St Paul's Secondary School

TY School Show Newsletter

Message from our Principal

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I write this as the first half-term of 2025-2026 comes to a close. While I will write mainly about our TY students, it would be deeply unfair to focus solely on them when all of our year groups bring me equally great joy.

I left school yesterday, Thursday, fresh from hearing positive feedback from our support staff, those who face each new day with the very familiar challenge of cleaning & caretaking our school after its 500 or so daily inhabitants have gone home. They are immensely grateful for the extra care your children are taking to ensure that rubbish is in bins, lights are off and classrooms are left as easy as possible to clean. The small effort each individual makes truly does add up to a really significant difference to our support team, and you can be proud of your child for their part in that. This is something Mr O'Frighíl and I have worked hard to achieve and it represents our school's collective effort to work together as a community and demonstrate respect for our facilities and all who use them.

Similarly, students are taking care of the books & resources distributed at the start of the year and are generally settling well into this year of learning. Just one week after our return Assessment Week will be upon us and the work from these early weeks will be tested. 1st & 2nd years will have 60-minute tests, 3rd & 5th will have 80-minute tests and Leaving Cert students will have 2-hour tests. We hope that your child rests well over the break, and is also conscious of the need to return ready to face those exams.

Our Transition Year students will spend that exam week on Work Experience, and we are grateful for all paperwork returned on that. December brings the school show and that will be a highlight of the next term. Work is progressing really well, and this newsletter shares important behind-the- scenes info & updates. We are incredibly impressed by how well Transition Years have embraced everything that has been on offer and are delighted to report positive feedback on classes and a hugely successful and enjoyable three days in Killary. They have just chosen Barcelona as their European Tour destination, so there will be much for them to look forward to in 2026. In the meantime, please enjoy the insights they share here on the preparations for The Wizard of Oz and the team supporting them in their efforts to impress when they take to the stage.

Transition Year students receiving their Junior Cycle results – well done to all!

We held an Assembly with our new 1st year students yesterday and acknowledged the many ways they have enriched our school community by joining us this year. Last night marked the anniversary of their Open Night and we ensured that they know how delighted we are that they have chosen St Paul's. A number of staff were in attendance too, many on a voluntary basis, and this demonstrates the exceptional care our staff take with your children. We know that they are tired and we wish them a very restful break after experiencing such a busy time in their early weeks in secondary school.

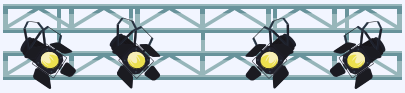
Our exam year groups have settled into work and seem conscious of the importance of starting this year well. Similarly 5th year students have embraced their new subjects and moved into the more academic side of Senior Cycle with relative ease after their more varied school year in Transition Year. This can be a difficult adjustment to make and it is to their credit that they have managed it with such maturity. Our 2nd years are also demonstrating new maturity and are coping well with what can be a challenging year. We are here to guide them and they are very responsive to that which impacts positively on what they can achieve as a group. In recent weeks 2nd & 3rd years have had their retreats and the visiting facilitators were high in their praise of both year groups. It means a lot to us when they prove how well they can represent their families and school when working with visitors to the school.

You have been both patient and supportive in recent weeks and we truly value your enthusiasm for all aspects of school life: extra-curricular, fundraising and your willingness to embrace Compass and all its features. Your positive engagement with us as a staff sends a clear message to our students, and the strength of our partnership ultimately benefits them as they find their way in the world.

The coming weeks bring an opportunity to see Transition Year students work together to demonstrate their extensive range of abilities and talents. We are proud of their academic achievements in the recent Junior Cycle results and The Wizard of Oz places the spotlight on an opportunity to shine in other ways. As they embrace the holistic education we offer through the School Show, we know that we can count on you to support it in any way you can. The Transition Years have availed of fantastic support from Mr Merrick, Mr Murray & Ms Gadd in the early weeks and others have been busy in the background. Ms Kenny & Ms Conneely have taken the lead on producing fantastic material to promote the show and Ms Friel & Ms Ní Labhradha are generating lots of energy around fundraising initiatives. Ms Ní Fhártharta, Mr Bohan, Olivia Healy & Emma Cleggett attend rehearsals and are a great link between St Paul's & the SamePage team. The show requires a huge team and I am immensely grateful to all of the adults who are willing to invest so much in our students & their show preparations. A special mention to Ms Conneely without whom we would not have this very special edition of our school newsletter. We all look forward to welcoming you to Oughterard Community Centre on 3rd & 4th December to enjoy The Wizard of Oz.

We also wish you as parents a restful break from the school routine after a very busy start to the school year.
With sincere thanks on behalf of all at St Paul's,
Linda

Meet SamePage Theatre



For this year's musical we are delighted to be working with the talented group from Same Page Theatre. This theatre company was established by Robbie Walsh and Sarah Slevin in 2017. Robbie and Sarah are both working on the musical with Transition Years, along with Shane Mullarkey who worked on last year's musical. Our production team decided to interview Robbie and Shane and gain some insight on theatre and peformance.

Robbie Walsh

How did you get into acting and where did you learn?

So, when I was a kid, I joined a stage school called Trading Places Stage School where we did musicals and stuff. And then I went to college and I got involved in the Drama Society where I was directing and acting and doing that kind of thing. So, I suppose that's how I initially got involved in it and then I just kept going then as I got older and in college and stuff.

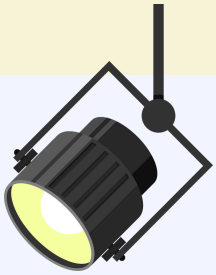
Brilliant. If someone had interest to start theatre, how would they go about getting into starting it?

Well, similar to me, I would join a stage school or a performance kind of thing and if they really are interested in it, study it in college or get involved in it in college.

Who inspired you to set up Same Page Theatre?

So, when I was in college studying, I was involved so much in the Drama Society, directing plays and acting in plays and then when I left college, I felt there wasn't much out there. There was nowhere to get involved in. So, I just decided to set up my own thing and start putting on shows myself with the team around me.

Meet SamePage Theatre



Shane Mullarkey

When did you first gain an interest in theatre?
From a very young age, I started dancing when I was around 7 and then I joined a stage school when I was 10.

Who was your first role model growing up?
Probably my first dance teacher, she was the one in the stage school who got me into my first dance classes, because she was like "You're able to dance, you should join dance classes". If it wasn't for her, telling that to me, I wouldn't be in this profession.

3. Do you enjoy working with schools and what has been your highlight of working with us?
I love working with schools, because it shows a different side that they might not see. My highlight? Probably the first rehearsal, because you never know what's gonna happen when you go into it, and the reception that I got from everyone, that everyone just knuckled down and gave it their all. I could see this was be, I don't want to say easy, but it would be a nice process.

Meet the Cast

The production team interviewed a few members from the cast

Caoimhe Lydon

Who do you play?

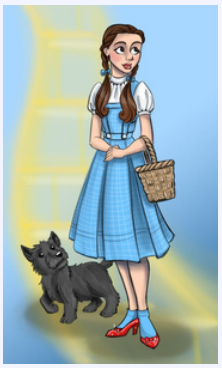
I play Dorothy, the main character who finds herself on a journey to OZ.

How did you find the auditions?

I found them a but nerve wrecking but also fun.

How are you feeling about the progress so far?

I'm feeling quite confident and excited to see the show all put together



Dannii De Vera

Who do you play in The Wizard of Oz?

I play The Wicked Witch

Do you have any good acting techniques?

I'm just learning as I go along!

What is your favourite part in the show?

My favourite part is the character Tinman looking for a heart

Katelyn Joyce

Who do you play in The Wizard of OZ?

I play Glinda the Good.

How did you feel about the auditions were you nervous?

I was nervous but when I got into it I actually found it enjoyable.

How do you feel about the play's progress so far?

I think it's going really well so far!

Meet the Production Team

While the main cast and ensemble work on making their musical show ready, a lot of work takes places behind the scenes with our production team. There are two teams of Transition Years currently working away to ensure the show is a huge success. One team is working on fundraising for Transition Year events and any extra costs needed to fund the musical. The other team is responsible for positive promotion of the school and to also boost support for our musical within our community. We have highlighted a few examples of our progress so far.

The fundraising team had a a hugely successful fundraising event recently. It was a no uniform day, where each year group wore a different colour. The ice cream truck was also very well received. Pictured are a group of Fifth years enjoying the day

Just some of our production team that are working away in the background. From fundraising to social media and promotion, even putting this newsletter together, the team has been busy. Our next job will involve painting some of the scenes that will feature in the show, we are looking forward to getting creative with this.

The production team off to buy their paint!