



Newsletter Committee Foreword

The newsletter focuses on a variety of Ballymakenny College events. All the articles in the newsletter are written by students. This Newsletter committee includes Michael Carroll, Nathan Reilly, Callum O' Brien Wright, Cillian Duff, Daria Mc Kenna, Catherine Meehan, Teja Nickute, Emily Scallan, Abi Sheerin, Ryan Sheerin, Kai Smith Kiernan, Madeleine Houssou, Evan Biggins, Sebastian Moldovan, Matthew Mc Fadden, Hazel Kumru, Rosanna Mc Mahon.

Editors of the Newsletter are Ciara McCrohan and Shauna Matthews. We hope you enjoyed reading this edition of the school newsletter.

ISSU Regional Meeting

by Madeleine Houssou

On Thursday the 10th of November, four members of the Student Council attended an ISSU regional meeting, accompanied by our coordinator, Amy Savage. This meeting took place on TU Dublin's Blanchardstown Campus and many other schools across Louth and Meath were also in attendance. Throughout the day, students took part in inspiring bespoke workshops on fascinating topics such as climate change as well as an election for the role Regional Officer.

The Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) is a democratic, non-profit organisation "led by students, for students". Its main aim is to represent secondary school student voices as well as their opinions on their education. It believes the ideas of a student to be of utmost value within academic decision-making, giving anyone who is willing to speak up on issues that concern them the platform to. It's an organisation that motivates because of its clear focus on a student's viewpoint. It advocated greatly for adjustments to the Leaving Certificate of 2023 which was swiftly granted a little while after! Their website also provides helpful resources students can utilise to educate themselves on racism, COVID-19 and climate change. Lastly, surveys concerning the future of the Junior and Senior Cycle are generated by this organisation meaning that students are also permitted to have a say in the curriculum.

The ISSU is an organisation without bias or discrimination, meaning any good ideas or strong opinions young people may have will not be left unheard and will be brought straight up through the ranks towards government leaders, fuelling a fire of much-needed change.

Our very own Áine O'Rourke in 5th Year was one of many students who put herself forward for the role of Regional Officer. Through this role, she would oversee all campaigns held by schools within this county, that ignite change and unity. Although she was not elected, we are proud of her efforts to support the student voice within the school, and she had amazing advice to empower wishing to indulge in leadership roles too: "If you're passionate about it, just go for it, you will get as much out of it as you put in. Always be willing to lend a hand where you can. Lastly, if you don't do it, who will?"

Higher Options

by Michael Carroll

On September 21st, thousands of Sixth Year students across Ireland attended the 2022 Higher Options exhibition at the RDS in Ballsbridge, with Ballymakenny College students being no exception. Students arrived at school for 8AM for a brief meeting and roll call before filing onto buses to make the journey to Higher Options.

Upon arrival, we were greeted by leaflets and maps of what the day held for us. Following that, we were allowed to independently explore the RDS, visit the stalls and assess our futures after secondary schools. There was a large variety of options available, ranging from traditional universities and institutes of education to apprenticeships and the army. This meant that pupils were able to learn more about their potential and what life post Leaving Cert could look like. Many other stalls were present as well such as StudyClix.ie and various Debs companies, giving us helpful information on the events that will take place during our final year in school.



After consuming enough information about our individual career paths to be satisfied, there were refreshments available in a food court where we could discuss with one another what we'd found out. We reconvened at the bus for 12 o'clock, shuttling back on in order to make it home in time for last class.

Overall, the Higher Options exhibition was an illuminating event for many. We were exposed to fresh, alternative choices and came out feeling confident about life after Ballymakenny College.

Interview with Jacinthe Mulligan

by Matthew McFadden

For those who don't know, where do you come from, and why have you moved to Ireland?

I am from the French part of Belgium, and I finished secondary school in Belgium. I didn't feel ready to move on to college yet, so I wanted to do something special that would help me gain some skills, so I thought of going back to secondary school in another country where I could improve my English. One of my sisters did that in England a few years ago, and I wanted to do something similar. I decided to go to Ireland as I have some Irish roots from my Dad. I'm technically half-Irish, but I hardly knew anything about the country, so I wanted to change that.



Have you settled in nicely at Ballymakenny College so far?

I would say yes, as even though I do get lost sometimes and I feel I need to ask a lot of questions, I have settled in well.

What are some cultural differences you have noticed between life in Ireland and Belgium?

That is quite a hard question, as there are many different things. The typical foods in Belgium are chips, pancakes and chocolates. Beer is also very popular. Belgium also have a special holiday on the 6th of December called Saint-Nicolas day, which as you know isn't celebrated in Ireland.

Is school life in Belgium different to school life in Ballymakenny?

Well firstly, the timetables are different. Here, it is 8:30 until 2:30/2:30. In Belgium school starts at 8:15 and finishes at 4:00 everyday except Wednesday where it finishes at midday. Lunch breaks were much longer in Belgium, being at least 50 minutes long. Lessons are also 50 minutes long. In my timetable, I had free slots where I was able to study and do homework in my timetable too. In classrooms, all the tables were in lines, not in pods like most of the classrooms in this school. Also, we call teachers by their surnames in Belgium, and it was weird to hear students call teachers by their first name originally.

In Belgium, there is a lot more compulsory subjects. I know in Ireland the only compulsory ones are English, Irish and Maths. In Belgium, French, history and geography are all compulsory, and so is religion if you are in a religious school. You can choose to add to those subjects too. For example, I chose to do Latin as I found it interesting. We also stay in the same class for every subject, due to everyone doing the same subjects. There is about 24 per class, and as a result you really get to know everyone. In Belgium there are no uniforms and also no extra curricular clubs. We also have exams twice a year, and if you fail your exams, you have to repeat the year! Every year group also has a trip at the end of the year. There is also an event called "100 days", which occurs when there is 100 days left of the school year. On this day, 6th years are allowed to do whatever they want, which is often chaotic. They are able to deface lockers and other crazy stuff!

There is no "treoir" in the mornings in Belgium, you just go straight to your first class. There are also no assemblies, so I was shocked when we had our first assembly of the year in September as there was so many people.

What do you hope to gain out of your year here?

I would like to improve my English, and also understand more about my Irish heritage. I also hope to make lots of memories and feel like I did something special.



6th Year Coffee Morning

by Madeleine Houssou

On the 20th of September, Teach Mh  ibhe students had the pleasure of taking part in a tea and coffee morning organised by their house leader, Paddy Carroll as well as the 6th year tutors. The event took place after a short house assembly and ran for the entirety of first period in which students could connect and chat with one another accompanied by hot beverages and baked goods

In Paddy's words, "Over the last few years we have not had many opportunities to socialise together. We wanted to reward our senior students for their dedication to their studies and for making BKC such a positive environment!"

Overall, the atmosphere was fantastic and a truly impactful way to begin the first month. The students would like to thank everyone involved in coordinating for the opportunity!



School Self Evaluation

by Sebastian Moldovan

SSE is a process whereby each school examines their practice using an evidence – based approach. We use this process to reflect on our practices and strive for improvement. Each school identifies three areas of focus. We do it to bring about improvements in specific areas in our school for the benefit of students' learning experiences and outcomes. This year Ballymakenny College are focusing on -

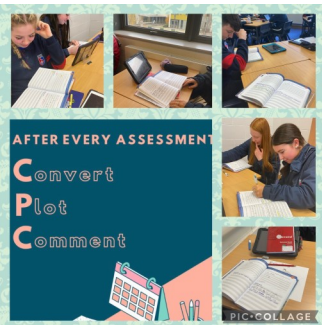
Literacy- DEAR time (Drop Everything And Read), keywords and action verbs.

Numeracy-Problem solving, fractional computation and plot graphs.

Learning to Learn – Our learning skill for this year is 'Reviewing'. We are using the CPC method to help us review our progress in all subject areas.

I use CPC regularly to review my learning. CPC (Convert Plot Comment) is a method used to review test results and comment on how we can improve in our next assessments. We use CPC in order to track our progress so that we can see what topics we need to focus on for our major assessments. I find CPC very helpful when assessing my learning because it helps me identify what topics I need to focus on. The keywords help more than you think in each subject too. When I learn my keywords, it helps me understand the different topics I am learning about.

The action verbs help you understand what a question is asking you to do because the action verbs widen your vocabulary and help you understand terms. The action verb of the month December is explain. The action verb of the month January is reflect.



The Student Council

by Teja Nickute

Once again, a new Student Council has been elected for the new academic year. These student council members are as follows: Ryan Kenny Walsh, Ewan Curran, Caoimhe Martin, Cillian Duff, Rachel Connor, Noah Everitt, Aaron Grey, Wan Ye Ge, Ross Irwin, Teja Nickute, Niamh O'Sullivan, Shay Carolan, Lucas Carton, Daria McKenna, Aine O'Rourke, Adam Connolly Fanning, Madeline Houssou and Tyler Martin. These members were chosen through a secret ballot that was sent out to the students in September. Each student was given two votes to choose the person that they believed would fit the role of the Student Council in their respective year.

What is the student council and what is their role?

The Student Council is a representative body that have been democratically elected by their fellow students. Their role is to be the "link" between students and the Board of Management as well as the Parent's Association. Another role that the Student Council has is to promote positive school life for all and to bring up issues of concern from the students to the BOM.

What do past and present student council members have to say about being on the student council?

From personal experience, I can say that being a member of the Student Council for the past 2 years has been an amazing and memorable adventure. The Student Council doesn't solely bring up issues to the BOM and other areas of concern but also organises school events, propose numerous of initiatives, inform the student body about organisations like the ISSU and much more. The Student Council has assisted in organising the Halloween dress up and fundraiser which have been huge successes. The Drogheda Special Olympics fundraiser was another fundraiser that the Student Council organised in which over €1,000 was raised for their dire need of a new roof. I would advise anyone who would enjoy improving school life, being that "link" between the student body and BOM, improve and develop communication skills and leadership skills then please join the Student Council next year as it is an amazing opportunity to grow and nourish these crucial skills.

6th Year Prefects

by Matthew McFadden

With a new school year, comes a new batch of school prefects. For every subject, a 6th year student is nominated to be head of that subject. Any 6th year student interested in a prefect role had to submit an application including why they believed they best suited the role, and they also had to include any experience they had with the subject they are applying to be prefect for. Everyone who applied was then put forward for an interview with vice principal Caroline O'Toole and teacher Barbara Grey, where the students were asked questions such as why they felt they were a good fit for the role and also how they would handle certain situations. Prefects are essentially the face of their respected subject. They also play a major role in organising themed weeks for their subjects. Prefects engage with the events and put forward ideas in order to present their chosen subject in the best possible light.

There is a lot of responsibility involved in being a prefect, it is also an opportunity to become as involved as possible with the subject you are most passionate about, which makes being a school prefect a very honourable and rewarding duty.

Halloween Fundraiser

by Cillian Duff



On the 28th of October, we held our annual Halloween fundraiser. Students and teachers dressed up and brought in money for SoSad. The art department organised events throughout the week such as quizzes, face painting and pumpkin painting with prizes for the winners of these. The Student Council organised a raffle and the winners were announced during assembly where they got brilliant prizes. The Student Council also picked out the best dressed of teachers and students from most creative to the best groups they all got great prizes. Due to the great effort put in the school raised over 1.3k for SoSad to help their brilliant organisation.

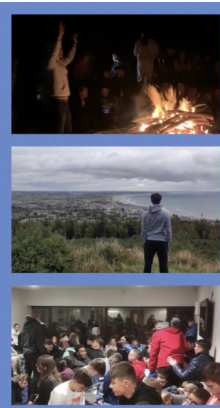
TY Bonding Trip

by Evan Biggins

Day 1 - We all got on the 1h 30min bus trip, arrived and deposited our bags. We then re-grouped outside the main building to find out what rooms we were in and after that went downtown. Everyone either searched for a supermarket or food. We walked back and explored our rooms, most of the rooms had their own bathrooms, we all had bunk beds. After we organised our rooms, we went to the cafeteria for lunch. We then went to our rooms for a few minutes before being sectioned into groups for our activities. There were 8 groups in total A-I. My group were put in waterproof pants, jacket, floaties and helmets. We went on a bus ride to the lake then we were put in a line tallest to shortest which was split in half, conveniently it turned into one canoe being all boys except the teacher and one being all girls excluding the instructor. After we finished, we were sent on the bus back to change out of the gear and shower. It was then dinner time. Jamie and Robbie gave donuts to everyone that wanted one. We then went back down into town for nearly an hour and a half. After we got back to YMCA we had free time till 1pm.

Day 2 - During breakfast that happened at around 8.20am, we were told our activities, mine was archery and zip lining at 9.45am then hiking. Archery was fun from start to near the end with the games, but a downside was the cold and just the length of the free time with the task, it was great overall. We had lunch at one then went for our second activity which for me and three other groups was hiking. The hiking trail varied for each group. We didn't go to a waterfall like the other groups, but we did walk for the same amount of time. After we got back, we were given free time till dinner at 5.30pm. Then we had free time till 7pm where we went downtown and got there around half 7 and had till 8pm before going back up, we could order a 14inch pizza for 10 pound, after waiting we went to the bonfire where songs were sung and hanging about till curfew which was changed to 12am.

Day 3 - Everyone woke up around 8am to get ready before breakfast which was at 8.30am. At breakfast 8 awards were given to 4 girls and 4 boys. We then were told to get ready and pack up because we were leaving at 10am but we meet up at 9.30am. Finally, we got on the buses and left. Thank you to all staff involved on the trip.



5th Year University Open Days

by Catherine Meehan

This year students from 5th year and Cú Chulainn were taken to open days at Dublin City University and Maynooth University. Both open days took place on Fridays in November, the first being DCU on the 18th and the second being Maynooth University on the 25th.

Shortly after Treoir students left Ballymakenny College by the bus load, and once they arrived at the universities they were allowed to explore the campus with their friends and attend lectures that appealed to them and their futures.

They got to chat with staff and students to get inspiration for and broaden their knowledge on what courses they wish to strive for in their Leaving Cert. Campus tours took place and depending on which lectures students attended they also got a sneak peek at the learning facilities, like the mock wards set up in DCU for the nursing students.

Representatives from the university's societies also had stands set up to draw in crowds. No interest is too niche for these societies with everything from crochet and dance, to airsoft and law societies, whatever your interested in these universities have you covered!

At the end of each day students were loaded back on the buses and were back in Ballymakenny with enough time to inspect their goodie bags and reflect on the courses and conversations they had experienced throughout the day.

A huge thank you on behalf of the 5th year and Cú Chulainn students, to all involved in the organisation of these informative days out!



What its like being a first year in Ballymakenny College?

by Rosanna McMahan

I personally think that secondary school is fun and a big difference to primary. I liked all the changing classrooms and seeing a different teacher every hour it's nice. I love the idea of the taster program it has definitely helped me to make choices.

I was shocked with the amount of people on the corridors, it was kind of hard to navigate through at first. I found remembering where all the classes were tough, and the yard is so busy I sometimes found it hard to find my friends at lunch. But a big school means there are a very wide range of extracurricular activities to choose from. (e.g., basketball, choir, ukulele club, gym etc) I chose choir and newsletter. Choir because I love to sing and it's fun and newsletter because I wanted to get more involved with the school and personally, I think it's pretty fun also.

The iPads are really useful, and I like to use all the learning tools on it especially Quizlet and Kahoot! They make it easier to study especially if you've got a test coming up you can look up the topics or you can make your own quiz which I find really helpful. All in all, I think that being a first year at Ballymakenny College is great!