

June 2018

Principal's Address

The last term of this school year has indeed been an exciting one as we prepare for some of the major change which is about to happen. The biggest initiative is the introduction of Transition Year which in turn will result in a large increase in student numbers as we now develop an additional school year. In preparation for the increased numbers and as we await our new building we are in the process of installing three temporary classrooms.

Our recent Leaving Cert Graduation was undoubtedly a highlight of our school calendar and a very significant event. We wish all of our Leaving Certificate students and indeed all exam students every success.

The coming school year is already being looked forward to with increased student numbers and staff interview being the order of the day. My thanks to the parents, teachers, staff and students for making this such a successful year.

Le gach dea ghúí,
Richard Daly



Kayaking

Well done to four of our students we successfully completed Level 2 Kayaking Skills. Edward Kalenbet, Alexey Budyney, Joshua Boyce Hyland and Tadgh Dunne look forward to starting Level 3 next year.



Basketball

Pictured are the under 16 team who reached all Ireland quarter finals and the first year team who reached midlands league shield final and were runners up



Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA)

December 2017 was the first year that JCPA was awarded to students who had completed their Junior Cycle. The JCPA contains their Junior Cycle results, Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) results and Other Learning Experiences.

**Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP)-
The Inspirational Student Award**

Each year the "Maynooth University Achievement Award" is presented to two sixth year students. Teachers vote for this award and reaching a decision is difficult because of the quality and achievement of each of the nominees. To be nominated for such an award is in itself a great achievement.

The following qualities are considered for each nomination:

- Students who have shown tremendous effort and progress in their studies
- Making a substantial contribution to the school
- Personal achievement
- Demonstration of specific interest and aptitude
- Motivation, Creativity and Enthusiasm

The winners of The Inspirational Student Award 2018:

Allan O'Connell

Justyna Parcez

The winners of 3rd year subject awards are:

English – Kate Page

French - Christine Eyre

Irish - Ellie Smithers

Maths - Edward Kalenbet

Spanish - Ellen Watts



Transition Year

Transition Year will start for the first time in the school this September. We have been preparing for this for a number of years and now as our accom-

modation is about to increase this is the appropriate time. The programme will offer exciting options in forensics, coding, CSI, kayaking, google certification and much more. We are starting with one class this year and more to expand next year.

Gaisce

Congratulations to students in fifth year who completed their Adventure Journey as part of their Bronze Level Gaisce Award recently. The students completed a

25km hike around the trails in Glendalough. Completing the Award also requires a significant commitment to developing a personal skill, being physically active and working in the community. Well done to the group on their achievements.



The Circus comes to town

JCSP students recently experienced the thrills of the circus during a workshop with the Wobbly Circus Company. Students, and staff, had great fun spinning plates, throwing spinners, juggling and walking the tightrope.

Wrapparound

Congratulations to Anne Arogundade, 3rd Year, for an amazing performance in Trinity College Dublin at the JCSP Wrapparound event. Thank you, Anne for representing Neart on Poetry Day Ireland. Anne wrote a poem called The Ocean which highlighted the theme of global sustainability.

The Ocean

The ocean vast and blue
A reflection of the sky, so wide and blue
Over at the beach it looks so peaceful;
But, in it is death,
People being killed by the anger of the ocean,
Humans polluting the sea,
The sea is angry and mad at me,
Angry at you,
It kills your young ones,
It rids the world of life,
The sea cries out to you,
It pleads with you,
"O won't you purify me",
Who am I to turn a blind eye,
For one day it shall be my turn, pleading for mercy from the sea.
So I say show love to the sea,
Recycle your hatred into plastics in the bin,
Preserve your love for the sea,
Just as it preserves life,
Throw your love at the sea,
Rather than the foul loathe of garbage,
Erase your mistakes as a sign of peace,
Leaving no trace of your disease,
Condemn thyself,
And revoke thy thirst,
Then shall ye know the love of the sea,
Which shines as bright as the sun in daylight,
And the moon in night time,
Glowing as if lit from within,
Peaceful and in harmony,
With waves that tell the tale of love,
Sending their chorus of voices to the heart of the listening earth,
As the tale of two becoming one, one hand in hand,
Overcoming their fears,
"O how purified am I",
By your love and kindness.

By Anne Arogundade, Athy College, Co. Kildare.



GRADUATION



Student of the Month 2017-2018

	September	October	November
First year	Eric McNamee Holly Dehahunt	James Doyle Aoibheann Buckley	William Holden Conor Brennan
Second Year	Daniel Murphy Chloe Robinson	Lorcan Page Jodie Reck	Luke Connolly Eanna Maher
Third Year	Jack Brody Sophie McDonald	Alexey Budyney Anne Arogundale	Ellen Watts Peter Delaney
Fifth Year	John Murphy Aoife Moran Terry	Destiny Soki Hannah Wilson	Damien Mitchell Cian McDonald
Sixth Year	Aisling Morrissey Ben Girdler	Leah Casey Allan O'Connell	Alex Dalton April Hanahran

	December	January	Feburary
First year	Siobhan Casey Piper Maher	Alex Mooney David Kanlsos	Nicholas Luca Jean Corcoran
Second Year	Julianne Rowan Roy Bell	Gonzalo Ruiz Feliu Leanne Fennel O'Rourke	Evan Peria Catalina Tiron
Third Year	Jessica Ryan Emma Kearns	Jamie Burke Brandon Walsh	Sarah Girdler Mikes Donogue
Fifth Year	Eoin Doyle Niamh Kelly	Dean Maher Oral Kyles	Rebecca Coleman O'Sullivan Alex Whelan
Sixth Year	Darragh Stynes Sandra Delaney	Simon Swanyne Leanne McEntee	Georgina Forde Walshe Brooklyn Hyland O'Keefe

	March	April	May
First year	Ciara Shaughussy Rhys O'Reilly	Izabella Ozolina Mallen Kinsella	
Second Year	Eoin Glesson Jodie Reck	Tiffany McDonagh Jodie Reck	
Third Year	Roisin Dobbyn Arkias Kasonga	Esther Johnson Oliwia Rosinka	
Fifth Year	Larry Delaney Paul Dunne	Jade Philips Peter Adewunmi	
Sixth Year	Jonathan O'Donoghue James Adewunmi	Michael McCormack Justyna Parcz	

Athy College Awarded Amber Flag by Pieta House

Thursday 17th May 2018 saw Athy College awarded its first Amber Flag at a large presentation ceremony held at Oriel House Hotel, Ballincollig, Co. Cork for commitment to promoting positive mental health awareness throughout the school during the past school year. The Amber Flag is an initiative run by Pieta House which aims to encourage schools to promote and actively bring about a culture change in the promotion of positive mental health within the educational system. For years Athy College has been at the forefront of bringing about awareness of mental health issues through their involvement with various charities and hosting the annual Darkness into Light walk. Therefore, participating in the Amber Flag initiative aligned perfectly with the already amazing work happening within the school in this area. What the Amber Flag aims to do is acknowledge these efforts and unite all schools in the promotion of "Positive Mental Health". It hopes to make wellness becomes a daily topic of conversation leading to a cultural shift where mental health becomes "The Norm" leading to the breaking down of stigma that is associated with mental health, resulting in individuals seeking help sooner when mental health issues arise. A committee made up of 10 students, 2 from each year group represented a cross section of the student body. This committee was steered by teachers including Ms. J. Murphy, Ms. Burke, Ms. C. Doyle and Ms. Butler. Students and teachers met for regular committee meetings where they set goals for the year and planned how they would set about realising these. The first goal the students wanted to achieve was to make a difference within the wider community. After much discussion it was decided that they would put it to all students that instead of doing Secret Santa within their class groups they would each bring in something which could be used to make up hampers for the patients of St. Vincent's Hospital, Athy. Students were delighted to participate in this activity and found it very rewarding to give rather than receive. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of students which saw enough goods donated to make up 7 large hampers and enough money to buy a DVD player and a CD player for the hospital. Thanks to Ms. D. Murphy who assisted in making contact with the hospital on our behalf. On Wednesday 13th December students and teachers visited St. Vincent's Hospital to hand over the hampers and spread some christmas cheer through carol singing for the patients. The next goal was to host a "Mental Health Week" at Athy College where students would be invited to engage in a range of activities that promote mental health awareness while educating students about resilience, coping techniques, wellbeing, healthy eating, physical activity and where to find help when issues arise. Weeks of meeting and preparation went into organising "Mental Health Week" which began with Elma Walsh speaking to the entire school about her late son

Donal Walsh who tragically passed away at the age of 16 after a long battle with cancer. This poignant talk saw over 400 students sitting in complete silence captivated by the sentiment of living life to the fullest and never taking life for granted. Students were visibly moved by Donal's message and at the end of this talk the Amber Flag Committee donated a cheque for €470 which had been contributed by students and staff to the Donal Walsh Foundation. During the following week events/initiatives included:

- Presentation shown in all SPHE and Senior Cycle Religion classes on Mental Health.
- A Positive Pathway Wall where students could share what makes them happy
- A Mental Health Art Competition
- A 'Positive Posts' treasure hunt everyday
- Lunchtime sports and relaxation room open during breaks
- Healthy food day where students were encouraged to try new healthy foods and provided with information on the benefits a healthy diet can have on their mood.
- Students provided with Mental Health Contact cards with detail of organisations/charities that specialise in the area of mental health
- A teacher coffee morning to promote mental health conversation amongst staff

The week of activities culminated in a whole school 'Colour Run' last class Friday to end the week on a high. Students dressed in white and ran/walked a 1km track around the school grounds where teachers equipped with powdered colour bombs doused students in clouds of fluorescent colour. By the end of the run some students were unrecognisable. The sound of laughter and smiles on students faces made everyone very excited about the events that next year could have in store.

Shortly after we submitted our application to The Amber Flag Initiative along with documentation to support all the wonderful activities we had been involved in over the year. In April 2018, we were delighted to accept an invitation to the presentation ceremony and collect our first Amber Flag to become one of a few secondary schools in Kildare to fly the flag as a symbol of our commitment to breaking down barriers and promoting a positive mental health among our student body.

Thank you to Mr. Daly and Ms. Coffey along with all the teachers, students, parents and wider community who helped and supported the Amber Flag Committee in making The Amber Flag Initiative such a success. We look forward to what next year has to bring as we build on this year's success.

The Amber Flag Committee: Sorcha Niblett, Robert Veips, Yasmin Fox, Adam Armstrong, Ester Johnson, Ja-Rell Devreux Kelly, Aoife Moran Terry, Peter Adewumni, Kieron Kelly, Shannon Lawlor

Rugby

Many thanks to Tadhg Kelleher, CCRO (Club, Community, Rugby Officer) for the bringing a little bit of sporting magic to Athy College with the visit of the Six Nations and Triple Crown Trophies. Thanks again to Tadhg for his commitment to developing rugby in the school.



Uladh trip to National Gallery



DIGITAL LEARNING ROOM



World Book Week

World Book Week was launched this year at the end of March. However, due to the 'Beast from the East' we had to break it in half and commence the second half of the week during April. No problem!

We started off with Drop Everything and Read on the Monday and then opened the reading room that lunchtime. We also launched an art contest to design your own book cover! DEAR followed again on the Tuesday, with another lunch reading session in F8. The rest of the week followed with the teachers dressing up as famous book characters, a table quiz and a golden ticket treasure hunt, as inspired by Charlie and the Chocolate Factory! Ms Denmead won hands-down with her Gangsta Granny ensemble, with Leah Casey, Noelle Murphy and Alannah Day winning the Senior and Junior prizes for the art competition. The table quiz was certainly very competitive but the clear winners were Sebastian Sonsa, Sean Armstrong, John Dooley and Conor Keogh from Rang Ash. They beat every other team from 1st and 2nd year and walked away with an Easter egg each!

A huge thank you to Ms Coffey and Mr Daly for the support, and to Ms Gaffney and Mr O'Donnell for lending an extra pair of hands with the quizzes and competitions.



The Chamberlains, AIB Build a Bank team

The Build a Bank Challenge, in association with AIB is a competition where six students come together to create a bank. This is Athy College's, second year in the competition.

In October 2017, interviews were held for our fifth year students to compete for 6 places on the bank team. The six students chosen by the AIB personnel were; Christina Alabi: Bank Manager, Niamh Kelly: Chief Operating Officer, Finley Donovan: Marketing Manager, Peter Adewumni: Customer Relations Officer, and Courtney Perse/David Ayeni: Financial Controller.

These students began their challenge by deciding on a name for their bank and a theme that would run through their banking journey. After much debating and many surveys the name "The Chamberlains" was chosen and the theme was Shakespeare.



The work then began to create "The Chamberlains" business plan. A timeline was drafted to decide on all the activities and events the bank would participate in. They decided they would not only develop positive banking skills in their fellow pupils but also involve the wider community of Athy. The specialism they chose was "Backing our Community".



They worked with the Kildare Chamber of Commerce to develop a "Youth Chambers Group in Athy". This group was set up to give young people a voice in our town. The group started a film club in our



school as there is no cinema facility in Athy.

The Chamberlains team had the opportunity to hear Eric Donovan speak about his journey through life. They were also invited by the Kildare Chamber of Commerce to an event organised to celebrate International Women's Day in Kildare Village. They had the privilege of



meeting Kathrine Thomas and many other successful and inspiring women at this event.

The students developed a "Budgeting Module" for the parents in our school. The aim of this module was to teach parents about how to successfully budget and save.



Throughout their banking journey, The Chamberlains supported a few different charities. At Christmas they donated over 40 new and improved shoeboxes, in a bag, to the local homeless shelter, Teach Iosa.



They also donated all the proceeds from their film club to the "Princess Sophia Fund".

Our team worked tirelessly for seven months creating and communicating a flawless and entertaining presentation for both the Regional Finals and the National Finals. The Chamberlains team came in the top 6 in Ireland.

Our team were given the opportunity to complete their presentation in front of over 600 people and this gave them an opportunity to spread their message about the value of listening to the youth of today. Our teams Shakespearean tale has just begun.....

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JUNIOR CYCLE

Wellbeing Programme

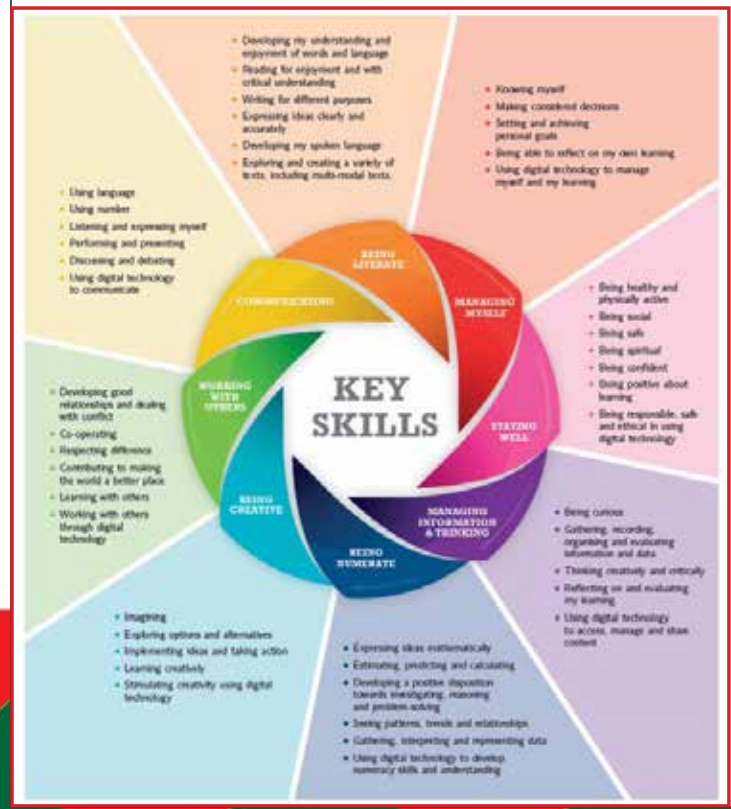
Your child's wellbeing is of central importance to his/her educational success and overall happiness. Wellbeing has been introduced into First Year as a core part of your child's junior cycle experience. This area of learning includes, amongst others, Physical Education (PE), Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) (including Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and a new module of Life Skills, Managing My Finance and Guidance. The new modules incorporate entrepreneurial skills from the Edison programme which supports the eight Key Skills of the Junior Cycle.

English is the first subject being examined under the new Framework for Junior Cycle. The results being presented in Junior Cycle English are based for the first time in 2017 on a new subject specification, assessment and grading system. These results represent student achievement in the SEC Final Examination including the Assessment Task, which was completed by students in Third Year.

Both the new grade format for English (Distinction, Higher Merit, etc) and the old grade format (A, B, etc) appear on the JCPA. The Classroom Based Assessment reports in assessments completed in second and third year. The new format of grades for Classroom Based Assessments are Exceptional, Above Expectations, In Line with Expectations, Yet to Meet Expectations and Not Reported.

The Other Areas of Learning reflects other learning experiences/events that a student has participated outside the formal timetabled curriculum such as extra-curricular activities, co-curricular activities, Endeavour Award Achievement, etc.

New subject specifications are being introduced in schools on a phased basis



Code Club

From the start of the year every Monday and Thursday evening a small group of dedicated students got together to code. The range of projects the club worked on included, building a Super Mario game on the code platform Scratch, building a working dance mat (sadly cardboard dance mats are not as reliable as plastic ones), to creating their own games and robots. The students used a range of devices and programming tools to create their projects; Raspberry Pi, MicroBit and Scratch were the main platforms used.

The students also got involved with Tech Week which is an internationally run event. As a team, the group built and programmed a robotic car. They programmed it so that it could respond to a remote control or sense its surroundings and respond accordingly to avoid crashing.

The students build breath testers, electronic sensors and made "Rock, Paper, Scissors" type games and this was all within a time limit of one hour after school sessions. The team worked in the 21st Century classroom in F7 in the school and made use of the fantastic TV screens and work area designed to promote teamwork and collaboration.



Mental Health Week



