

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB NEWSLETTER

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TG4 Documentary

What Is CNS?

Erasmus

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Professional Development

Higher Options



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dublin and Dún Laoghaire
Átha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

Coláiste Cois Life student features in new TV documentary about ETB learners



Kayleigh Trappe meets diverse group embracing education through Irish

A student from Coláiste Cois Life in Lucan recently featured in a new documentary which aired on TG4 about Ireland's Education & Training Boards (ETBs). In *Eachtraí Foghlama le Kayleigh Trappe* (Learning Adventures with Kayleigh Trappe), Samuele Arzate Montalti met the TikTok sensation and *Dancing with the Stars* finalist as she travels around Ireland and connects with a diverse group of learners embracing education through Irish.

On her journey, Kayleigh visited her old ETB school in Monaghan, met a budding Bangladeshi doctor in Tralee, a boatbuilder in Connemara, a girl with a 300km commute to school on the Aran Islands and keen coder Sam, who attends Coláiste Cois Life in Lucan, part of our Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB community. Sam, whose mum is from Venezuela and dad is from Mexico, says that staff and students at the school were "very patient" with him on his Irish language learning journey in the Gaelcholáiste. In the entertaining documentary, Sam taught Kayleigh to play chess and discovered that they both went to the same Irish summer college.

Speaking of the week-long adventure, Kayleigh said: "I've had an amazing week. It's so wonderful to see the opportunities that the ETBs provide across Ireland. I got to meet such a variety of people around the country, all with their own amazing stories. They all have a positive outlook towards Irish".

Education & Training Boards are the largest provider of education through the medium of Irish at second level. Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB are the patrons of 4 Gaelcholáistí and 1 Aonad Lán Gaeilge (an Irish school situated within an English medium school).

Our DDLETB CE, Caitríona Murphy said: “Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB is delighted that one of our schools, Coláiste Cois Life, is featured in Eachtraí Foghlama le Kayleigh Trappe and we would like to thank Samuele for participating in this project; we are thrilled with his contribution. We are very proud of the diversity of learners across DDLETB. We have 2,000 learners studying through the medium of Irish, including some who may not have attended Irish-language primary schools, and we are committed to ensuring that they are fully supported throughout their educational journey.”

Well done to Kayleigh, Sam, Hridita, Paraic, and Éadoin, and to everyone involved in creating the documentary – it was a wonderful production and a truly positive, inspiring representation of learning through Irish and the adventures it brings.

You can catch-up with Eachtraí Foghlama le Kayleigh Trappe on TG4 player.

Samuele Arzate Montalti is ainm dom agus táim sa tríú bliain i gColáiste Cois Life. D'fhreastail mé ar bhunscoil Béarla i Leamhcán sular thosaigh mé i gColáiste Cois life. Is as Venezuela í mo mháthair agus is as Meicsiceo é mo dhaid.

Ag aois óg, bhí suim mhór agam sa Ghaeilge. Nuair a bhí mé i rang a sé, dúirt mo mhaim liom gur cheart dom smaoineamh faoi dul chuig méanscoil Ghaeilge agus thaitin an smaoineamh sin liom. Nuair a shroich mé Coláiste Cois Life, bhí mé píosa neirbhíseach toisc go raibh mé taobh thiar de na daltaí eile le mo chuid Gaeilge. Ach tá na múinteoirí i gCCL an-deas agus foighneach. Thug siad an-tacaíocht domsa ag socrú isteach i nGaelcholáiste agus d'fheabhsaigh mo chuid Gaeilge de réir a chéile. Chomh maith leis sin, rinne mé ranganna Gaeilge le linn an tsamhraidh chun mo Ghaeilge a fheabhsú, agus de bharr sin bhí tuiscint réasúnta agam ar an nGaeilge agus mé ag tosú sa scoil.

Bhain mé an-taitneamh as mo thaithí sa chlár teilifíse, Eachtraí Foghlama a chraoladh ar TG4 le déanaí. Nuair a tháinig an lá mór agus na ceamaraí chun na scoile bhí mé neirbhíseach ach ceapaim gur éirigh liom jab maith a dhéanamh. Táim mar bhall den chlub fichille agus códú ar scoil agus bhí ceamaraí TG4 istigh sna clubanna liom ar an lá taifeadta. Sa todhchaí agus mé críochnaithe ar scoil ba mhaith liom códú a dhéanamh san ollscoil, nó b'fhéidir fichill a mhúineadh. Gabhaim buíochas as mo chuid múinteoirí ar scoil agus as an BOOACDL as an deis a tugadh dom.

Tá BOOACDL/DDLETB thar a bheith bródúil as Sam agus bhí áthas orainn go raibh sé ag déanamh ionadaíochta ar DDLETB agus ar Choláiste Cois Life ar TG4.

Maith thú Sam agus go raibh maith agat.

What Are Community National Schools (CNS)?

Community National Schools (CNS) are a distinctive model of primary education in Ireland, established to reflect the evolving diversity of Irish society. These schools are under the patronage of the local ETB and are state-operated, co-educational, and multid denominational, aiming to provide inclusive and high-quality education to all children in the communities they serve. DDLETB is the proud patron of 9 CNS and 3 Community Special Schools.



A Modern Educational Model

The CNS model was introduced as part of the state's response to the increasing demand for publicly managed, multid denominational primary schools. Traditionally, many Irish primary schools were managed by religious bodies, but with societal changes, there was a growing need for schools that cater to a diverse range of beliefs and backgrounds. CNSs were developed to meet this need, offering an alternative to the predominantly denominational school system.

Ethos and Core Values

CNSs are supported by our ETB ethos which is underpinned by our 5 core values:

- **Excellence in Education:** Striving for the highest standards in teaching and learning.
- **Care:** Fostering a nurturing environment where every child feels valued.
- **Equality:** Ensuring all children have equal opportunities to succeed.
- **Community:** Building strong relationships within the school and the wider community.
- **Respect:** Promoting mutual respect among students, staff, and the community.

These values underpin the daily operations and interactions within CNSs, creating a supportive and inclusive atmosphere for all students.



The Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY) Programme

A cornerstone of the CNS ethos is the Goodness Me, Goodness You! (GMGY) programme. This is a multi-belief and values education curriculum developed specifically for CNSs. Unlike traditional religious education, GMGY provides a framework for exploring a wide range of beliefs and values in an inclusive and respectful manner.

The GMGY programme comprises four strands:

- My Stories: Encouraging self-reflection and personal storytelling.
- We Are A CNS: Building a sense of community and belonging.
- Thinking Time: Promoting critical thinking and open-mindedness.
- Beliefs and Religions: Exploring various beliefs and fostering respect for diversity.

GMGY is taught during time traditionally scheduled for religious education, ensuring that all children, regardless of their background, can engage with the content in a meaningful way.

The curriculum was developed in collaboration with children, parents, teachers, local ETBs, the Department of Education and Youth, and assisted by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

For more information about Community National Schools and the GMGY programme, please visit the official CNS website: <https://cns.ie>



Danu Community Special School Celebrates with First Ever Student Art Exhibition

Danu Community Special School (located on the grounds of Rath Dara CC, Dublin 15) successfully held its first student art exhibition, opening its doors to showcase the students' artistic talents.

The event provided an opportunity for the entire school community to come together and celebrate the students' creativity and remarkable achievements. The exhibition, a significant milestone for the school, was well-received, with visitors admiring the many beautiful artworks on display. Artwork from Danu's younger students in classes Juniper and Willow featured sunshine, rainbows, hot air balloons, valentine hearts, the hungry caterpillar and more, including beautiful sketchbooks. The exhibition also featured several art projects from talented first-year Junior Cycle students in classes Hawthorn, Oak, Apple, and Ash.

January's project, 'All around the World', explored world foods, celebrating the diverse nationalities that comprise the vibrant school community. Inspired by Italian artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo, students created individual food-themed self-portraits, a mixed-media collage of their drawings, and prints made with fruit and vegetables, along with recycled food packaging from some of their favourite snacks. Special congratulations to three of students, Jared, Deji and Alan, who were all awarded certificates of commendation from the Texaco Children's Art Competition for their beautiful self-portrait artwork.

The exhibition also showcased 'Brigid's Cloak', a stunning collaborative student artwork, featuring an assemblage of student prints, mark-making skills with twigs, and sensory play in creating tactile coloured rice tiles. Students took great pride in their collective achievements being acknowledged and included in the Arts Council Creative February weekly round-up celebrations.





The exhibition was an unforgettable evening filled with laughter, out loud 'Wow' moments, and a powerful sense of joy in connection as the whole school community gathered to celebrate the students' achievements, surrounded by their beautiful artworks. On entering the space, a large digital screen showcased every student engaging at various stages of their creative learning process, having fun while exploring materials and creating art. Walking around the space, one may encounter polka dot animals, large, recycled beetles scaling the school wall, colourful light radiating through winged suncatchers overhead, interactive butterfly life cycle spinners, pie-in-the-sky mixed media birds and berry trees, and much more – a visual feast for the eyes.

The celebrations culminated in heartfelt speeches from Principal Ms. Pat Doolan, Chairperson of Danu's Board of Management, Mr. Paul Mc Evoy and Art Teacher Ms. Hazel Moore, who captured the essence of Danu's students' incredible creative journey over the past year. The Danu Community Special School is pleased with the success of their first-ever student art exhibition and looks forward to celebrating many more future events.

Well done and congratulations to all of Danu's talented student artists.



ALL - Adult Literacy For Life



Helena Browner, Dublin & Dún Laoghaire Regional Literacy Coordinator

I am the Regional Literacy Coordinator for Dublin & Dún Laoghaire ETB. I have worked within our ETB for the last twenty-five years across the Adult Education sector. I am excited to take on the responsibilities and challenges of this role.

Redefining what we mean by literacy?

In the past, literacy was defined as the ability to read and write. However, society has changed over time and the skills required for full participation in society have changed also. Today, we understand literacy to include not only reading and writing, but also listening, speaking, numeracy, and the ability to use everyday technologies like smartphones and computers.

Why do people have unmet literacy needs?

There are many reasons why people may struggle with reading, using technology, or working with numbers. Some may have left school early, while others might not have found education relevant to their lives at the time. According to the 2022 census, nearly 25% of adults in Ireland (aged 15 and over) have only completed the Junior Certificate or less, and 10% have only primary education or no formal qualifications at all.

Many adults with unmet literacy needs can read to some extent but still struggle with everyday tasks—such as filling out forms or finding information online. Some may have felt confident in their skills when they left school, but over time, changes in the workplace and daily life may have left their abilities outdated. For instance, someone who rarely writes at work or at home might lose confidence and fall out of practice. In many ways, literacy is like a muscle—if you don't use it regularly, it can weaken over time.

There is also a stigma surrounding low levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital skills. People often feel too embarrassed to seek help and may go to great lengths to hide their difficulties from friends and family, which can make the situation even more challenging.

Literacy and Ireland

The OECD Adult Skills Survey 2023 found that around 1 in 5 adults in Ireland aged 16 to 65 (21%) are at or below Level 1 on a five-level literacy scale, meaning they may struggle to understand basic written information.

In terms of numeracy, 1 in 4 adults (25%) scored at or below Level 1, indicating difficulty with simple calculations. The survey was carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in Ireland. A 2020 study by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) also revealed that about 2 in 5 adults aged 25 to 64 in Ireland (38%) have below basic digital skills. This suggests they may find it difficult to use everyday technology such as smartphones and computers. (www.nala.ie, 7/10/25)

Adult Literacy for Life Strategy

In 2021, Simon Harris (then Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science) launched a new government strategy called Adult Literacy for Life.

This strategy takes a whole-of-society approach to raising awareness about the importance of literacy. It plays a vital role in helping Ireland achieve its vision of a fully inclusive and equitable society and economy. The strategy aims to ensure that every adult has the literacy, numeracy, and digital skills needed to participate fully in everyday life and reach their full potential.

Literacy is a form of power. It offers a person the opportunity to carve out a place for themselves in the world. The ability to read and write, work with numbers and navigate the digital sphere can unleash an individual's potential. By the same measure, unmet needs in literacy, numeracy and digital literacy can leave a person feeling powerless, disenfranchised, and with little hope of advancement. (Simon Harris TD Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, 2021, Adult Literacy for Life Strategy, p.5)

Regional Literacy Coordinators appointed

As part of the ALL strategy, sixteen regional literacy coordinators were appointed and based in each Education and Training Board. In Dublin & Dún Laoghaire, we set up a Regional Adult Literacy Coalition to implement the Adult Literacy for Life strategy by drawing up a Literacy Action Plan each year.

Our Regional Adult Literacy Coalition includes representatives from local libraries, the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Department of Social Protection (DEASP), Money Advice and Budgeting Services (MABS), Citizen's Information Service (CIS), Home School Community Liaison (HSCL), Traveller Development Organisation, local Partnership and a learner representative.

As Regional Literacy Coordinator for Dublin & Dún Laoghaire, I am deeply committed to supporting our communities and creating new, inclusive pathways for those who need them most, thus ensuring everyone feels valued and included.

Through our Regional Coalition Action Plan and in close collaboration with local stakeholders, we are actively shaping the support landscape across Dublin & Dún Laoghaire. Together, we are championing adult literacy and expanding learning opportunities for adults at every stage in life.

By working collectively, we can continue to build a stronger, more inclusive community—breaking down barriers and empowering adults to develop the literacy, numeracy, and digital skills they need to thrive.

Photo on the right shows Caro Neville & Caroline Brennan with the MLI Award



Storytelling Through Creative Media – a new and award-winning approach

This year's Summer project was a new approach in literacy for the Adult Education Service, Dún Laoghaire (Loughlinstown) with the project: Storytelling Through Creative Media.

Using the theme of 'Storytelling Through Creative Media', our learners produced written and spoken stories, podcasts, short films, film reviews and visual art. All the media produced can be accessed and viewed through QR codes.

Our Stories Matter

The project was led by our fabulous tutor, Caroline Brennan. The group began by exploring the history of storytelling and why it is important for us to tell our stories. The group got to know each other better and built trust through several themed group discussions.

Teamwork

The group used the film 'Small Things Like These' to look at the essential elements of film making and discover the different roles and skills involved. Telling stories through mixed media was explored. The group used their learning to create their own short films. It was unanimously agreed that filmmaking takes lots of teamwork!

Photo Stories

The group looked at different types of writing and why it is important to understand the difference between journalistic and opinion/bias pieces. Learners shared their stories, verbally practicing public speaking and building confidence. They examined how photo stories work and created our own.

Mixed Media

The group produced written and spoken stories, podcasts, short films, film reviews and visual art which can be accessed and viewed using the QR codes.

Throughout the project the learners gained and practiced digital skills, literacy skills, people skills and critical thinking. The course was delivered using a UDL approach. Once learners had a new selection of skills, they were ready to tell individual or group stories in creating a final piece. They decided what the story would be and how they would like to tell it.

What the tutor said

'It was a big group and demanding work, but amazing fun! By framing the use of technology in a practical, relevant, and novel way the learners were less intimidated, and this made it much more accessible. Now learners know how to use their audio recorder to take audio notes in class. They know they can take photos of notes on the board or notes from group discussion. This in turn allowed them to focus on the task at hand'.

These are all skills the learners can bring forward into their Media Expression QQI Level 3 classes this year. Watch this space!

What the judges said:

'This initiative represents a very inclusive, heartfelt, creative, lifelong learning and hands-on approach to media literacy, with a strong emphasis on practical media production skills (podcasts and films) that successfully built confidence and skills among participants with different learning needs.'

DDLETB Erasmus Accreditation

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.

We are delighted to announce that Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB) achieved Erasmus+ Accreditation status in the school sector in May 2025. This milestone marks a significant step forward in our commitment to international collaboration, professional development, and enriching educational experiences for both staff and students.

Expanding Horizons Through Mobility

Since receiving accreditation, DDLETB has actively embraced the opportunities offered by Erasmus+. From June 2025 to date, 20 staff mobilities have been successfully carried out, involving participants from across our schools. These mobilities have included:

- Job Shadowing experiences in:
 - French Guiana
 - Martinique
 - The Basque Country
- Participation in a wide range of professional development courses, including:
 - AI-Powered Content Creation for Educators
 - Artificial Intelligence Foundations: Equipping Teachers for the Digital Classroom
 - Personalised Learning with High-tech & Low-Tech Strategies
 - Project-Based Learning (PBL)
 - AI-Enhanced Learning Experiences: The Future of Education
 - Game Design for Teaching and Learning
 - English Language Courses

These experiences have empowered our staff to bring innovative practices and European perspectives back to their classrooms and communities.



Student Engagement on a Global Stage

Our students have also begun to benefit from Erasmus+ opportunities. Learners from Grange Community College, Kingswood Community College, and Swords Community College travelled to Patras, Greece to participate in a sustainability-focused project titled “Act, React, Make an Impact”. This initiative brought together students from Greece, France, Germany, and Ireland, fostering intercultural dialogue and collaborative action on environmental issues.



Looking Ahead

The journey is just beginning. Between November 2025 and May 2026, 60 more mobilities are planned, offering even more staff and students the chance to engage in transformative learning experiences across Europe ranging from Aruba to Norway.

DDLETB's Erasmus+ Accreditation is not just a recognition—it's a gateway to growth, innovation, and connection. We look forward to continuing this exciting journey and sharing more stories of impact in the months ahead.

Anyone who is interested in participating in Erasmus under our accreditation can contact priscillakirwan@ddletb.ie to hop onboard the Erasmus Train.



Firhouse Community College: Innovating Maths Education Through Erasmus+ and Trinity Access

Firhouse Community College's Maths Department has been on an extraordinary journey over the past three years, one that has transformed how Maths is taught and learned.

Through their partnership with Trinity College Dublin and the Erasmus+ Programme, teachers have been at the forefront of educational innovation, collaboration, and creativity, both in Ireland and across Europe.

For the past three years, Firhouse Community College has proudly participated in the Trinity Access Maths Programme, a national initiative that connects schools around the country to develop new, engaging approaches to teaching Junior Cycle Maths. This collaboration has allowed the Maths Department to redesign Units of Learning, focusing on task-based learning and real-world problem solving to help students become more resilient, confident, and curious learners.

Working closely as a department, they now plan lessons collaboratively and have introduced peer observation, allowing teachers to learn from one another in a supportive and reflective environment. The results have been remarkable – students are more engaged, more willing to take risks, and demonstrate greater perseverance in tackling challenging problems.



In addition to the Trinity Access work, the school is part of an Erasmus+ programme with Trinity College Dublin, which brings together Maths teachers from Ireland, Austria, Sweden, and the Czech Republic to exchange best practices and co-create new learning materials. This international partnership has provided invaluable insight into how different education systems approach Maths and how collaboration can enhance teaching quality and student outcomes.

Our Erasmus+ journey is structured around a series of Learning, Teaching, and Training Activities (LTTAs) – short-term international exchanges where teachers from partner schools come together to share expertise, explore new pedagogical methods, and design innovative classroom resources. The project began with LTTA01, hosted in Ireland, where teachers from all partner countries came together to explore the project goals, share details of their education systems, and use AI tools to assist in lesson planning and resource creation. Each country also developed plans for how to apply what they learned within their own schools.

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



**Funded by
the European Union**

In April 2024, as part of LTTA02, Nadia McCormack, Hazel Travers, and Seidina Delagic travelled to the Czech Republic, where they shared our Geometry Unit of Learning and observed classroom practice in Czech schools. Later that year, in December 2024, for LTTA03, Seidina Delagic and Jack Farmer represented Firhouse in Austria, presenting a Unit of Learning on Probability. Most recently, in April 2025, Noel Gallagher and Pablo Gayubo visited Sweden for LTTA04, where they presented a Unit of Learning on Quadratic Patterns and participated in workshops exploring inclusive teaching strategies.

The next phase of the project, LTTA05, will see Nadia McCormack, Seidina Delagic, and Monica Crossan return to Austria, where they will present a Unit of Learning on Coordinate Geometry and deliver a lesson plan on linear and quadratic equations using the Utility Value Theory.

These exchanges have not only deepened teachers' professional practice but have also brought back fresh energy and innovative ideas to share with students in Firhouse classrooms. We are incredibly proud of how our Maths Department has embraced this opportunity to grow, learn, and lead on an international stage.

As part of this ongoing work, we are also eager to connect with other DDLETB schools interested in collaborating on Maths resources or developing a Community of Practice to enhance learning in Maths across the region. Through these projects, Firhouse Community College continues to show that when educators collaborate, locally and internationally, the learning experience for every student becomes richer, more dynamic, and more inspiring.

For more information contact the team at Firhouse CC.



Art Teachers Bring Back Creative Inspiration from Erasmus+ Training in Barcelona

This summer, Adrienne Byrne & Claire Timmons, the devoted art team at Mount Seskin CC had the opportunity to take part in an enriching Erasmus+ teacher training course in Barcelona, funded through the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme. The week-long course, titled Modernism & Avant-Garde, took place in June and brought together a small group of educators from three European countries to explore the impact of modernist movements in art and architecture — both historically and in education today.

The course began with each participant sharing their school's story and cultural context, laying the foundation for a week of meaningful collaboration and exchange. From there, the teachers immersed themselves in the vibrant artistic heritage of Barcelona, beginning with a tour along the iconic Passeig de Gràcia, examining the stunning detail and beauty of sculpture embedded in both public and private buildings.

Throughout the week, the group explored many of Antoni Gaudí's most celebrated works, including La Pedrera and Casa Vicens, gaining deeper insight into how modernist principles were applied not just in galleries, but in everyday urban spaces.

The course encouraged participants to consider the influence of Modernism in outdoor galleries,

public buildings, and shared cultural spaces — ideas that have since directly influenced visual art planning for both the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate in our school.

As part of the course, Claire and Adrienne also learned to use Wikiloc, a digital mapping tool, to create interactive art trails. Inspired by this, they've already brought the learning home: in September, LCA students created their own sculpture trail in the National Botanic Gardens, using Wikiloc to design and guide their experience — a fantastic example of cross-curricular learning in action.

Beyond the classroom, the teachers embraced the full cultural experience of Barcelona — sampling traditional Catalan cuisine and joining in the celebrations of the San Juan Festival, a vibrant and joyful highlight of the local calendar. Reflecting on their experience, both teachers highly recommend taking part in Erasmus+ programmes. "It was an incredibly valuable opportunity — not only for professional development but also for the fresh ideas and cultural perspectives we were able to bring back to our students," they said.

We are proud to be part of the Erasmus+ network, and we look forward to continuing to grow through international collaboration and creativity.



ddletb FESTIVAL OF MUSIC

25TH ANNIVERSARY 3 MARCH 2026

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE 25TH **FESTIVAL OF MUSIC** WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL ON **3RD MARCH 2026**. THIS WILL INCLUDE PERFORMANCES BY STUDENTS FROM DDLETB COMMUNITY COLLEGES & GAELOCHOLÁISTÍ.



The annual Festival of Music returns next March with performances by students from DDLETB Community Colleges and Gaelcholáistí.

From Pop, Rock, Traditional, Folk to Classical Music the students perform as soloists, in groups, in bands and as part of the DDLETB Choir. It promises to be another fabulous evening of music, showcasing the musical talent of the students in the DDLETB.

The Festival is a great opportunity for the second-level students of the DDLETB to meet and create music together on the stage of the country's premier music venue. We are immensely proud of the achievement of our students and delighted to support this performance.

This ticketed event is open to all students/learners and staff. Tickets will be available to purchase directly from **the National Concert Hall (NCH)** in early 2026.

Full details will be made available soon on our website www.ddletb.ie and also our Social Media Channels with the link to NCH.



ddletb

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Átha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

DDLETB Leadership Connect Back in Full Flight for 2025!



We're thrilled to announce that DDLETB's Leadership Connect is back in full swing this year — and it's bigger and better than ever!

This year's programme features three exciting strands: the Teacher Leadership Programme (TLP), the Middle Leadership Programme (MLP), and our brand new Year Head Development Programme (YHP). Each one is designed to inspire, challenge, and support participants on a journey of learning, leadership, and reflection.

Coordinators Janet Murphy and Caroline Daly, with the fantastic support of the Development Team, will lead a series of dynamic learning sessions throughout the year. We are extremely grateful that so many of our DDLETB colleagues are on board to share their expertise, knowledge, and experiences with participants, alongside insights from external experts.

We're so excited to kick off another Leadership Connect journey and can't wait to follow the progress, growth, and collaboration that will unfold over the coming months. Stay tuned for updates — it's going to be an inspiring year ahead!





Free Access to LinkedIn Learning for All DDLETB Employees!

We're thrilled to remind you that all DDLETB employees have free access to LinkedIn Learning — a world-class digital learning platform offering over 200,000 expert-led courses across a wide range of topics.

Whether you're looking to upskill professionally, explore a personal interest, or simply stay up to date with the latest trends in your field, LinkedIn Learning has something for everyone. Courses are available in areas such as:

- Competency Based Applications and Interviews
- Leadership and management
- Digital skills, IT and AI
- Communication and collaboration
- Project management and organisation
- Wellbeing and work-life balance
- Creativity and design tools and many more.

You can learn anytime, anywhere, and at your own pace. The platform even offers personalised course recommendations based on your interests and goals.

Access is easy — simply log in through your SharePoint/Office 365 account or go directly via your browser using your DDLETB email address. You'll have received a welcome email from a DDLETB representative with an instructional video to guide you through the setup process, and additional support is available directly on the platform.

Be sure to connect with us on LinkedIn too and list us as your employer!

Our Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB page is full of updates, learning opportunities, and events — and it's a great way to stay engaged and informed across our organisation.

This is a fantastic resource for professional growth and lifelong learning — make the most of it and start exploring today!

Celebrating our participation in WorldSkills 2025

This year, our team proudly showcased talent and innovation at WorldSkills Ireland 2025, held from 17–19 September at the RDS Simmonscourt, Dublin. The event brought together over 30,000 attendees, including students, educators, and industry leaders, to celebrate skills, apprenticeships, and future career opportunities.



Avril Fitzgerald, Maksym, Jim Smyth

Our Speakers

We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to all the apprentices who represented their trades, employers and centres as speakers on the Heroes Stage at WorldSkills Ireland 2025. Among them, Rory Deegan, an Apprentice of the Year 2025 nominee currently working with Systems Plus and in Phase 2 of his apprenticeship at Tallaght Training Centre, was one of the featured speakers. Special mentions also go to James Callaghan (Essity), Tendai Hove (OMC Claims), Tegan O'Shaughnessy (Saloon Botanica), and Cheryl Dunne (O'Brien Wines). Each of you has made your training centres and employers extremely proud by sharing your journeys with such a wide audience. Well done to Rory and to all our inspiring speakers.

Our Competitor Maks

We are extremely proud of Maks and his mentor Avril who competed in the World Skills 'Electrical Installations' competition finals. Maks began his apprenticeship a year ago and is now in Phase 2 of training at Tallaght Training Centre, and an apprentice electrician with Fantasy Lights. To reach the National Finals is an amazing achievement and everyone at Tallaght TC is very proud of how Maks represented Tallaght, your employer and more importantly yourself at such a high level.

Our talented Wood Manufacturing & Finishing instructor Jim Smith who won the WorldSkills 1995 competition in cabinet making also played a critical role at the #WSI2025. Expert in his field, Jim was a WorldSkills Ireland Examiner, sharing his experience and knowledge in cabinet making.



Rory and Maks



Fashion Design, Styling and Visual Merchandising

Our Fashion Design, Styling and Visual Merchandising stand was a highlight of the exhibition, designed to reflect the creativity and professionalism of our Further Education and Training programmes. The stand showcased a range of displays and live demonstrations, providing learners with the chance to interact and explore educational pathways with our educators from Sallynoggin College of Further Education and Training.



DDLETB CE Caitriona Murphy and Karyn Hurley at WorldSkills

We look forward to building on this momentum and continuing to inspire excellence in the years ahead. Here's to many more successes and shared journeys—well done to everyone involved.

FET Learner Focus

Baldoyle Training Centre proudly celebrated the remarkable achievement of Charlotte Carroll, a graduate of our Pharmacy Sales Assistant course. Charlotte was honoured with the “Counter Assistant of the Year Award 2025” by Irish Pharmacy News (IPN).

Charlotte’s journey began when she enrolled in the Pharmacy Sales Assistant Course in Baldoyle Training Centre and subsequently obtained eight-week work experience at Raheny Pharmacy (McCartan’s), where she now holds a permanent position. During her time at Baldoyle Training Centre, Charlotte completed several key modules, including Skincare and Grooming, Customer Service, Retail Sales Techniques, and Over-the-Counter Medicines. These modules are

certified by the Irish Pharmaceutical Union, ensuring a high level of professional training.

Her dedication and impact in the pharmacy sector have been recognized through this prestigious award. The accolade highlights the exceptional service provided by pharmacy support staff who excel in customer care. As a student, Charlotte stood out for her extensive knowledge of over-the-counter medicines and her ability to build strong relationships with customers and her commitment to excellence in customer service has set a high standard in the industry.

We are incredibly proud of Charlotte’s achievements and look forward to celebrating more successes in the future.

If You Can Dream It... You Can Do It!

Adam McGarry, Sports Instructor with the Blanchardstown Community Training Centre funded by DDLETB Baldoyle Training Centre, had the honour of representing Ireland at 2025 European Masters Weightlifting Championships in Albania. Reflecting on the event, Adam described it as an “unbelievable couple of days” competing against some of the top master athletes in Europe.

Despite a challenging start in the snatch event—where a rare 15-minute gap between his first and second lift disrupted his usual rhythm—Adam delivered an impressive performance in the Clean & Jerk, successfully completing all three of his lifts. His efforts earned him a top 10 finish overall, a significant achievement at this high level of international competition.

Adam highlighted the intensity of the championship, noting that it was a distinct step up from national competitions, particularly due to the fast-paced and often chaotic environment in the warm-up area. Yet, as always, he embraced the challenge and is already looking ahead to future opportunities to compete on the European stage. We wish Adam every success for the future.



DDLETB'S FIRST DEGREE KICKS OFF IN BFEI

BFEI are delighted to announce the launch of their Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Politics, Society and Media. This is the first tertiary award within the DDLETB.

This Tertiary Degree was co-designed and will be co-delivered between TU Dublin, Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB and City of Dublin ETB Colleges. Students will attend years 1 and 2 at their chosen further education college (Blackrock Further Education Institute, City of Dublin FET College Rathmines, City of Dublin FET College Ballyfermot) and years 3 and 4 at TU Dublin. This tertiary award will provide students with, for the first time, a seamless pathway from Further Education to Higher Education. The students starting their degree-journey in BFEI this September will graduate in four years from TUD with an Honours BA.

This Tertiary Degree was designed to fulfil the long-held conviction that access to third level education in Ireland needed to be broadened. The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science outlined their "Statement of Strategy 2021 to 2023", six strategic goals, one of which centered around developing talent and skills. Crucial to the achievement of this goal was the provision of diverse and progressive pathways for learners, enabling progression across and between different institutions. Similarly, the SOLAS "Transforming Learning Strategy 2022-2024" highlighted the need for transitions within FET and from FET to HE.

It has been widely recognised that students need more diverse and better aligned learning and development opportunities as well as a variety of pathways to enable students' personal growth, the development of talents, and the promotion of lifelong learning. This year, BFEI opened the door to students who wish to acquire a degree but up to now have been locked out of the system. It was with great excitement that the first cohort of students registered in BFEI and began their Bachelor of Arts journey.

For more information on this course visit: [**BA \(Honours\) in Politics, Society and Media**](#)



Principal Tina Reddin (back row, second from right) and Frank Kehoe, Course Lead (Back row, first on left) with some of the first group of students to start their degree in BFEI.

Debating in Ardgillan College

Debating in Ardgillan College is off to another exceptional start this academic year, with students demonstrating remarkable dedication and hard work. Students have committed countless hours to research, speech writing, and practice sessions as they prepare to compete in several debating competitions, including the Concern Debates, the Leinster Schools Debating Competition, and the UCD Junior Schools Debating Competition.

The level of preparation for debating competitions requires significant commitment from students, who put a huge amount of time into preparing their speeches. Their hard work is evident in the quality of debates they have participated in so far, showcasing not only their speaking skills but also their ability to critically engage with current affairs and global issues. Students are now eagerly preparing to begin the Inter-DDLETB Debating Competition.

Their determination and enthusiasm continue to strengthen the debating tradition in Ardgillan College, and we look forward to celebrating their continued success as the year progresses. Thank you to Ms Arkins, Ms Magilton, Ms O'Connor and Mr Walsh for their work with the debating team.

The DDLETB Inter-Schools Debating Competition is now in full swing for 2025-2026, organised by Hannah O'Connor (Ardgillan CC) and proudly supported by the DDLETB Development Team. We wish all participating schools and teams the very best of luck and we look forward to seeing the finalists in DDLETB Head Office in April 2026.

Huge thank you to Hannah for all her hard work and organising.





Donabate Community College Staff Complete Restorative Practice Training

Congratulations to the teachers and SNAs of Donabate Community College (DCC) who completed an eight-hour training programme in Restorative Practice. Over four 2-hour sessions, staff engaged in meaningful professional learning focused on building and sustaining positive relationships throughout the school community.

The training explored practical ways to embed restorative language and conversations into everyday life at DCC – fostering a culture where respectful dialogue, understanding, and collaboration are at the heart of how students and staff communicate together.

A word of appreciation goes to Marina, Noreen, and Dorothée from CDI (Childhood

Development Initiative) who expertly delivered the sessions. Their guidance provided staff with practical tools and confidence to approach challenges restoratively and resolve conflict constructively.

Staff left the training inspired and ready to put their new skills into practice. The collective aim is to continue nurturing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where every member of the school community feels heard and valued.

The training concluded with a well-deserved celebration and presentation of certificates of completion – a proud moment for the DCC team as they commit to making restorative approaches an integral part of school life.

Visit <https://www.cdi.ie> for more information

Donabate Community College Annual Open Evening

Donabate Community College was full of energy and excitement on the evening of Monday, September 16th, as the school opened its doors to prospective students and their families for its annual Open Evening. This year's event marked an important milestone, as the Parents' Council took part for the first time, setting up an information stand and meeting parents interested in joining or learning more about their work within the school community.

Principal Mr. John Doyle welcomed parents and pupils before introducing a short video presentation about life at Donabate Community College. The video presentation celebrates who we are as a DDLETB school, living out the values of Excellence, Care, Equality, Community, and Respect every day. From there, guests were invited to take guided tours of the campus led by enthusiastic student volunteers, who shared their own experiences of school life and answered questions from curious future students. Classrooms came to life with interactive subject displays, practical demonstrations, and hands-on activities, offering visitors a taste of the engaging and innovative teaching methods used every day at DCC.

Parents and primary school students explored a wide range of learning spaces — from science labs buzzing with experiments to art rooms showcasing vibrant creative projects to our range of Sports facilities to our modern well-equipped technical rooms. A notable new feature of Open evening was the presence of the Parents' Council. Members of the Parents' Council were on hand to answer questions and explain the



important role the council plays in supporting the school and fostering strong links between parents and staff.

Visitors praised the welcoming atmosphere and were impressed by the professionalism and enthusiasm of the students who led the tours. Many parents commented on how seeing the school in action helped them and their children feel excited and reassured about the transition to post-primary education.

DCC extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended, as well as to the dedicated staff, students, and members of the Parents' Council who helped make the event such a success.

Deansrath Community College Launches Green Ribbon Campaign for World Mental Health Day – October 10th

As students at Deansrath Community College, we were delighted to launch our Green Ribbon campaign this October to coincide with World Mental Health Day, which took place on October 10th. This day is a global reminder of the importance of mental health, encouraging us to come together, raise awareness, and promote wellbeing for everyone.

As part of our Mental Health Matters campaign at Deansrath, we have been busy gathering information, raising awareness, and distributing green ribbons and wellbeing resources to our school community. Our aim is to get conversations going, increase understanding, and reduce stigma around mental health issues, helping every student feel supported and valued.

Mental health is an important part of overall wellbeing. By talking openly about our feelings, sharing and supporting each other, we can build a stronger, more compassionate school community and the Green Ribbon campaign is a step towards this goal.

We are excited about more initiatives to come this year and would like to thank our teachers, Mr. Corbett and Mr. O'Melia, for their help and support. Their involvement ensures our campaign aligns with the school ethos of care, respect, community, equality and excellence in education.

Let's start conversations, break the stigma, and support one another – because mental health matters every day, not just on October 10th!



Firhouse Community College – Celebrating Leadership, Kindness & Innovation

Firhouse Community College is proudly reflecting on and celebrating a year defined by student leadership, creativity, and community spirit. Across every year group, students have shown that small actions, from helping a classmate to leading whole-school initiatives, can have a lasting impact. “We are so proud of how our students have led with kindness, positivity, and initiative this year,” said the school’s Student Participation Coordinator. “They’ve made an incredible contribution to every aspect of school life.”

STEM Leadership

Under Ms. Nadia McCormack, the STEM Team delivered a dynamic programme that brought science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths to life. Transition Year students led inspiring sessions on Women in STEAM, highlighting female innovators and hosting interactive quizzes for first years. The team also organised events for Space Week, STEM Week, and SciFest, encouraging experimentation, discovery, and teamwork that sparked curiosity across all year groups.

Green Action

Coordinated by Ms. Marie Kennedy, the Green Schools Committee achieved Firhouse’s fourth Green Flag, awarded for Travel. Their impact went far beyond sustainability — students raised over €600 for charities, collected 150kg of batteries for LauraLynn Hospice, joined NASA’s Globe Air Quality Campaign, and secured funding for a 20-bike shelter. Two Sustainable Development Goals Weeks also promoted awareness and responsibility throughout the school.

Digital Innovation

With Ms. Michele Crossan, the Digital Ambassadors excelled in the Microsoft DreamSpace Programme, gaining advanced coding and digital creativity skills. They ran MakeCode Arcade workshops with local primary schools and supported teachers with digital learning projects, strengthening Firhouse’s culture of innovation and collaboration.



Student Voice

Led by Emma Rea, the Student Council ensured that student perspectives were heard and valued. They contributed to the anti-bullying policy, proposed creative updates for the student journal, and championed initiatives that make the school more inclusive and student led.

Mentorship & Support

The Fifth-Year Mentors, guided by Maria Martyn and Seidina Delagic, provided exceptional peer support through their Homework Club and Study Skills Workshops, helping younger students build confidence, motivation, and resilience.

Wellbeing & Kindness

Under Megan Doyle's leadership, the Wellbeing Committee promoted kindness, inclusion, and mental health through the "Be the I in Kind" campaign, Odd Socks Day, and participation in Darkness into Light for Pieta House. Their ice-cream days at the end of each term brought joy and connection to the whole school community.

Community Spirit

And once again, Firhouse CC students showed compassion through the Team Hope Christmas Shoebox Appeal, preparing 144 boxes for children in need—a true reflection of Firhouse's generosity and empathy.



Dodder Investigators 2.0: Transition Year Students Take Action for Our River



Firhouse Community College sits right beside Section 40 of the River Dodder. Over the past few years, the school community have noticed changes, lower levels in summer, flooding in winter, and fewer signs of the wildlife that once thrived there. That's why, in 2022/23, Firhouse CC TY classmates launched the Dodder Investigators project as part of the European Space Agency's Climate Detectives Programme. Their goal was simple but vital: find out how climate change is affecting our local river.

What the First Investigators Found

The original Dodder Investigators carried out monthly tests on the river, comparing their results with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) records from the last 20 years. They measured temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and looked for indicator species like mayflies and stoneflies.

Their results showed that:

- Water temperatures in recent summers went above 20°C, too hot for salmon and trout to feed or grow.
- Dissolved oxygen levels collapsed to just 3.9 mg/L, far below the safe level for fish survival.
- pH values spiked to 9.2, outside the healthy range, making life difficult for salmonids.
- Stoneflies disappeared and mayflies dropped dramatically, showing the river's health was declining.

Anglers and fisheries officers confirmed the same story: the Dodder is under pressure, with weirs slowing the flow, raising temperatures, and reducing spawning areas.

The first Dodder Investigators didn't just collect data, they impressed experts. The EPA commended the project, and it was ranked among the Top 7 in Europe in the Climate Detectives Programme. That recognition proved that local action could make a global impact.

Now it's our turn. The TY Class of 2025/26 are calling ourselves "Dodder Investigators 2.0", and we want to build on the work of the first group by putting their solutions into action.

Our plans include:

- Tree planting along the Dodder to provide shade and reduce water temperature.
- A petition to remove weirs so the river can flow freely again.
- 12 monthly field visits to monitor the Dodder's water quality across the seasons.
- Awareness campaigns in the community, including exhibitions, videos, articles, and social media.

Why It Matters

The Dodder is not just a river. It's part of our community, our heritage, and our environment. It flows through Dublin, supporting fish, birds, and plants, while giving people a place to walk, fish, and enjoy nature. If we don't act, climate change and human interference will continue to damage it.

But if schools, councils, anglers, and the community work together, the Dodder can thrive again.

For more information or to find out how to sign the petition contact Student Participation Co-ordinator Nadia McCormack at nadiamccormack@firhousecc.ie





Fifth Year Students Explore the Future of Tech on Amazon STEM Trip

Fifth Year students at Mount Seskin Community College had an exciting and inspiring day in September as they visited Amazon's Fulfilment Centre as part of a STEM initiative designed to spark interest in technology, engineering, and innovation.

Upon arrival, students were welcomed with a tasty hot lunch in the canteen before being brought to a large meeting room for an engaging introductory session. There, they learned about health and safety protocols, Amazon's apprenticeship pathways, and how the fulfilment centre operates using advanced technologies.

Students were then split into three groups and rotated through a series of 30-minute workshops – all hands-on, educational, and fun. One group explored robotics by brainstorming and designing their own robots – ideas we brought back to school to develop further. Another group had a fascinating behind-the-scenes tour of the fulfilment centre, witnessing how automation and logistics work together at scale. The third group got to programme Ozobots, learning basic coding and seeing how their commands influenced the robots' movements.

The timing of the sessions was just right to keep students fully engaged throughout the day, and the entire event was extremely well organised. The Amazon staff were incredibly welcoming and enthusiastic, taking the time to answer questions and encourage the students to consider STEM careers – particularly through their apprenticeship routes.

"It was a brilliant day," said Alanna, Fifth Year students. "It's amazing to think about how much robots can do, and how we can shape this for the future."

Science Lead Ms. Edwards praised both the experience and the students: "Our students represented the school exceptionally well. The visit gave them practical insights into how STEM is used in the real world – and Amazon created a truly engaging and inspiring environment for learning. Thanks to all for hosting"

A huge thank you to Amazon for hosting us. We're already looking forward to returning next year!

REALT wins ESRI Impact on Society Award

In May 2025 the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) awarded their 'Impact on Society Award 2025' to REALT for use of their ArcGIS online mapping system to seek appropriate school places for refugee children. The category awards projects that make significant positive impacts on society, addressing social, environmental, or economic challenges through GIS.

The REALT (Regional Education and Language Team) was established at the outbreak of war in Ukraine to assist Ukrainian families arriving in Ireland to find school places for their children. Agreed between the Department of Education and Skills (DoES), and Education and Training Board Ireland (ETBI), a REALT Co-ordinator was placed in every ETB in Ireland to provide speedy, flexible, localised assistance to Ukrainian families and local schools. Since then, REALT has expanded to provide support for families living in International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS) accommodations. REALT DDLETB has supported thousands of children since its inception, vindicating the rights of children in the DDLETB region to education.

For support or advice on REALT contact our DDLETB REALT Coordinator at aineivers@ddletb.ie



ESRI 'Impact on Society Award 2025' was awarded to REALT. Áine Ivers, REALT Co-ordinator, DDLETB, Aidan McGinley, National REALT Co-ordinator, ETBI

Honouring Excellence: Priory Youthreach Awards Celebration

Celebrating Success and Shaping Bright Futures



Level 4 Graduates 2025

Priory Youthreach proudly presented QQI Level 4 awards to this year's dedicated graduates, each now taking the next step toward exciting new opportunities in education and employment.

Molly Finnerty – progressing to Inchicore College to study Nursing Studies

Caitlin Hawkins – training in Frontline Reception at Tallaght Training Centre

Julie Clare O'Brien – beginning a Hairdressing Apprenticeship and employed by Peter Mark

Rebecca O'Sullivan – continuing at Rathmines College to study Digital and General Administration

The team at Priory Youthreach is immensely proud of their hard work, dedication, and success – wishing them every happiness in the next stage of their journey.

Level 3 Learners Shine in Active Youth Challenge

Our Level 3 learners made us proud by winning medals and a trophy in the 12-week Active Youth Challenge! They threw themselves into activities like tag rugby, football, indoor rock climbing, and even bog jumping – showing outstanding teamwork, enthusiasm, and energy throughout. Well done to all involved for their amazing effort and spirit!



L-R Erin O'Rowe, Holly McMahon, Chlo Smit, Ryan Dunne, John Jerard Walker, Fionn Nolan O'Brien, Katie Rafferty, Lara Pujolas and Patrick Martin



Left to right Chloe Smith, teacher Celia Jones and Jayden Skelton

Gold Award for Dream Space Ambassadors

Learners at Priory Youthreach achieved Gold in the Microsoft Dreamspace Ambassador Programme, completing online activities in MakeCode Arcade, Python 101, and AI. Special congratulations to **Chloe Smith** and **Jayden Skelton**, who led peer-to-peer sessions and helped set up Minecraft Education across the centre. Huge thanks to their teacher, **Celia Jones**, for guiding them to the gold award and helping them inspire others in digital learning!

Gold Tec Ambassadors Award

Congratulations to Celia Jones and Sandra Bagnall, who received the Gold Tec Ambassadors Award from Choose Tech, supported by Salesforce. The programme helps young people (from aged 15-20) explore the exciting world of technology – from pre-tech training to career pathways and apprenticeships in the tech industry. It encourages them to pick up new skills, build on what they already know, and discover different career routes – from pre-tech training to apprenticeships in the tech industry.



Priory Youthreach Joins AI History!

Our learners made history by taking part in Microsoft's AI Skills Fest, joining thousands nationwide in a virtual AI learning session live from One Microsoft Place. The event broke a GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ title for the most people to complete a multi-level AI lesson online in 24 hours – and Priory Youthreach was part of it!

Sustainability in Action: Recycle & Reuse Day

Youthreach learners also embraced sustainability by organising a Recycle & Reuse Day, promoting eco-friendly clothing habits. They swapped outfits, explored upcycling, and learned how reducing textile waste can make a real difference. Their creativity and commitment to greener living show how small actions can have a big impact on the environment. We're proud of our learners' commitment to making a positive impact for a greener future.



For more information on Youthreach, Youth programmes and locations, visit our website www.ddletb.ie

ddletb



Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna Dublin and Dún Laoghaire
Átha Cliath agus Dhún Laoghaire Education and Training Board

Editor

Janet Murphy - janetmurphy@ddletb.ie

Development Team

Janet Murphy
Caroline Daly
Suzanne Graham
Frances Shannon
Mary Kenny
Deirdre Dunne
Priscilla Kirwan
devteam@ddletb.ie

FET Contact

Jessica Sheekey - jessicasheekey@ddletb.ie

Communications

Janet Murphy
Jessica Sheekey
Jennifer Farley

Design & Layout

Jennifer Farley

Contributors

Samuele Arzate Montalti - Coláiste Cois Life
Matt Corbett - Deansrath CC
Helena Browner - Regional Literacy Coordinator
Caitriona Rooney - Donabate CC
Nadia McCormack and TY Students - Firhouse CC
John Doyle - Donabate CC
Aisling Ryan - Mount Seskin CC
Karen Sutton - Danu CSS
Aine Ivers - REALT Coordinator
Eoin Acton - Head Boy at Deansrath CC
Emma Rose Byrne - Head Girl at Deansrath CC
Sandra Bagnall - Priory Youthreach
Sharon McGrath - Baldoye TC
Cillian Walshe - Ardgillan College



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