbye to our sixteen sixth class pupils who will finish with us today. They have had a good year and represented the school well. We wish them all the best as they start their next chapter.

Summer and Return

We would like to thank you again for your continued support over the course of the year and we look forward to collaborating closely with you in the new school year. **Pupils will return to school on Thursday, August 28th.** We wish you all a nice summer break!

