



JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

OLD CONNA, FERNDALE ROAD, RATHMICHAEL, CO. DUBLIN.

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Dec 18, 2022

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We have arrived at the end of a very eventful first term. I thank everyone, students, parents, teachers, staff, and the extended school community, for their dedication during the first term. Here are just a few notices I would like to share with you.

Schedule for the week

Thursday, Dec 21

Thursday is Christmas Jumper Day, and students do not need to wear their school uniform. They are only asked to wear footwear suitable for PE. All students are invited to bring €2, which will be donated to Barnardo's charity.

At 1.00 pm, there will be a festive lunch for all students. The lunch is available to all students, including those who normally bring their own lunch.

Friday, Dec 22

Our end of year celebration will take place in Rathmichael church at 11.00 am. The celebration will consist of universal prayers for peace, songs, and instrumental music from different students.

The event will finish at 11.45 am. Students who normally take the school buses to the LUAS, DART and N11 route will depart directly from the church. All other students will be brought back to the school. All other students will have returned to the school by 12.15 pm for collection. Students are asked not to bring any books or bags on Friday.

Head Students

Our head students occupy the role from January of 5th year to December of 6th year. Here are a few words from our departing head girl, Anahita Aryan, and head boy, Euan Gallagher.

My name is Anahita, and I am head girl of John Scottus. Starting out the year as a head student was an intimidating prospect. In the months since, I have uncovered the joys and challenges of the role. Meeting parents and potential students during the school's open day was an inspiring start to the year, as I remembered my experiences in first year and hoped to recreate some of the kindness that past head students had shown me. In September, we crossed our first big hurdle- Founders' Day- which proved to be a great success but not without its challenges. Our chaotic planning approach was the perfect opportunity to learn priceless skills in organisation and communication. We approached Halloween with more foresight, and 6th year pulled together an incredible spectacle in the shed, pioneered by Gabriel's creativity. We have had endless

Principal: Dr. Declan Kelly, B.A.I, M. Eng, Ph.D, Pg.Dip.Ed

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opportunities to interact with and get to know the school community. Whether it's student council meetings, friendly chats on the stairs, or Euan proudly policing the lunch line, it has been a pleasure so far to spend our final year connecting with students new and old. Anahita Aryan.

Hello, my name is Euan Gallagher Doyle, and I am the head boy. Anahita and I have been, and still are, enjoying our time as head girl and head boy. I would be lying to you, though, if I said there hasn't been a bit of stress involved. I don't think any activities we ran would have happened without Anahita's extreme organization and constant stressing because, let's just say, I had a more relaxed approach to it. At the end of the day, seeing the enjoyment that the students get from the activities makes it all worth it. I have learnt a few things from being head boy, the first being- no matter how well you think you have planned something, I guarantee you something is always bound to go wrong, but you have to deal with it and move on. I have learnt that the amount of planning that goes into activities and convincing people to get involved is a lot more than you think. Another thing I have learned is when there is help being offered, I encourage you to take it, as things become a lot less stressful and easier (Anahita and I learned this the hard way after our first activity we planned). The last thing I will say is don't get too caught up in life and live in the present! Euan Gallagher.

Parent-Class Teacher Meetings

Parent-class teacher meetings will take place on Monday, Jan 15, starting at 5.00 pm. This opportunity to talk formally with the class teacher and discuss your child's progress occurs once each year. The meeting also provides the opportunity to make plans for the coming year and to articulate one or two specific aims. The meetings will take place online via Teams, similar to the subject-teacher meetings held in October and November. If you wish to meet your class teacher, please let us know by responding to the emails the office will send out. The office will contact you in the new year about the times of the meetings.

School League Tables

On Tuesday, December 12, the newspapers published the progression data on students going to 3rd-level college. This year, John Scottus appeared with the top progression rate of all schools, with a progression rate of 125% into 3rd-level colleges. The number is greater than 100% as students who deferred places in previous years started in college this year.

Assessment Results

The November assessment results are now available on the student administration system VS Ware. They are the first of the three primary assessments that take place each year. The assessments in each subject assess the learning taking place since the start of the year and indicate learning progress to date. If you have trouble accessing the results, please get in touch with the office.

After-School Study

After-school supervised study resumes on Monday, Jan 9. After-school supervised study occurs on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm. On Wednesday, it takes place from 1.30 to 4.00 pm. Parents can make payments for supervised study using the school website.

Philosophy Themes

To provoke discussion and thought, some of the themes for the past few weeks have been:

Do I leave a life of measure or excess?

How do I calm the mind?

Can I be a helper to someone who needs it?

Are you a radiator or a drain pipe?

For more information about the assembly themes, please click [here](#).

Transition Year Update

Krav Maga module

For the last five weeks, transition year students have participated in a two-hour weekly lesson teaching them self-defence. Krav Maga Academy Dublin ran this module and taught the students self-defence, resilience, and the importance of not giving up and keeping a positive mindset. To see some pictures, please click [here](#).

First Aid Course

During the last week in November, the Transition year students participated in a full-day First Aid workshop. In the workshop, they learned the vital skills of first aid, including CPR, recovery position, applying a sling and bandages and running through practical scenarios. To see some pictures, please click [here](#).

First work experience placement

On the 13th of November, our students went out to experience the world of work for a week. The students worked in various professions, including veterinary care, finance, teaching, forestry, guards, retail, IT, and defence forces. We even had one student shadowing Simon Harris for the week. The feedback from the employers for all our students was excellent, and hopefully, they gained insight into possible future career paths.

Weightlifting Ireland

Weightlifting Ireland has kindly come back again this year to run a five-week module on powerlifting using training weights. The boys have been participating in the module for the last five weeks, and the girls will participate in the module for five weeks after Christmas. The trainers highlight the importance of resistance training for reducing the risk of injury, increasing bone density, reducing the risk of osteoporosis, and enhancing general well-being. To see some pictures, please click [here](#).

Friday trips

With the unsettled weather of November and December, our Friday trips have been a mix of outdoor and indoor activities. These activities include the Coolalingo walk and waterfall, Newgrange, the National Archaeological Museum, Natural History Museum (dead zoo) and Farmleigh House. To see some pictures, please click [here](#).

Other events

Another major activity that has continued is the TY Musical rehearsals and auditions. The students have been preparing for the Junk Korture competition in art class. This is a significant undertaking, and hopefully, they will be ready to show off their designs after Christmas. The Transition year students also planted 300 bulbs, hopefully bringing more colour to the grounds in Spring.

School Events

Charity Fund Raising

Students have organised several fundraising initiatives in the last few weeks.

Students from various classes organised care packs for the Kilcoole nursing home residents. On December 6th, the 5th year students visited the centre to deliver the care packs and meet the residents. The centre director commended our students for their good-natured temperament and generosity and have invited them back for afternoon tea.

Our 6th-year leadership team organised a bake sale to raise funds for Focus Ireland, bringing in a total of €230. In addition, our 5th year student, Georgina, organised a non-uniform day to raise funds for UNICEF, bringing in a total of €244. Finally, the Transition year students organised both a car wash and bake-out to raise funds for the social hangout area beside the staff park. They raised a total of €487.

I must congratulate all students involved in the various charity fundraisers for their enthusiasm and generosity.

Christmas Events

Our 6th-year leadership team has been highly creative and enthusiastic about organising events for Christmas. The events organised include Secret Santa, a visit to Santa's grotto, Candy Cane Santa, Room decorating competition and Christmas Dress up. A huge congratulations to all involved for raising the spirits of all students during this Christmas period.

Ice-Skating

All Students went ice skating with their respective classes on Tuesday, Dec 12, and Thursday, Dec 14 . From the feedback received, the trip was thoroughly enjoyed by all. I must thank the various teachers for organising such a fun day out for our students.

Tráth na gCeist Feachtas

On Tuesday, 28th of November, students from the 3rd year and 5th years travelled to St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham, to attend an Irish language quiz organized by Feachtas. The 3rd and 5th years competed against 10 other teams from Coláiste Eoin, Stratford College and St. Columba's College. Our highest-scoring team on the night was Patrick and Sadhbh from 5th year and Orla and Alex from 3rd year. They managed to come 4th place following closely behind 3 Gaelscoil Coláiste Eoin teams. Well done to all who participated. A huge Go raibh maith agat to all the parents who helped with lifts on the night. To see some pictures, please click on the link [here](#).

Teacher vs Student soccer maths

Our student leadership team organised a lunch-time tournament with the winners getting the prize of playing the teachers! The winners of the tournament were the 6th year students, and they were very eager to arrange the match as soon as possible. The students started strong, going into a 2-0 lead. The teacher's resilience was evident to see, hitting goal posts and crossbar, among other near misses. Eventually, the team found the form and came back with 2 well-taken goals to leave the game at 2-2. In the last kick of the game, the students reacted strongly to the kick out and scored the last goal of the goal to come out 3-2 winners. Well done to the students for organising a great tournament.

European Parliament 2023

On the 24th of November, Ms Shanahan's Business students attended the Euroscola Event at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. They met with Dita Charanzová (the vice-president of the European Parliament) and asked her questions about the current problems that the E.U. faces.

All students were split up into groups and had the opportunity to engage with other students from all over the E.U. They had very interesting discussions and debates on cybersecurity and equal pay for women. Finally, they were taught about how amendments are voted and passed in the E.U. and the impact of new amendments on younger generations.

They also had time to do some sightseeing in Strasbourg, the highlights being Strasbourg Cathedral and an amazing Christmas market.

Barry Andrews MEP Visit

Ms Shanahan's 5th Year Business attended a talk given by Barry Andrews. They participated in a very interesting discussion on Cyber Security, Climate Change and Sustainability. Barry Andrews described his career path to becoming an MEP and how students can make their voices heard in Europe. It was a very thought-provoking talk and led to some very challenging questions on reducing our carbon footprint. To see some pictures, please click on the link [here](#).

Science Week

This year's Science Week was celebrated from Nov 13 to Nov 17 in John Scottus School. The Science Department organised several events to bring Science awareness and Science fun to the school community. The hall was transformed into a hall of fame for famous scientists from Marie Curie to Richard Feynman. A Science jokes wall was also created to highlight various scientific concepts and humour. In-class quiz competitions were organised for all year groups, Chemistry, Biology, and Physics quizzes.

The Engineering competition was back by popular demand. This year's challenge was building a free-standing 30cm tall tower using drinking straws to support two table tennis balls in 10 minutes. Thirty students participated. The teams explored some very clever ideas involving various geometrical shapes.

Finally, Ms Grace demonstrated a fire-spitting demonstration and Mr Pender demonstrated a water rocket launch on the Astro pitch to close this year's Science Week. Thank you to Mr Pender, Mr Brady, Mr Pender and Ms Grace, for organising all

the events.

Stand Up Week

In the week beginning Nov 13, the school celebrated Stand Up Week. The week is a nationwide campaign against LGBTI+ bullying in schools. The week started with introducing the theme: "Allyship – being an ally to our friends". The week ended with a multi-coloured clothes day, raising funds for BelongTo, a charity supporting LGBTI+ young people in Ireland. Well done to our TY students for organising the week.

Extra-Curricular

Club Schedule

To see the current extra-curricular club schedule, please click [here](#).

Film Club Show

On Tuesday, the 19th of December, the after-school film club will show its festive movie. This is a great event for students to watch movies together and develop their tastes and preferences over time. The club is a pop-up and, as such, is not on every week. Advance notice will be provided every time the club has a meeting. The theme of this film will be Christmas, and students had the chance to vote on their preferred film. The options were Elf, Home Alone 1 and The Santa Clause. Some snacks and drinks will be provided, but students are encouraged to bring their own snacks. Please note that all liquids must be kept in sealed containers such as keep cups or reusable water bottles.

Sports Update

Below is an update on some of the sports events in the past month.

Basketball

With the league stage finished, three wins and two losses, we thankfully did enough to qualify for the quarter-final of the plate competition. Spirits were high as the boys knew that this was a great opportunity to go the whole way to the final.

First up was the quarter-final vs Sandymount Educate Together on 21st November. We knew that this was going to be a tough game as Sandymount knocked us out at the same stage last year by two points. The game, as expected, was a close affair, and at halftime, the score stood at 15-16 to Sandymount; it was all to play for. It was basket for basket and in the closing stages of the third quarter, Corin scored two free throws to put us one point ahead. The final quarter was no different and with great scores from Yude and Maks and a timely score from Josh, the final whistle blew ... a two point win for John Scottus.. and relief all round. Roll on the semi-final.

Next up was the semi-final away to St Tiernans on 29th November. This was another close encounter and a great team performance. The boys worked really hard for each other, and it was their best defensive game of the season. The standout performances were from Yude and Max who scored twelve points each. There was also great outside shooting from Eoin with six points and Josh scoring six points under the boards. We finished with a great win 41 - 28.

Next up ... The Final V Strafford College 6th December, Oblates Hall Inchicore..

The excitement around the school had been building as it was the first time John Scottus had reached a final in a long time. The game started at 10 am, and the nerves were gone; it was time to play. After a slow start and Strafford College making some great opening baskets, the boys finally settled, and we now had a great game on our hands. It was score-for-score for the remainder of the first half. After a short halftime break, it was time to get back on the court and give everything. In the third quarter, we fought hard but took a little dip in performance and trailed by eight points. It was still all to play for, and the boys came out fighting in the last quarter. They closed the eight-point gap, and the game was a draw; nobody could call it. In the final minute of the game, we were two points down with two free throws to draw level. We scored one point, leaving us needing one basket to win. With under ten seconds to go, we needed the ball, but unfortunately, time just ran out for us; it was an agonizing one-point loss. The boys were understandably disappointed, but overall a great team performance with everyone making an enormous contribution.

Although we fell at the final hurdle, we are immensely proud of all the boys. They have really gelled together this year we are already looking forward to continuing our basketball journey next year. Thank you so much to Yursa, who was a great support to the lads for all their games, especially in the final and for helping with table duties, motivation, and even coaching.

We have to mention our amazing supporters and teachers, and you really lifted the boys and the atmosphere. Hopefully, we can bring you more days like this.

Team: Yude He, Max Senatore, Joshua Mullins, Coirin O'Leary, Jake Khan, Eoin Walsh, Emre Ucar, Emanuel Keene, Odhran Leahy, Oisin Conlon and Liam Crimes. To see a picture of the team, please click [here](#).

Next up... 2nd year boys league after Christmas.. watch this space

Special thanks to our Basketball coach, Edel Scott, who has been working with the boys since last year. It's amazing to see the improvements they have made in this time.

Soccer

John Scottus 3 - 6 Grange CC

Our u17 girls hosted Grange Community College in their first game of the league on the day we came back from mid-term break. The opposition started much brighter, having taken a 3-0 lead before our girls even realised they were in a game. This trend continued throughout the first half, and we found ourselves 5-0 down at halftime. The break gave the girls a chance to regroup and make the decision to put in a far greater effort in the second half. The increase in intensity was just the trick, and the girls performed much better in the second half. Goals from Milly Fischer, Annalia Halford and Brenna Gallagher were no less than the girls deserved from their second-half efforts.

John Scottus 1 - 1 Mount Seskin CS

Our u15 boys came away from this game scratching their heads, wondering how they didn't come away with all 3 points. The boys started the brighter right from the off, with Oisin Donelon and Conor Wood, causing the opposition all sorts of trouble down the right-hand side of the pitch. Eventually, this early pressure paid off with Senan Kelly playing a lovely ball through to Lucas Tyner. Lucas saw his initial effort come off the post, but he was quickest to follow up, sliding home the rebound. The remainder of the second half was a tight affair. In the closing stages, Mount Seskin got their equaliser with a fine finish from the edge of the box.

The second half was all John Scottus. The boys moved up a gear and dominated throughout. Conor Wood raced through early in the half only to see his shot blaze agonisingly wide. Finn Merryweather had a dubious offside decision go against him after finishing well from a ball in from Luke Flavin. In the closing stages, a corner from Finn Merryweather somehow managed to come off the underside of a Mount Seskin defender. In the end, the winner just continued to evade the JSS boys. However, they can be very content with an excellent performance and look forward to the rest of their group games.

John Scottus 0 - 0 Blackrock ETSS

Our u15 boys second game in their group proved to be another very tight affair. This time, they came up against a strong and skilful Blackrock side. In the first half, Blackrock were on top and applied plenty of pressure without creating any clear-cut chances. The back three of Alfonso Zunzunegui, Aaron Hroffman and Callum Nolan were imperious throughout. Strong in the tackle and always composed and playing the ball into midfield. The JSS boys got a handle on the game in the second half and started creating the better of the chances. Oisin Donelon started causing problems down the right side, and Finn Merryweather delivered some excellent crosses that we just couldn't finish. The best chance of the game came when a long ball in from Aaron Hoffman was beautifully controlled by Senan Kelly, whose headed effort was saved by the goalkeeper. All in all, a draw was probably a fair result, and the boys now have the last game of their group to look forward to, where they hope to put in another good performance.

Loreto Bray 6 - 2 John Scottus

Our Minor Girls travelled to Greystones to take on a very strong Loreto Bray side in their first game of the u15 girls league. Loreto Bray started the stronger and had lots of early possession, but excellent defending from Katie Ashmore, Amelie Broklebank and Charlotte Stafford meant that it was still all square in the opening quarter. The following 15 minutes became far more open, with both teams having plenty of chances. Zoe Van Den Bergy and Annalia Halford were causing the opposition lots of trouble, and between them, they were unfortunate not to have a goal by halftime. In this period, the Loreto Bray forward excelled also and took their chances to have a 3-0 lead at halftime. The second half proved to be just as exciting as the first, with both teams creating lots of chances. Kayla Flavin's meandering run eventually led to her being pulled down in the opposition box. She then stepped up and coolly slotted away the penalty. Savannah Phoenix Munroe got the second of the game when she blasted in from the edge of the box when an Annalia Halford corner landed at her feet.

Just a reminder, both girl's and boys' soccer training continues after school on Wednesdays. We encourage all our players to attend as many as they can.

Frisbee

On Tuesday, 7th November 3, teams from JSS travelled to Abbottstown Sports Campus to compete in an invitational event organised by Dublin Ultimate Frisbee. There were nine schools and over twenty teams playing games throughout the day. JSS had one senior open team and two junior girls teams.

At the end of each game, teams had to form the "spirit circle", give positive feedback to each other and give a spirit score out of ten. At the end of the event, all scores were added up. The JSS senior open team won the spirit award in their event and all three JSS can be very pleased with their performance throughout the day.

On Thursday, November 23rd, we brought four teams to the recent Ultimate Frisbee event in Abbottstown: one junior girl, one senior girl, and two junior boys teams. There were ten schools represented and over twenty teams participating. Each and every one of our students played their best and had a great day. Our junior boys won one of the four "Ultimate Spirit Awards" of the day and were very proud to bring the trophy home.

Girls hockey:

The John Scottus girls teams have been very busy over the past few weeks with league and cup games. Our junior team have played Sion Hill, Blackrock and Loreto Foxrock. Our minor team have played Loreto Beaufort, Newpark and Sandford Park. Both teams are getting a huge amount of experience in playing big hockey schools, and our girls have risen to the challenge.

Boys hockey

The boy's minor (1st year) hockey team travelled to New Park, Blackrock, for their first match together. This was the first minor boy's hockey game in more than 10 years. It was a super game, and our boys are showing lots of potential as a squad. Many of the boys had never played on a full hockey pitch, and we look forward to taking this squad together. There will be more matches to come in the new year.

Music

It's been a busy few weeks of music-making in preparation for the Christmas season. The first and second years have been creating Christmas jingles, playing the ukulele and singing upbeat Christmas songs. The TY students have been rehearsing a variety of Christmas songs and will be going carol singing for charity this week! We also have a variety of students from all years rehearsing for the end-of-year celebration. From Mariah Carey to classic Christmas carols, it will be a wonderful way to end the school term.

Philosophical thought for the day

"You don't have to control your thoughts. You just have to stop letting them control you." - Dan Millman

Summary of Events coming up

End of Term – 12.15 pm, Friday, Dec 22

School Re-opens – Monday, Jan 8

Parent-Class Teacher Meetings – Monday, Jan 15

Philosophy Week – Starting Monday, Jan 22

Mock Exams for 3rd and 6th years – Thursday, Feb 1 to Friday, Feb 9

Exam Week for 1st, 2nd and 5th years – February 7 to February 9

Mid-term Break – Mon, Feb 12 to Fri, Feb 16

Lastly, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Yours warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Declan Kelly".

Dr Declan Kelly

Principal

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