

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB

# NEWSLETTER

EDITION 21 - MARCH 2026



## Festival Of Music 2026

Celebrating 25 Years

BETT Global  
2026

Safer Internet  
Day In Schools

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New Digital Strategy



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



# ETB Ethos Symposium 2026

Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB representatives explore values at national conference

Our DDLETB Team recently took part in the annual Let's Talk Ethos Symposium, hosted by Education and Training Boards Ireland in Portlaoise on 12th of February 2026.

This national event brought together ETB ethos co-ordinators, ethos leads, teachers and school leaders from ETBs across the country for a day of professional reflection, collaboration and shared learning. The symposium featured a thought-provoking keynote address from Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children, and explored themes such as antiracism, online regulation and LGBTQ+ inclusion, supporting school communities to deepen their understanding of how to enact ETBI's shared values of care, equality, community, respect and excellence in education.

Attendees engaged in interactive workshops, exchanged best practice, and strengthened professional networks – all aimed at reinforcing the ethos that underpins our ETB schools and ensuring inclusive, values driven environments for learners.

Our DDLETB Ethos Co-ordinator Caroline Daly facilitated a workshop on DDLETB Ethos Ambassador Programme which is now in its second year. An innovative programme designed and developed by Caroline, under Director of Schools Mark McDonald, it aims to empower students to champion our ETB Ethos and Core Values. By training student leaders to promote these values through various workshops, it fosters a positive school culture, encouraging active leadership and social responsibility.

Image Above: DDLETB representatives pictured with Director of Schools Mark McDonald and Ethos Co-ordinator Caroline Daly, at the annual ETBI Let's Talk Ethos Symposium.

Did you know... the ETB Ethos Podcast titled 'Let's Talk Ethos', which this year's symposium was named after, was designed, named and developed by the Ethos and Communications Teams at DDLETB in collaboration with our colleagues in ETB Ireland, and greatly supported and produced by our colleagues at Dublin College Dún Laoghaire, who kindly provided their recording and editing expertise along with valuable advice and guidance.

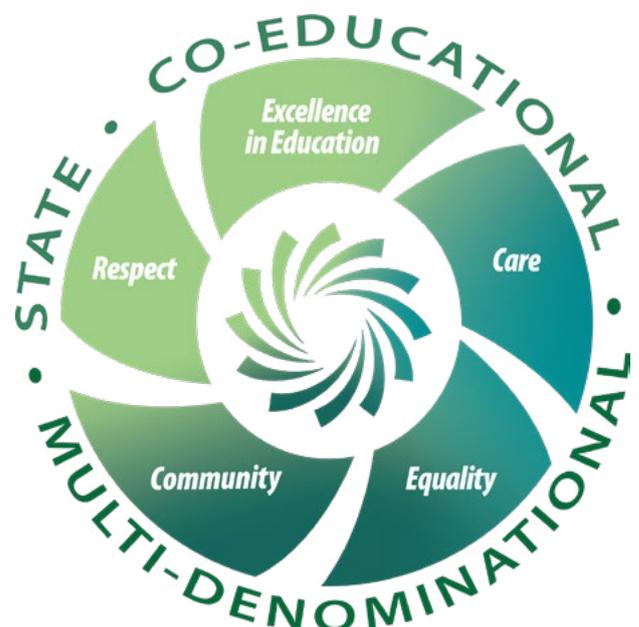
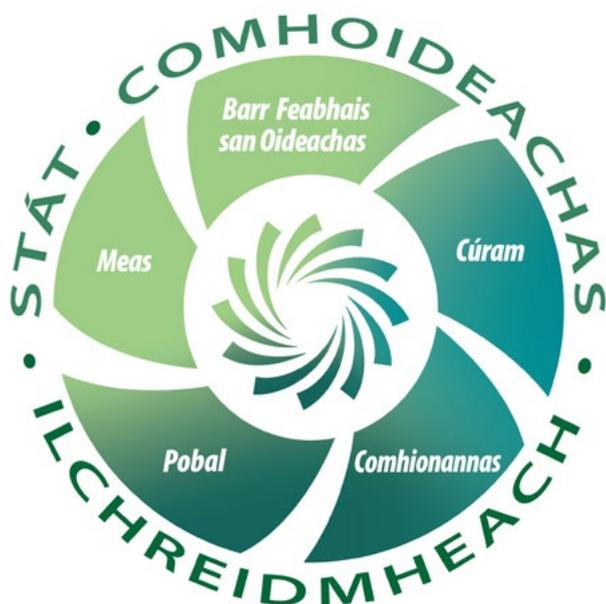
ETB Stronger Together!

You can check out all episodes of the [Let's Talk Ethos podcast here](#)

*"The Annual ETB Ethos Symposium was a vibrant and well-attended event, proudly represented by DDLETB across both primary and post-primary sectors. The day centred on the vital theme of student voice and participation, highlighting the importance of empowering young people to actively shape their educational experience and school communities. Attendees engaged in meaningful discussions and shared best practice approaches to strengthen student engagement at all levels. A particular highlight of the day was the excellent keynote address delivered by Dr Niall Muldoon, Ombudsman for Children, who offered powerful insights into listening to and valuing the perspectives of children and young people. His address set up an inspiring tone for the symposium and reinforced the collective commitment to fostering inclusive, student-centred learning environments across DDLETB schools.*

*It was a wonderful day and a privilege to share the success of our Ethos Ambassador Programme with colleagues from other ETBs."*

Caroline Daly, DDLETB Ethos Co-Ordinator



# Leadership Connect



## Leadership Connect: Strengthening School Development Through Collaboration

Leadership Connect continues to provide a valuable space for professional dialogue, shared learning, and practical leadership development across our schools. Last term's Teacher Leadership Programme session offered a timely and highly relevant focus on leading school development, exploring the importance of clear vision, purposeful planning, and sustained commitment to improvement.

A big thank you to Denise McNamee, Deputy Principal of Luttrellstown Community College, who facilitated an engaging and practical session for TLP participants. Denise guided attendees through the realities of leading meaningful school development, highlighting the critical role of strong teamwork, effective communication, and the willingness to dig deep to ensure that improvement work is carried through to completion. Her insights, grounded in experience, sparked thoughtful discussion and reflection among participants. Their next session on March 10th is one that participants always look forward to. 'Developing My Leadership Capacity' facilitated by Noel Kelly, Principal at Griffeen Community College, will support teachers in exploring how leadership can be nurtured, strengthened, and applied in practice. Focusing on developing self-awareness, understanding leadership influence, and identifying strategies for building credibility and capacity as a leader within a school context.

Meanwhile, participants in our Middle Leadership Programme engaged in a valuable, group-led session on Planning, Organisation, and AI Tools, facilitated by programme coordinator Janet Murphy. The session provided an opportunity for participants to share and reflect on practical strategies to support organisation, prioritisation, and effective time management within their roles. Participants also explored a range of emerging AI tools and applications, considering how these technologies can enhance productivity, streamline planning, and support decision-making. Alongside this, the group discussed the ethical implications of AI use, including the importance of responsible implementation, ethical use, data privacy, bias awareness, and the potential risks of over-reliance on automated outputs.

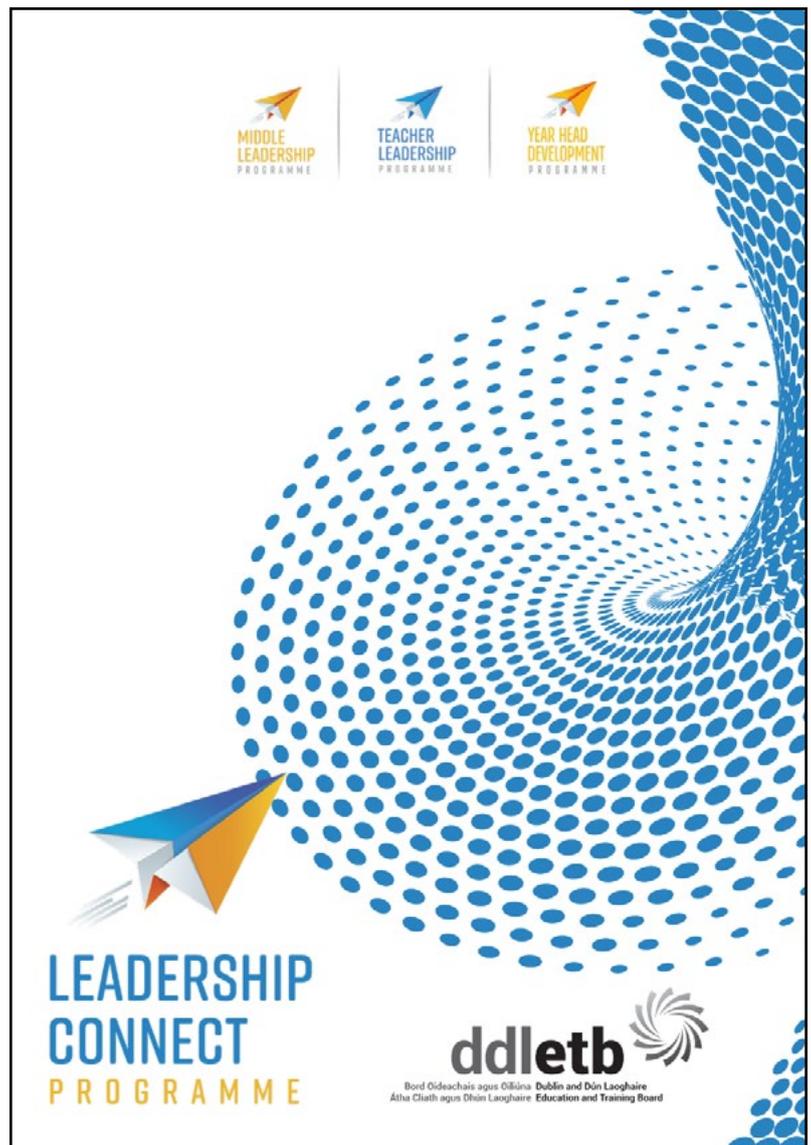
Session 4 took place on February 26th with the esteemed Dr. Mark Fennell and was titled 'Middle Leadership with Impact, Bringing LAOS to Life'. The session provided an in-dept analysis and discussion of Looking at our Schools 2022 and its importance to the SSE and school development process. We are very much looking forward to our next session on March 12th, which will be facilitated by Stephen Brett, Principal of Lucan Community College. Stephen will lead the team in a 'Coaching for Leaders' session – the first time this session has been delivered in this programme— and we are confident it will be engaging, exciting, and very well received.

# Leadership Connect

In January, our Year Head Programme participants joined the Leadership Connect 2025-2026 Journey and completed an online introduction session and two in-person sessions.

The first session with Mr. Harry Freeman, who is always warmly welcomed to DDLETB Head Office. The session focused on their role as Year Heads, Teamwork, Team Leadership and the role of the tutor and year head team and was well received by all participants. The next session will be facilitated by DDLETB Psychological Support Services and will focus on attendance avoidance and supporting vulnerable learners.

This highly thought-provoking session consistently encourages rich discussion, shared reflection, and professional dialogue among participants. It will provide a valuable space to explore and develop new strategies and deepen understanding of school avoidance and examine the emotional psychology that can influence pupil engagement, behaviour, and wellbeing.



**Thank you to all who have attended and contributed so positively to all Leadership Connect sessions. The programme remains an important forum for strengthening leadership capacity and supporting collaborative practice across our DDLETB community.**

**ddletb**  
FESTIVAL OF  
**MUSIC**

**25<sup>TH</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**

**CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF THE DDLETB FESTIVAL OF MUSIC**



The 25th anniversary of the DDLETB Festival of Music was again celebrated in style this year at the magnificent National Concert Hall – marking a remarkable milestone in one of the most cherished traditions in our DDLETB community.

Bringing together learners from across our network of 31 Community Colleges and Gaelcholáistí, the festival once again filled the stage with energy, creativity and an extraordinary standard of musical performance. For a quarter of a century, the Festival of Music has provided young performers with the unforgettable opportunity to showcase their talents in Ireland's premier concert venue. Each year, students perform as soloists, in ensembles, bands and choirs, and in the DDLETB Choir (a collaboration of all our DDLETB Community Colleges) presenting a vibrant mix of musical styles from pop and rock to traditional, folk and classical.

The festival was originally established through the vision and commitment of passionate educators and organisers Paddy Scarlett and Michael Stanley (Riversdale CC – now Rath Dara CC) who believed in giving young musicians from all parts of our community a professional platform to perform, connect and grow. Their dedication laid the foundation for what has become a long-standing tradition of artistic excellence and although Paddy and Michael are sadly no longer with us, their legacy continues to inspire, and we remain truly grateful for the energy, dedication and belief they showed in DDLETB learners.

Today, a committed team of organisers, teachers, musical directors and staff led by Paul Kingston (former Principal St. Mac Dara's CC), Carmel O'Neill (Former Deputy Principal Castleknock CC), Aoife Staunton and Karen Conlon (Music Teachers Castleknock CC) continue that legacy – coordinating auditions, rehearsals, supporting performers and ensuring the event remains a powerful celebration of student achievement year after year. The time and energy given to creating the event each year is commendable and we sincerely thank them.



On the evening, DDLETB Chief Executive Caitríona Murphy paid tribute to our outstanding learners, as well as to the dedicated organising committee and head office support staff whose continued commitment ensures the festival's ongoing success. Sincere appreciation was also extended to Donal Dignam, a past pupil of St. Mac Dara's Community College, for his role as Festival Accompanist and for his work arranging the choral pieces, and to Vanessa Butler, Music Teacher at Swords Community College, for her leadership as Musical Director. Gratitude was also expressed to the many music teachers, past and present learners, and school leaders whose loyal support sustains the festival year after year.



Caitríona was also delighted to welcome back to the stage Paddy Lavelle, recently retired General Secretary of Education and Training Boards Ireland and former Chief Executive of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire ETB, who has long been, and remains, a passionate advocate and supporter of the festival.



Each year this event not only highlights musical excellence but also strengthens community, builds confidence and creates lifelong memories for performers and audiences alike. We were delighted to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the DDLETB Festival of Music and look forward to many more memorable nights to come.



**Safer  
Internet  
Day 2026** | Tuesday  
10 February

[webwise.ie/saferinternetday](https://webwise.ie/saferinternetday)

# Collinstown Park Community College

## Safer Internet Day 2026: A Fun and Engaging Whole-School Success

This year's Safer Internet Day, themed "IT'S ALL FUN AND GAMES!", ran successfully across the school, with students enthusiastically taking part in a range of activities designed to promote AI awareness, cybersecurity, and online safety.

Selected class groups participated in a one-hour timetabled session during the week. These lessons were intentionally low-pressure, interactive, and highly engaging. Through games, puzzles, and collaborative challenges, students explored key digital concepts—learning how to stay safe, smart, and informed in an increasingly AI-driven online world.

Teachers appreciated the flexibility to run the lesson at any point during the week, ensuring the initiative reached as many students as possible. SPHE and Religion (Wellbeing) classes were particularly suited to the content, but teachers across multiple subjects were invited to incorporate online safety themes into their lessons. As digital literacy remains an essential part of IT-related courses, the event naturally supported existing learning in those areas as well.

Overall, the week was a great success. Students enjoyed the activities, engaged fully with the topics, and strengthened their understanding of how to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. The whole-school approach ensured that AI awareness and online safety remained at the forefront of learning throughout the week.

Special thanks go to all students involved, Ms Scully, Ms Devine and Mr Warren who facilitated multiple classes engaging with the lesson.

First year and other students received their Safer Internet Day wristband as part of the event.

**[Find out more at Safer Internet Day](#)**



# Webwise Youth Ambassador Featured in the Irish Times

We are extremely proud of Zach Moore, a 3rd year student at Greenhills Community College and Webwise Youth Ambassador. Zach was recently interviewed by the Irish Times regarding the under-16s internet ban introduced in December. He was selected at a national level to give his perspective on this important development, which mirrors a similar move in Australia.

The interview was conducted over the phone with an Irish Times journalist, followed by a photographer visiting the school to capture the story. The article was published in print on 27th December, and we are delighted to share it as a testament to Zach's engagement and commitment.

We are equally proud of all the Student Council members at Greenhills CC who represent the school so well through Webwise. Their involvement has opened fantastic opportunities, including trips to Meta, Google and TikTok, as well as work experience placements at Google. Beyond these experiences, students have made new friends, developed skills, and strengthened their wellbeing through participation in the programme – demonstrating the positive impact of student voice and leadership in digital safety and awareness.





## Triumph for fifth year students from Deansrath Community College at the 2025 Adventures in Cyberland awards.

By Lucy Greene, 5th year student as Deansrath Community College

On the 11th of December 2025, Deansrath Community College fifth-year students Piotr Zawierta, Emily Pesak, Ciara Minnock and George Hurst attended, for the second year in a row, the Adventures in Cyberland Awards ceremony in UCD O'Reilly Hall. The event was organised by the UCD Centre for Cyber Resilience Education (CyberWise) headed by Dr Rachel Farrell.

The ceremony was attended by educators, industry professionals, and invited student teams, and featured contributions from key guests including Professor Orla Feely, President of University College Dublin; Janice Richardson, an internationally recognised expert in Digital Citizenship, Cyber Resilience and an advisor to the Council of Europe; Dr Ray Genoe, Director of the UCD Centre for Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Investigation among many other distinguished guests.

The event featured the selection of Gold Award projects from fifteen schools across the country that had advanced through a competitive selection process, all focused on the theme of Global Opportunities and Challenges in Cybersecurity.

This very special gathering gave all those present the chance to communicate and learn from peers and experts. The aim of the event was to "honour visionary students projects that break barriers, challenge gender bias and champion inclusivity in computer science and cybersecurity."

Gold awarded projects included cyber-games such as the one presented by the Greystones Community College team entitled Scam: A Card Machine Game, Chat Control, a brilliant project by Tullamore College, and many other cyber-safety and cybersecurity projects, including a highly practical project related to cybersecurity and farming.

Deansrath Community College team submitted an educational animation they made from scratch called "Dr Antsvi's Introduction to Malware". Many jobs were involved such as animating, character designing, voice acting, storyboarding and set designing. The hard work and dedication they put into this animation paid off. The judges were very impressed with their work. They received the Gold Award, the Creativity and Innovation Award and the very exclusive Overall Winner Award. They really made our school proud.

The 2025 Adventures in Cyberland awards was co-funded by Research Ireland and the Ubuntu Network and we are delighted that our school team's winning project will be used in Global Citizenship Education and as part of the SECURE micro-modules on cybersecurity for primary schools.

The amount of hard work Team Deansrath put into their project is astounding. Huge congratulations to the worthy winners, Piotr, Emily, Ciara and George and many thanks to the CyberWise project manager and main host, Marelle Rice, who worked tirelessly to bring everyone together and made it a very special day for everyone involved.

# FORBAIRT GHAIRMIÚIL LEANÚNACH AR FCÁT/ DEA-CHLEACHTAIS AN TUMOIDEACHAIS

Chuir an ETBI an clár FGL FCÁT/ CLIL ar fáil arís i mbliana do mhúinteoirí tumoideachais na nGaelcholáistí agus na nAonad, i gcomhar le COGG agus Ollscoil na Gaillimhe. Is deis luachmhar í seo do mhúinteoirí a oibríonn i suíomhanna tumoideachais nó atá ag iarraidh a gcuid scileanna sa Chomhtháthú Ábhair agus Teanga (FCÁT/CLIL) a fhorbairt tuilleadh. Tugann an scéim seo léargais phraiticiúla ar mhodhanna múinte nuálacha, deachleachtais sa tumoideachas, agus bealaí chun tacú le foghlaimoirí i dtimpeallachtaí dhátheangacha le seisiúin idirghníomhacha, líonrú le comhghleacaithe, agus comhroinnt acmhainní mar chuid lárnach den chlár.

Thug Dylan Ó Broin faoi anuraidh agus bhain sé an-tairbhe as. Arsa Dylan, “Roghnaigh mé an cúrsa FCÁT mar is múinteoir réasúnta nua-cháilithe mé agus bhí smaointí agus taithe múinteoirí eile uaim chun tacú le mo chuid múinteoireachta”. Ba iad na smaointí iontacha agus an chruthaitheacht a bhain leis an teanga a nascadh leis an ábhar ionas go mbeadh siad fite fuaite le chéile is mó a thaitin leis. Threisigh Nadia Brosnan leis an méid sin ag rá, “roghnaigh mé é mar mhol mo chomhghleacaithe dom é agus tá suim agam ann ó rinne mé tráchtas ar chúrsaí FCÁT don tráchtas máistreachta. Mholfainn go hard na spéire é agus foghlaimoidh tú go leor as agus as an ngréasánú”.

Chuir Ciara agus Nadia a dtionscnaimh i láthair ag an seisiún scoir den chúrsa FCÁT ar an 11.02.2026 agus d'éirigh go hiontach leo – táimid ag súil leis an deachleachtas roinnte anseo i gColáiste na Tulchann

Ina theannta sin tá cúrsa eile ar fáil a mholann Clíona Ní Fhloinn tabhairt faoi – an M.Oid. san Oideachas Lán Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta i gColáiste na Tríonóide. Is í aidhm an chúrsa ná múinteoirí agus ceannairí i scoileanna lán-Ghaeilge agus Gaeltachta a chumasú chun barr feabhais a bhaint amach ina gcleachtas oideachais agus san inniúlacht teanga. Is cúrsa páirtaimseartha é a mhaireann dhá bhliain acadúla, agus bíonn cuid mhaith d'obair an chúrsa ar siúl le linn tráthnónta. Tá táille laghdaithe de €650 i gceist do rannpháirtithe a chomhlíonann na critéir iontrála, mar gheall ar urraíocht ón Roinn Oideachais. Is do mhúinteoirí bunscoile agus iar bhunscoile cáilithe é. Déantar é a sheachadadh i bhformáid chumaisc, le ranganna ar líne agus cúpla lá ar an gcampas gach téarma chun freastal ar mhúinteoirí atá ag obair go lán aimseartha. Dar le Clíona, ‘ní fhéadfaí cúrsa níos oiriúnaí a roghnú agus tú ag obair sa tumoideachas – cé go bhfuil ualach éigin oibre i gceist leis. Mar a deir an seanfhocal, imíonn an tuirse ach fanann an tairbhe”.

Croífhóireanna Choláiste na Tulchann, Aonad lán-Ghaeilge Luttrellstown CC

# CLIL FOR IMMERSION – A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR TEACHERS

In collaboration with the University of Galway and COGG, ETBI made this valuable CPD in FCÁT/CLIL available again this year. This programme is designed for teachers working in immersion or bilingual settings, as well as those wishing to deepen their expertise in CLIL/FCÁT methodologies. The course provides practical insights into innovative teaching methodologies, effective approaches to immersion education, and strategies for supporting learners in bilingual environments. Interactive workshops, peer networking, and shared resources form key elements of the programme.

Dylan Ó Broin participated last year and benefited greatly from it. He said, “I chose the CLIL course as I am a relatively newly qualified teacher and I needed the ideas and experience of other teachers to support my teaching”. It was the brilliant, shared ideas and creativity involved in linking the language with the subject content and how to link them that benefitted him most. Nadia Brosnan echoed this by saying “I chose it because my colleagues recommended it to me and I’ve been interested in it since I did a dissertation on CLIL courses for my master’s thesis. I would highly recommend it and you will learn a lot from the course and from meeting other teachers”. Ciara and Nadia presented their projects at the final session of the CLIL training on the 11.02 and we are looking forward to sharing their practices here in Coláiste na Tulchann.

There is also another course available that Clíona Ní Fhloinn recommends taking – the M.Ed. in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht Education at Trinity College. The aim of the course is to enable teachers and leaders in Irish-medium and Gaeltacht schools to achieve excellence in their educational practice and language proficiency. It is a part-time course lasting two academic years, with much of the coursework taking place in the evenings.



This year there is a reduced fee of €650 for participants who meet the entry criteria, as the Department of Education and Youth part-finances it. Aimed at qualified primary and post-primary teachers, it is delivered in a blended format, with online classes and a few days on campus each term, to accommodate teachers who are working full-time. According to Clíona, ‘you couldn’t choose a more suitable course when working in immersion education – although it does involve some additional work. As the seanfhocal goes, the fatigue disappears but the benefit remains”.

# Transition Year Engagement at Dublin College Blackrock

In a new and exciting initiative, the staff of Dublin College Blackrock and the Educate Together in Wicklow, devised a series of workshops for the TY students.

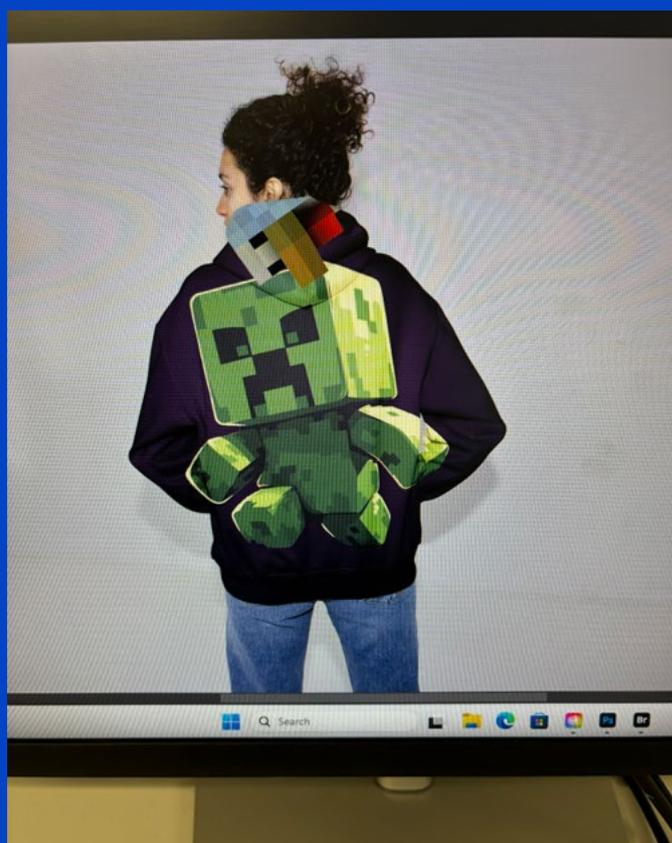
Over the course of three days the TY students were engaged in a variety of demonstrations, tasks and group activities to arouse their curiosity and give them a flavour of the different courses on offer in Dublin College Blackrock.

The IT department gave the students from Wicklow Educate Together Secondary School an intensive one-hour digital editing workshop using Adobe Photoshop. The session was split into two halves: for the first half of the workshop the students designed posters for Red Bull, before moving on to create their own custom hoodies. They produced some really great work.

The Community and Health Care department demonstrated CPR and the students got to try out the defibrillator and other life-saving equipment, while being supervised and encouraged by the current student body. While the Business Department used a hands-on entrepreneurship workshop - the spaghetti tower challenge - to develop teamwork, creativity and problem-solving skills and the Beauty Department rolled out all the stops and demonstrated a wide variety of the treatments that are taught in areas of Make Up, Advanced Facials, Eyelashes and Nails as well as providing a talk on Sports Therapy.

The feedback from staff in both Dublin College Blackrock and Wicklow Educate Together was that it was a very worthwhile programme.

For more information visit the website <https://www.bfei.ie/> and contact office@bfei.ie



# Dublin College Rush

## Introduction to AI – Maynooth University

Dublin College Rush learners recently completed an inspiring three-day – “Introduction to AI” module, facilitated by The National Centre for Inclusive Higher Education (NCIHE), The Academy for Good at Maynooth University and delivered in partnership with Google Ireland.

NCIHE is directed by Professor Katriona O’Sullivan, Professor of Psychology and award-winning researcher and bestselling author of the critically acclaimed book ‘Poor’. The Introduction to AI module provided learners with an insightful overview of the core principles of artificial intelligence, while looking at the importance of ensuring that emerging technologies are accessible to communities that have historically been underrepresented in the digital landscape. We are grateful to Brian, John, and Justine for the valuable expertise and encouragement they shared throughout the 3-day module.



# Trinity QQI Distinction Awards

A proud celebration of academic excellence took place at Trinity College Dublin as learners from across Dublin College Further Education and Training were recognised at the Trinity QQI Distinction Awards, a new initiative celebrating outstanding Further Education graduates who have progressed to undergraduate study at Trinity, spotlighting the commitment, resilience, and ambition of learners.

This year's ceremony acknowledged learners who achieved eight distinctions in their QQI Level 5 or 6 programmes and successfully secured places in Trinity College Dublin for 2024 or 2025.

Dublin College was represented from learners from Dublin College Blackrock, Dublin College Dundrum and Dublin College Greenhills. The awards were presented by Professor Vincent Wade, Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Trinity, who acknowledged the students' exceptional achievements and the vital role of Further Education in widening access to higher education.

The ceremony marks a meaningful milestone for learners and acknowledges the growing strength of collaboration between DDLETB and Trinity College Dublin through initiatives such as the Trinity Access Programme and enhanced progression pathways.

Huge congratulations to all our learners.



# Mount Seskin Community College celebrated the launch of their Digital Strategy, marking the introduction of one-to-one laptop devices for students

**Mount Seskin CC has recently introduced a one-to-one device strategy for the first time, aiming to support every student with their own digital device to enhance learning both in the classroom and at home.**

The initiative aims to make lessons more interactive, improve access to online resources, and help students develop important digital skills literacy for the future. While there has been great excitement about the new opportunities, the school is also providing training and support to help students and staff use the technology responsibly and effectively. Overall, the programme marks a significant step toward modernising the school's learning environment.

The new Digital Strategy was officially launched on Wednesday, February 25th and was extremely well received by all in attendance. On the day of the launch, Second Years were proud to demonstrate their learning online for visiting parents, network colleagues and Board members. They proudly used 'Coggle' mind mapping tool for revision, designed a media project on Canva and made computer coding look easy for all watching!

Digital Coordinator, Caitriona Mulhall said: 'Our Digital Strategy will support wider learning, develop proficiency in IT skills and ultimately, help to secure solid training, education and career paths for our students when they leave school'.

The project has been funded by the national Digital Strategy grant, with the support of DDLETB and incredible fundraising work from the school's Parent's Association over the last year. Chairperson of the Board, Councillor Mick Duff, said, 'I'm thrilled with this opportunity for the young people in our community. Thanks to all who have supported the journey, in particular those who fundraised and our colleagues in the DDLETB team'.



Well done to the Leadership Team, Staff, Students and Parents/Guardians for bringing this dream to life. DDLETB are excited to support Mount Seskin CC in this new initiative and look forward to the journey ahead!

# DDLETB Senior Men's GAA Team Crowned Inter-Firms Dublin County Champions

**On a night when torrential rain and unforgiving conditions threatened to overshadow the occasion, the DDLETB Senior Men's GAA Team delivered a performance defined by resilience, skill, and teamwork to claim the Inter-Firms Dublin County Championship crown against local rivals, the Tallaght Garda Senior GAA Team.**

From the first whistle, the teachers demonstrated remarkable composure and determination, refusing to allow the dreadful weather to dictate the pace or quality of the game. Over 60 minutes of high-intensity football, the Garda side mounted a strong and organised challenge, but the DDLETB team's pace, structure, and teamwork ultimately shone through. In a contest that demanded grit as much as talent, the DDLETB players rose to the occasion, securing a well-deserved six-point victory and the coveted county title.

Players from schools and colleges including, Lusk CC, Swords CC, Scoil Ghráinne CNS, Castleknock CC, Coláiste de hÍde, Skerries CC, CP Setanta, Coláiste Pobail Fola, St Mac Dara's CC and Kingswood CC, joined together as one team with a shared purpose. This collaboration highlights the strength of connection across the DDLETB network, with teachers from a wide range of communities coming together, not only to represent their schools, but to proudly represent the entire organisation.

In just their second year, this group of players has built something far beyond on field success. Through training sessions, matches, and shared challenges, the team has developed, outstanding morale, strong friendships, cross-school professional connections and a collaborative spirit that strengthens the DDLETB as a whole

Their county title is not merely a sporting victory, it is a living example of the culture of teamwork, wellbeing, and mutual support that we strive to foster across all of our schools and centres.

As newly crowned Inter-Firms Dublin County Champions, the DDLETB Senior Men's GAA Team has set a powerful example of what can be achieved when staff collaborate, support each other, and strive toward a common goal, both on the pitch and in the classroom.

***On behalf of all at DDLETB we want to congratulate the team on their success and thank them all for their hard work, teamwork and dedication. Thank you also to the team sponsors GTI Travel, McSport and SG Education.***





# Stripe Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition 2026

**This year's 62nd Stripe Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (formerly BT/Esat Young Scientist) took place from 7–10 January 2026 at the RDS in Dublin – one of Ireland's most exciting annual science and innovation events for secondary students.**

The Stripe Young Scientist Exhibition is a national showcase where young innovators from across Ireland present original research and STEM projects to judges, teachers, industry experts, families and thousands of visitors. Projects span science, technology, engineering and mathematics, encouraging students to explore real-world problems through rigorous research and creative thinking.

Over 550 projects were exhibited at the 2026 event, selected from nearly 2,000 submissions nationwide and these came from 225 schools across Ireland. The RDS was buzzing with energy as well over 40,000 visitors explored the stands over the four day event.

## The Winning Project

The top honour 'Young Scientist & Technologist of the Year 2026' was awarded to Aoibheann Daly, a fourth-year student from Mercy

Secondary School Mounthawk in Tralee, Co. Kerry. Her outstanding project, 'GlioScape: Multi-task Deep Learning and Causal AI for Glioma & Glioblastoma Profiling', developed an innovative AI-based approach to supporting brain cancer diagnosis – a remarkable achievement at such a young age.

## DDLETB Learners Shine

As always, we are hugely proud of all of our DDLETB learners who attended and exhibited their projects at this year's Young Scientist Exhibition. The level of work, thought and creativity that goes into each entry is extremely impressive and a testament to the dedication of our students and the support of their teachers.

To every student who took part, whether with a project on display, part of the audience or cheering on their peers, you helped make the 2026 Stripe Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition a brilliant celebration of young talent.

We look forward to seeing where your curiosity takes you next!



# ARDGILLAN SUCCESS AT YOUNG SCIENTIST

## The Mask of Masculinity

Hi everyone, our names are Shane and Willard, and we are currently in Transition Year in Ardgillan College. This means we have the option and often the time to participate in many extracurricular activities we would not normally do, such as the Young Scientist competition, which we both think was a great decision!

We were delighted to win both a special prize from Coimisiún Na Meán and to come in second place in our category. For us, this is one of the highlights of TY that we will remember for a long time. YSTE was a great experience, and we would recommend it to all students.

Our project was called the "Mask of Masculinity". In the beginning, we asked ourselves, "How does toxic masculinity present itself in the lives of young people?" The purpose of our project was to investigate the levels of toxic masculinity with a focus on young people, schools and social media. Firstly, toxic masculinity refers to "a set of attitudes and ways of behaving stereotypically associated with or expected of men, regarded as having a negative impact on men and on society as a whole". We chose this as the topic of our project as we both feel, as males, we have experienced toxic masculinity before and that it is a topical issue.

We see countless examples of toxic masculinity in our everyday lives, whether it's social media, influencers, TV shows like Adolescence that explore it as a topic, or even sports, which both of us are familiar with. The list goes on.

One interesting study we looked at was done by the University of South Carolina that aimed to uncover the negatives of toxic masculinity. The study found that toxic masculinity caused 'emotional detachment' and higher risk of suicide, depression and anxiety.

We conducted two experiments: the first was a survey, and the second was a social media analysis.

The purpose of our survey was to investigate whether there were more toxic masculine attitudes in teenage males in a single-sex boys' school or in a co-educational school. Our hypothesis was that toxic masculine attitudes would be more common in the predominantly all-male environments, like the single-sex boys' school, compared to the mixed schools.

The questions in our survey were based off previous surveys and studies that defined and identify toxic masculine characteristics in certain behaviours, actions and attitudes. Those surveyed were given statements on emotions, gender stereotypes, roles and other characteristics of toxic masculinity. They were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with them (ratings on a scale of 1-5).

For example, 'Men should be the protectors of and defend their family' and 'men should act strong even if they feel scared or nervous', which indicates emotional suppression.

We found that toxic masculine attitudes were in fact more common in the single-sex boys' schools, which we learned to be statistically significant when we carried out the T-Test. Our survey highlighted to us that some of the 'symptoms' of toxic masculinity were more often found in the single-sex boys' schools, such as reluctance to express emotions or seek external help when feeling sad, depressed or anxious.

One of our most surprising results for the survey was that there exists a gap in education, as only 49.52% of all students in both school types knew what toxic masculinity was. Only an average of 53.5% of those who knew what it was could identify it when exposed to it on social media. We surveyed a total



of 1044 students from 8 different single sex schools and 8 different co-ed schools across multiple counties. In our survey, we found that TikTok was the main platform used by all respondents. As a result, we continued our experimentation from there. We then carried out a social media analysis.

Today's world is strongly shaped by the online world. Social media doesn't always create a healthier and more supportive environment in our lives. Therefore, to combat these negative attitudes and behaviour, we must know more about them, so we again asked ourselves, "How does toxic masculinity present itself in the lives of young people?"

We found in our survey that TikTok was the most popular social media platform, which led to us to choose TikTok to do our social media analysis on. The social media analysis involved creating 6 TikTok accounts that replicated those of a teenage male, meaning when the emails and accounts were set up, all personal data entered made the accounts look

like those of a teenage male. We based this experiment on one carried out by the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, which also had the aim of investigating the frequency of toxic masculine content on social media.

The major difference in our experiment was that we did not interact with the toxic masculine videos. We found that on all six accounts, after only a maximum of 58 scrolls, we were suggested toxic masculine content on all accounts. On each account, the toxic masculine content would start with male body image and then increase in frequency until the accounts were being suggested to contain misogynistic, racist or homophobic content.

We used previous studies we found to determine if a video was toxic masculine, often using things like hashtags and keywords. We took note of recurring hashtags on toxic masculine posts, such as #masculinity. We also took note of recurring influencers such as Andrew Tate, which we found interesting as it shows that when an influencer is banned, it does not stop the spread of their content.

One of our findings that surprised us was that under #masculinity, 33 out of the first 50 posts were toxic masculine or had toxic masculine traits and characteristics. Under the hashtag

repetitive themes included: violence, misogyny, promotion of rigid gender roles, body image and emotional suppression, which are all characteristics of toxic masculinity.

If we were to continue our project into the future, we would like to see how our findings would change if we surveyed more people, survey people individually so there would be no conformity bias and see if where people live (rural or urban) affects the results. If we were to continue our social media analysis, we would like to compare the frequency of toxic masculine content on other social media platforms, like the DCU study, but with the newer algorithms that favour watch times rather than user interactions, which would give different results.

Overall, our research also shows that change is possible. Many young people reject harmful ideas of toxic masculinity, like violence, emotional suppression, and rigid gender roles. With better education, more positive role models, and smarter algorithms, we can create an online environment that supports healthier, more open, and more equal versions of masculinity. This project has made it clear that the future of masculinity doesn't have to be toxic. With awareness and action, it can be something far more positive for everyone.



# BETT Global 2026

## An Unforgettable Experience for DDLETB

This January, our DDLETB team returned to BETT Global 2026 at the ExCeL in London – and as always, the experience did not disappoint. BETT remains the world's leading education technology exhibition, bringing together innovators, educators, and decisionmakers from around the globe to explore the latest in teaching and learning technologies.

Originally launched in 1985 as the British Educational Training and Technology Show, BETT has grown into an annual global EdTech hub. The 2026 edition continued the event's legacy as a space where classroom practice meets cutting-edge innovation, with three days packed with exhibitions, hands-on demos, keynote stages, and specialist sessions.

The theme for BETT 2026 was Learning Without Limits, and it lived up to that promise with dozens of featured topics, including:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** – from practical classroom applications to ethical and inclusive implementation approaches, AI was everywhere. Sessions highlighted tools like Microsoft 365 Copilot, learning accelerators, and AI driven personalised workstreams for learners and educators.
- **VR/AR and Immersive Learning** – explorations of immersive tech brought new ideas for STEAM, history, and collaborative experiences straight to educators.
- **Esports in Education** – with dedicated esports zones and conversations around how competitive gaming supports teamwork, strategy, and pupil engagement.
- **Inclusion & Accessibility (SEND)** – the SEND section showcased tools and support designed to make technology work for every learner – a core interest for educators focused on inclusive practice.
- **Digital Collaboration Tools** – platforms like Microsoft, Kahoot, Canva, Padlet, and schoolwide systems were highlighted in exhibition halls and demo spaces as essential for creativity, planning, and sharing.





BETT 2026 delivered a rich programme that blended practical workshops with forward-thinking talks. There were keynote sessions on various areas, exploring how emerging technologies can support every learner, and practical hands-on labs (Tech User Labs) offered real engagement with robotics, coding, and integrated digital strategies from leading providers.

In total, BETT typically attracts thousands of visitors, hundreds of speakers and a breadth of exhibitors that ensure that teams explore not just “cool tech,” but solutions that matter in real classrooms – from operational systems to student engagement platforms.

Perhaps one of the most impactful parts of BETT for our DDLETB delegates was the opportunity to connect with colleagues from our DDLETB Team and beyond. These face-to-face chats helped spark new ideas, share practical insights, and strengthen professional networks – a reminder that EdTech isn't just about tools, but about community.

We'll be bringing back key learnings, contacts, and inspiration to DDLETB and look forward to applying them in our schools, colleges and centres throughout the year.

# Exciting times for Dublin College Dún Laoghaire Film Makers

Three short films from the Media – Film Television, Radio Podcasting and Journalism Department at Dublin College Dún Laoghaire have been accepted into the First Frame programme at the Dublin International Film Festival (DIFF) 2026. These films were screened in February 2026 in both Galway and Dublin, giving learners the extraordinary opportunity to share their work with wider audiences as part of Ireland's premier celebration of cinema.

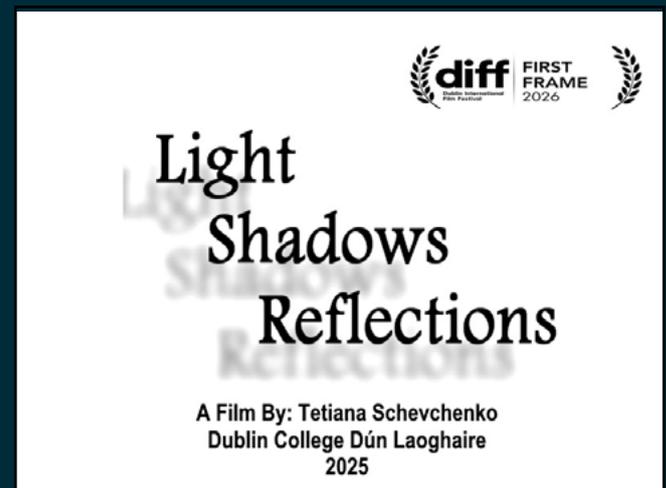
The Dublin International Film Festival – running from 19 February to 1 March 2026 – is one of the country's most distinguished cultural events, bringing together world premieres, international guests, masterclasses, screenings and industry panels over almost two weeks. With over 80 feature films, short films, Q&As with filmmakers and global cinema highlights, DIFF attracts filmmakers, critics and film lovers from around the world, making inclusion in its First Frame strand a genuine honour for emerging talent.

The First Frame initiative specifically showcases the best student films from colleges and further education institutions across Ireland. Selected films are screened in competition and supported by workshops and networking opportunities, offering an invaluable platform for young filmmakers to learn from industry professionals and to have their work seen in a professional festival context.

We are delighted and proud of our talented creators and the entire Dublin College Dún Laoghaire team for this achievement. The admission of our students' films into such a prestigious festival is a testament to their creativity, technical skill and storytelling ability – and it reflects the high standard of work being produced in the department. We look forward to seeing where these promising filmmakers go next!



Fish director Toby O'Brien  
(Creative Digital Media Production 2025)



Light Shadows Reflections director Tetiana Shevchenko  
(Level 6 Film and Television Production 2025)



The Audition director Samantha Kent (Level 5 Film and TV Production 2025)

# Sylvia's story - reskilling with Dublin College Tallaght Cookstown

## Medical Administrative Assistant Traineeship 2024 -past participant

After nearly 20 years as a dedicated Quality Analyst & Team Leader in call centres across South Africa and Ireland, I faced an unexpected turning point when redundancy became a reality at the end of 2023. While it marked the end of a long chapter, it also quietly signalled the beginning of something new.

In May 2024, I came across the Medical Administrative Assistant course advertised by Dublin College Tallaght Cookstown (formerly Tallaght Training Centre) and with encouragement from my husband I decided to apply.

My journey at Dublin College Tallaght Cookstown began with a quest for something different. The 35-week full-time course offered a life-changing opportunity that equipped me with the skills, knowledge, and competencies to work independently in providing administrative support in both medical and general office environments.

A key component of the program was a valuable work placement at Moorefield Medical Clinic, where I gained hands-on experience and applied my learning in a real-world setting. As part of the reception team, I enhanced my MS Office skills, as well as my written and verbal communication and organizational skills. I have developed a strong understanding of administrative processes, proactive communication, and have become an expert in multitasking!

Completing the Medical Administrative Assistant traineeship marked a significant change in my career focus, as I was finally ready to pursue something different and more fulfilling.



About a week before finishing the course, my college was looking to hire a new Clerical Officer for their busy office. With my newfound confidence and administrative knowledge, I submitted my application.

I never imagined working here; however, after my interview, I was offered the job. I joined an incredible team of professionals who have taught me everything there is to know about public sector administration.

Now, I am supporting our learners on their journeys and encouraging them to pursue their dreams which is incredibly fulfilling.

I'm so glad I did the course. It reminded me that it's never too late to learn, grow, and pursue something new. I always say this to our new learners, 'Don't let age or doubt stand in your way – your next chapter starts when you decide it does!'

As I sit in my office, looking out at the Dublin mountains, I feel fulfilled and satisfied. Since joining the program back in May 2024 and successfully applying for a job here, I just realised that I actually never left Dublin College Tallaght Cookstown!

# Education for all, in the heart of the community

## Two new Community Special Schools for DDLETB

Under the patronage of Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education and Training Board, two new Community Special Schools – Lucan Community Special School and Belmayne Community Special School – have been established to support the growing need for specialist educational provision in rapidly expanding communities across Dublin. Located in Lucan, West Dublin, and Belmayne, North Dublin, both schools are co-educational, multi-denominational settings designed to provide inclusive, high-quality education for children and young people with complex learning needs, including autism.

The schools form part of a national expansion of special school provision, created to ensure that children with additional needs can access appropriate, specialist education within their own local communities and closer to home. DDLETB are now the proud patrons of 3 Community Special Schools Lucan CSS, Belmayne CSS and Danu CSS in Blanchardstown.

Our CSS schools are designed to meet the needs of students with special educational requirements in supportive and inclusive settings. We work in partnerships with parents, families and the wider community and we have a strong commitment to providing safe, caring environments. Our Approach is inclusive and respectful of all identities and beliefs, with a focus on wellbeing, creativity, and lifelong learning. Our CSS ethos reflects DDLETB's commitment to equality, respect, care, community, and excellence in education, with personalised supports and multidisciplinary collaboration to help every student thrive.

*“Our IQ reflects what we have learnt however, it does not define our future ability and success”.*

“In Lucan Community Special School our Educational Philosophy is rooted in the core values of Love, Joy and Diligence.



Principal and Deputy Principal at Lucan CSS

Our students are welcomed with love into school and from this we aim to bring out the best in each student. Before we teach the official curriculum, we teach the hidden curriculum which is who we are as people. Joy is another integral guiding value in our school. I heard an interview a few years back by Brendan O'Connor who himself has a daughter with Down Syndrome and he said, "all any parent wants is for their child to be happy". This too, is our aim in Lucan Community Special School, that our students are happy coming into school and that joy is a tangible lived reality in our school. Our third guiding core value is Diligence, which means that we expect our students to do their best, so that they can be their best.

We are deeply indebted to the many dedicated individuals who, over the past several months, have worked tirelessly – often quietly and behind the scenes – to bring Lucan Community Special School to life. Their commitment, care, and belief in what this school could be made the opening of our doors possible.

Since welcoming our first group of learners, one parent shared something that will stay with us always: she heard her child speak for the very first time. In that moment, every late evening, every challenge overcome, and every unseen effort found its meaning. It captures the heart of our work – the impact made not only by those who work in the school each day, but also by those whose invaluable contributions happen out of sight. Together, they have created a place of possibility, hope, and voice for our young people."

***Iníon Ní Dhuibheannaigh, Príomhoide, Pobalscoil Speisialta Leamhcáin (Lucan CSS).***

"At Belmayne Community Special School, we believe every child carries their own unique light, and it is our privilege to help that light shine brightly. We strive to create a safe, nurturing, and inspiring environment where children with additional needs feel understood, valued, and encouraged to grow each day. Our pupils come to us as children and leave as young adults, and it is our responsibility to prepare them for the world ahead with confidence, resilience, and independence. By celebrating progress in all its forms and working in close partnership with families and our wider community, we support every child on their individual journey. Our commitment extends beyond the classroom we aim to foster a love of lifelong learning while equipping our students with the skills, confidence, and independence needed for meaningful employment and fulfilling futures. We hope that every young person who walks through our doors leaves with confidence, joy in learning, and a strong belief in their own potential. "

***John Condon, Principal, Belmayne Community Special School.***

For more information on our DDLETB Community Special Schools please visit [www.ddletb.ie](http://www.ddletb.ie)



Principal and Deputy Principal of Belmayne CSS

# AI AWARE AT SCOIL CHORMAIC CNS

Scoil Chormaic CNS has always been forward about the positive impact and uses of technology in the everyday lives of our pupils. The technology team run competitions annually to raise awareness about online safety; this year focused on the growth of AI, acknowledging the pros and cons, and knowing how to use it safely. Last year, it was cyberbullying and the team within the school have technology plans to ensure the best upkeep and usage of the devices within our school.

With 4 suites of laptops, and 3 suites of iPads, the pupils are able to integrate technology into their daily lives in a meaningful way, be it through spellings and research in the older classes, all the way down to phonics and self-assessment in the younger classes.

Upkeep is essential, with laptops and iPads having 'home-bases' to which they return at the end of the day, all plugged in, all checked, all ready to go for the next day.

Our school knows the risks associated with technology, but we also embrace their advantages. With our technology, lessons are now differentiated to an individual level: pupils are now able to work at a level that is suited to them. Not only this, but through programs like LexiaCore5 or Duolingo, our pupils are being provided with more avenues to access the curriculum, in some ways for leisure, and in others for accessibility.

What surprised us most about WebWise's lessons this year, was how responsive the children were. Many of us have used AI to assist in our teaching in one way or another. However, many of us were shocked to see how many children had grown to like AI produced content, especially the kind they find in great quantities digitally through YouTube kids and Shorts. They were more able to identify AI generated images, even more so than some of our tech-savvy teachers. They were able to acknowledge the use of AI in a beneficial way, whilst also being acutely aware of not only how much water image generation wastes, but could also be critical of AI media, such as the images being too 'smooth' or 'oil-like' when it came to generating characters for images.

AI-generated content may be incorrect and in this growing age of AI, their awareness shows promise for the future of ever-evolving technology, and we can safely say our digital future is in safe hands with our savvy students.



This year, the slogan was 'AI Aware: Safe, Smart and In Control,' and the children were tasked with the following: make a poster that not only can defeat the content made by AI but also draw attention to the safe usage of AI. To launchpad this, an AI generated poster was produced. The children were encouraged to hone their artistic abilities and prove that art was safe in human hands.

What followed was a week-long initiative of pupils of all ages putting their best colours forward to create informative masterpieces that were relatable, intuitive and unique.



Those who judged the posters were stumped and certainly spoiled for choice. The junior classes provided spectacular colouring competition entries using the HTML Heroes as their muses. The senior classes provided mind-blowing and beautiful one-of-a-kind posters that AI itself could not dream of replicating.

Their message is simple: AI can be good, but we can be better. Through being informed, they showed us what true creativity and online awareness truly looked like.



# ETBI NEWS

The Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) Post-Primary Principals and Deputy Principals Conference 2026 brought together more than 200 school leaders from across the ETB sector for two days of professional learning, dialogue and collaboration. The conference, centred on the theme “Leadership and Voice: Influencing Education,” provided a focused space for reflection on the evolving demands of school leadership and the future direction of Ireland’s education system. The event was open to post-primary principals and deputy principals in ETB schools, and this year included a dedicated day for school leadership teams from our ETB Gaelcholáistí to meet and collaborate.

Keynote speakers included child and adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist Dr. Colman Noctor, who explored the challenge of managing expectations in times of uncertainty and supporting wellbeing across school communities, and Author, Broadcaster and Businesswoman Ellen Gunning, whose address was titled “Beyond the Classroom: Are Global Tech-Driven Forces Reshaping Education”.

Delegates also engaged in reflection on current issues in education and navigating these issues, contributed to discussions on curriculum, assessment, professional learning and system reform. Workshops and panel sessions also explored emerging priorities including artificial intelligence in education, school buildings and infrastructure, curriculum reform, the Irish language in schools and links between schools and youth services.

A central feature of the conference was its contribution to the National Conversation on Education ahead of the Government’s Convention on Education. Findings from a poll of almost 200 ETB principals and deputy principals highlighted significant concerns across the sector. Respondents identified high-stakes examinations and curriculum overload as major barriers to students’ positive school experience. Almost all agreed that student needs have become more complex in recent years, while three quarters felt the system is not adapting quickly enough. Although many leaders believe the system serves most students reasonably well, 80% reported that current structures do not adequately support teacher and school leader wellbeing.





DDLETB was well represented. Aidan Flynn, Principal of Adamstown Community College and former Director of Schools at DDLETB, presented on school leadership in rapidly expanding school communities, highlighting strategic planning and collaborative approaches to growth and change. Deborah Dunne, Principal of Kingswood Community College, shared practical approaches to strengthening inclusive school culture and student wellbeing, emphasising the importance of student voice and responsive supports.



Overall, the conference provided a timely and influential forum for professional dialogue, policy engagement and shared leadership learning, reinforcing the sector's commitment to leading for excellence in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

The ETBI Further Education and Training (FET) Conference 2026 took place on 25–26 February 2026 and was attended by Director of Dublin College Further Education and Training Jo McCloskey and the Dublin College team. The event was hosted at the Slieve Russell, County Cavan, bringing together educators, leaders, policymakers, and practitioners from across Ireland's further education and training sector.



Across the two days, delegates engaged in keynote presentations, panel discussions, and interactive workshops exploring current priorities and emerging developments in FET. The programme focused on strengthening collaboration across education and training boards, sharing innovative practice, and responding to the evolving needs of learners, employers, and communities. Emphasis was placed on inclusion, skills development, and the role of FET in supporting lifelong learning and regional growth. The conference also provided valuable networking opportunities, enabling participants to exchange ideas, reflect on sector progress, and shape future directions for further education and training nationwide.





Bhí áthas orainn gur tionóladh Muintearas 2026 an tseachtain seo caite in Óstán Chonnacht, Gaillimh—ócáid a cheiliúradh daoine óga, a gcruthaitheacht, agus a bhfís don todhchaí. I mbliana, ba é “Glór na hÓige, Fís don Todhchaí” an téama, agus thug an ócáid ardáin do dhaoine óga ó gach cearn den tír a gcuid smaointe, a dtalann, agus a dtiomantas don teanga agus don todhchaí a roinnt.

Muintearas '26 took place last week and celebrated young people, their creativity and their vision for the future. This year the theme was “The Voice of Youth, Their Vision for the Future”, and the aim was to give young people from all over the country a platform to share their ideas, talents and commitment to the Irish language and the future. The ETB community was honoured and delighted to welcome Uachtarán na hÉireann, Catherine Connolly to the national celebration of student voice in Irish medium education. An tUachtarán Connolly spent the day engaging warmly with students, presenting awards, and praising their “creativity, insight and vision for Ireland’s future”.

Hundreds of young people from ETB Irish medium schools (Gaelcholáistí) nationwide debated major issues, shared innovative projects, collaborated with their peers, and showcased leadership through the Irish language – the true stars of Muintearas '26.

*DDLETB Gaelcholáistí were well represented at Muintearas '26 agus táimid thar a bheith bródúil astu. Comhghairdeas le daltaí Luttrellstown CC/Coláiste na Tulchann, Coláiste de hÍde, Coláiste Chilllain, Coláiste Cois Life agus Gaelcholáiste Reachrann.*



# Swedish Success at Model United Nations!

## Ardgillan College students at St Andrew's International Model United Nations

From Friday 13th to Monday 16th, five students from Ardgillan College took part in St Andrew's International Model United Nations (SAIMUN), a four day conference that brought together students from schools across Ireland and beyond to debate some of the most pressing global issues of our time. Representing the Kingdom of Sweden, Ardgillan students demonstrated outstanding preparation, diplomacy, and teamwork as they engaged in rigorous debate, negotiation, and resolution writing across a range of committees.

Model United Nations (MUN) is an academic simulation of the United Nations in which students act as diplomats representing different countries. Participants research their assigned nation's policies, debate global issues in committees, and work collaboratively to draft and pass resolutions, developing skills in public speaking, critical thinking, negotiation, and international awareness.

Thelma served as Ambassador for the Swedish delegation and represented Sweden on Special Political and Decolonisation Committee (SPECPOL), debating topics on disinformation and interference in state elections. Thelma played a key leadership role in coordinating the delegation's approach and articulating Sweden's positions with confidence and clarity. Shane represented Sweden on the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), debating the question of preventing non-state actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. This complex topic required a deep understanding of global security, international law, and international cooperation.





Darragh took part in The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CTSD), engaging with the question of regulating the use of genetic engineering and human enhancement.

His committee explored the ethical, scientific, and societal implications of rapidly advancing technologies. Andrew represented Sweden on the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee, debating the question of the protection and promotion of minority languages globally. This topic highlighted issues of cultural identity, human rights, and cultural preservation. Willard participated in the Ecology and the Environment Committee (E&E), where delegates examined the question of the management and environmental impact of artificial intelligence, considering how emerging technologies can be balanced with environmental sustainability.

In addition to committee work, students had the opportunity to hear from guest speakers, including Richard Boyd Barrett T.D, who spoke about contemporary political challenges, and Gina London, who delivered an engaging talk on communication, leadership, and confidence in public speaking. These sessions provided valuable real-world insight and inspiration for all delegates!

Over the course of the conference, all five students demonstrated impressive research skills, strong public speaking ability, and a commitment to respectful and constructive debate. Their participation in SAIMUN was a very rewarding educational experience. Huge congratulations to Thelma who won the Distinguished Delegate Award! This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the work she put in over the four days of the conference.

If you would like advice in getting involved with MUN get in touch with the team at Ardgillan College and for more information on the Model UN programme, visit <https://www.un.org/en/mun>



# An Erasmus start to the year for Ardgillan staff!

The start of the new year marked the beginning of two Erasmus+ mobilities for Ardgillan College secretaries and SNAs. As part of the ongoing commitment to innovation, digital transformation, inclusion and continuous professional development, four members of our staff recently participated in two Erasmus+ course mobility experiences in Nicosia, Cyprus and Florence, Italy. Supporting Ardgillan College's Erasmus project "Whole School Inclusion; Supporting Innovative Teaching and Learning for All".



In January Ms Cullen and Ms Broni travelled to Nicosia to undertake a course on Digital Skills. The following month, it was off to Florence for Ms Leonard and Ms Lawler. The courses provided hands on workshops, collaborative activities with European colleagues, and practical strategies that can be directly implemented here in Ardgillan College. Both mobilities lasted a week and covered a range of topics; digital platforms for school organisation and communication, digital innovation for school inclusion and developing digital competency within schools.

Beyond the classroom, the mobility provided a valuable opportunity to establish links with school administration and inclusion staff from across Europe. We hope these links can be established as partnerships going forward to both welcome staff from Europe and for our staff to visit their school settings too.

The dissemination of the learning from Erasmus+ mobilities is key, and all staff ensured to bring back relevant learning for our school setting. Our staff SharePoint has a dedicated Erasmus+ section, where staff can upload and share resources, links and relevant material for all staff to access. Our Learning and Teaching Co-Ordinator facilitates in house continuous professional development (CPD) sessions known as "Teachmeets" for staff to collaborate and share best practice from their Erasmus+ mobilities.



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