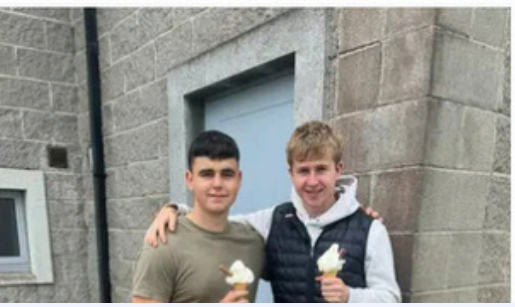
September 2025

St Paul's Secondary School

Creating Community with a TY Musical Fundraiser



Scoil Naomh Pól Uachtar Árd

Dear Parents & Guardians,

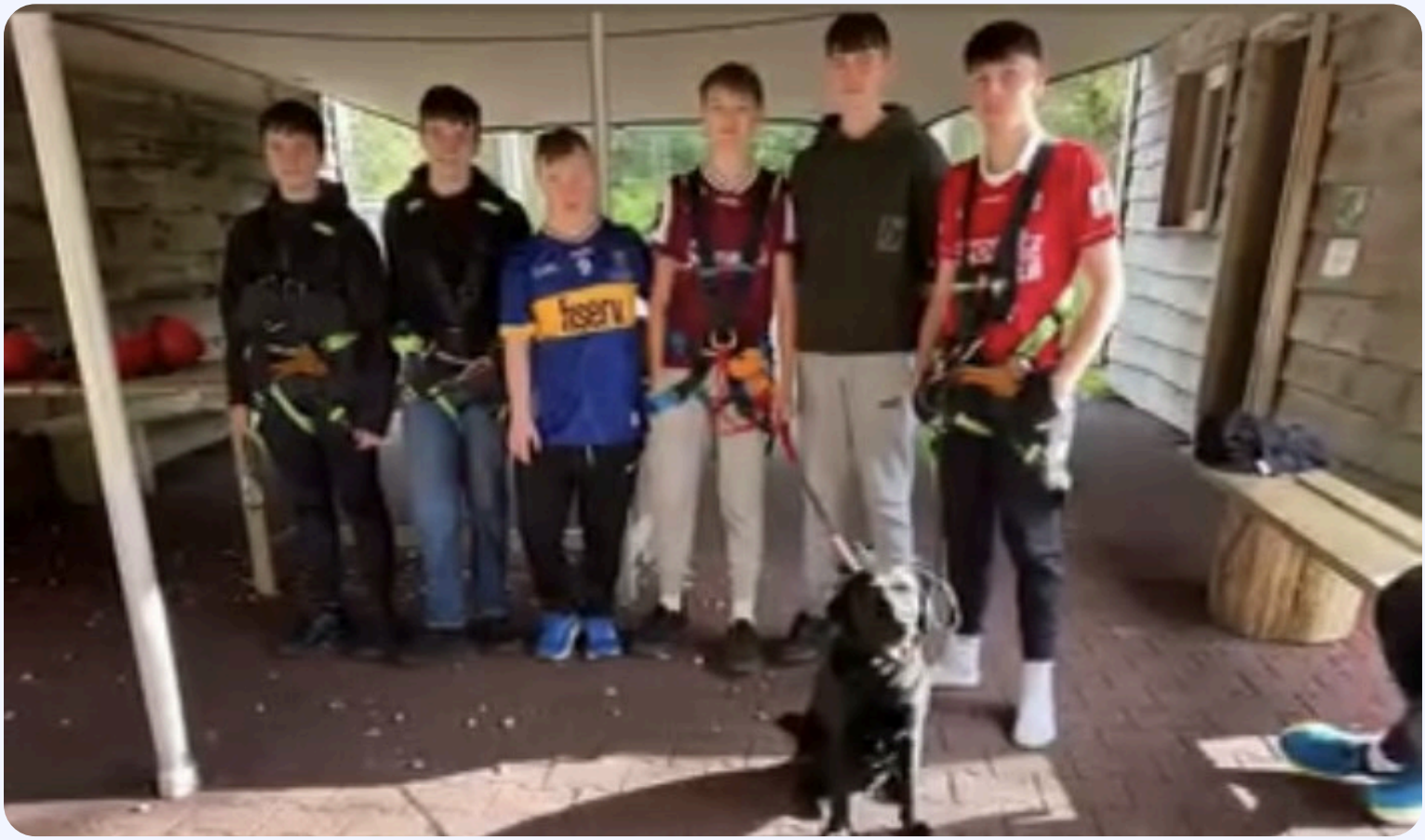
I start with very sincere thanks to all who supported our TY musical fundraiser. We brought September to a close with 3 treats for our students: a day of freedom from their school uniform, an ice-cream cone & a well-earned long weekend! As a staff we think very highly of our students and wanted to reward them for a very positive return to school. This event was only possible thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of our TY students and the teachers who trusted them, so our gratitude goes to Ms Friel & Ms Ní Labhradha for believing in our students. Thanks also to Ms Kinnevey for organising the ice-cream van & to her fellow Year Heads for embracing the idea and supporting the day so visibly.

Promoting Spiritual & Human Development
TY Killary Adventure Trip

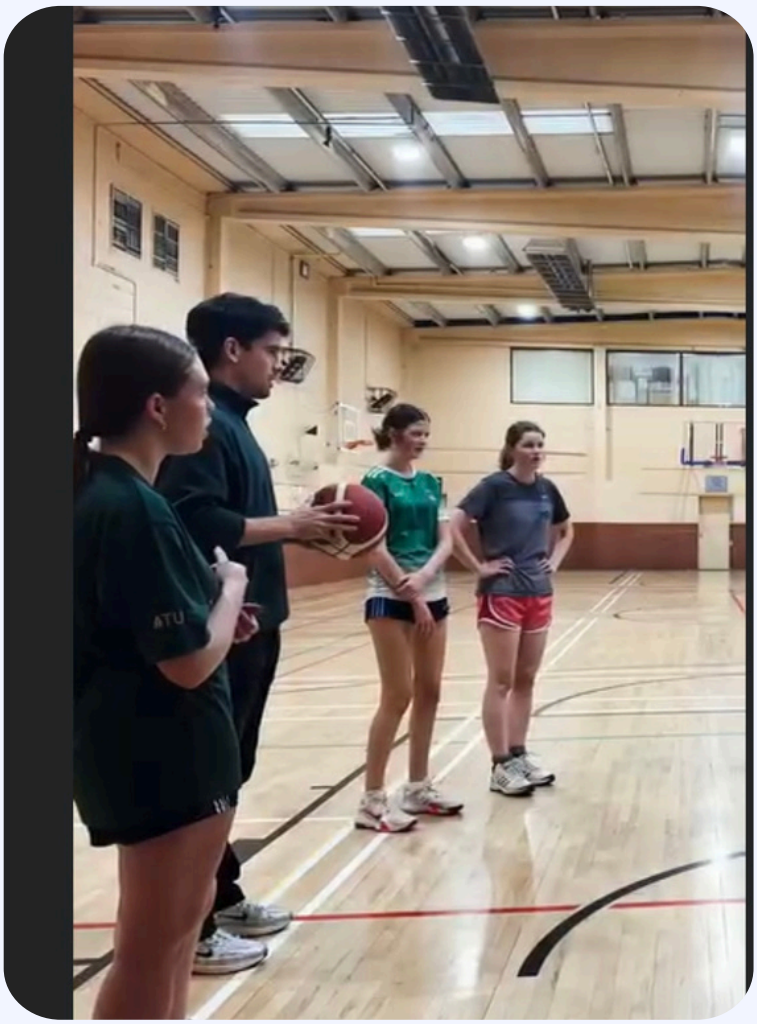
We are very grateful to all involved in the Killary Adventure Trip for their courage and determination. The accompanying staff showed incredible generosity by going away overnight with our students, and the students returned that with high standards of co-operation and positive behaviour. Everyone embraced the range of activities on offer and nerves were soon replaced by fun & laughter. An unforgettable few days for this very special group of St Paul's staff & students. Heartfelt thanks to Gary Begley, Emma Cleggett & Ronan Molloy for their willingness to accompany the group, and to Olivia Gadd & Joseph Merrick for the extensive organisation involved. Special mention to Mr Malone & Luna, our therapy dog, for taking the time make an appearance or two!

Since returning Wizard of Oz rehearsals have benefitted from new levels of energy & courage and we will have updates on that in our next newsletter.

The TYs will receive their Junior Cycle results on Wednesday and we wish them all the very best of luck.



Being Just & Responsible via Extra-Curricular activities

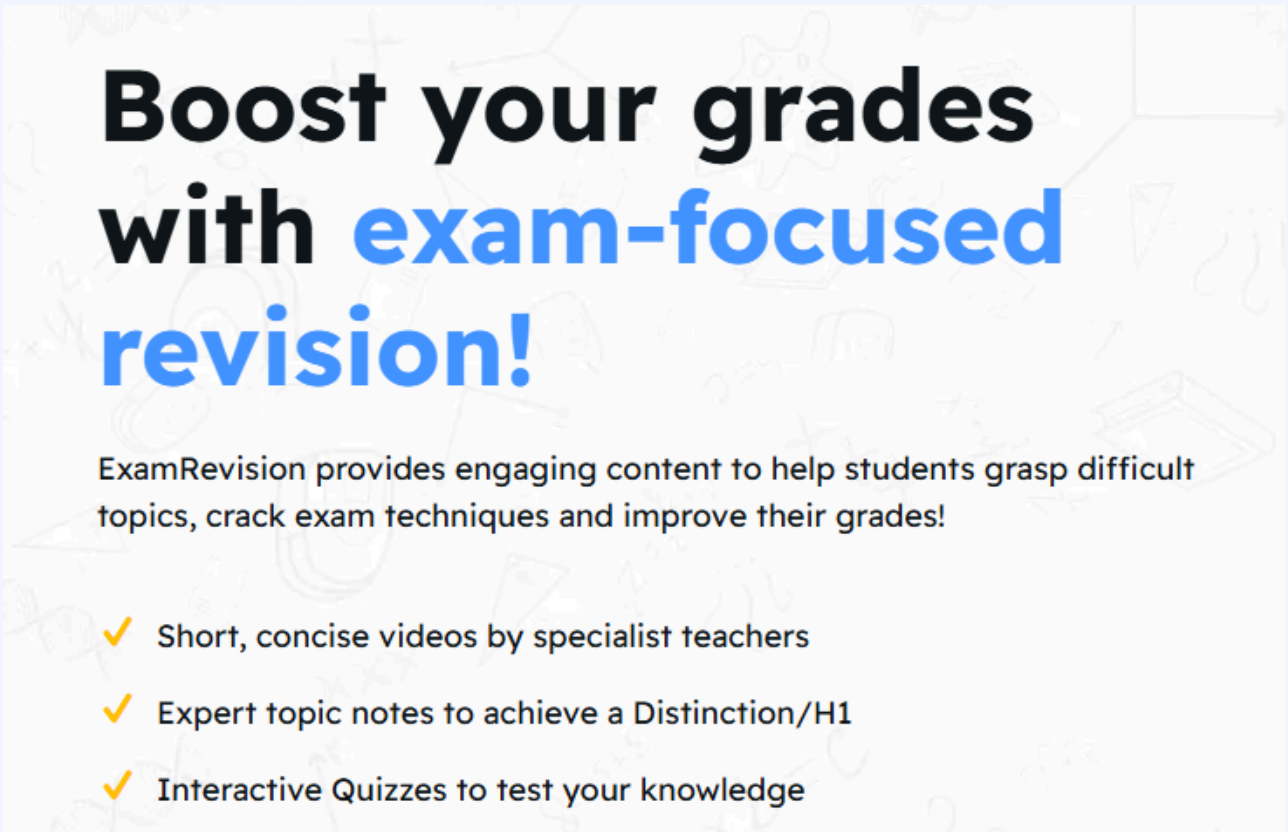


Achieving Quality in Teaching & Learning in collaboration with Exam Revision

With the extra-curricular sporting calendar about to get busy we have made an increased effort to minimise the impact on the quality of what happens in our classrooms. I have been acutely aware of the various aspects of your concerns as parents and I have communicated them clearly to staff. Equally I am conscious of how fully you value our commitment to extra-curricular sport. This brings us to the reality of conflicting priorities and the need to find a way forward that puts our learners first.

We have therefore made a significant investment in the form of subscriptions to Exam Revision for each student enrolled at St Paul's. We availed of a trial in the summer term and received very positive feedback from students. Teachers have also embraced this and engagement has been high. The hope is that Exam Revision's resources will serve two concrete functions in relation to the inevitable disruption caused by our busy extra-curricular programme: (1) it will support teachers in having meaningful content easily available to them, so that the workload involved in extra-curricular commitments is more easily balanced with the corresponding commitment to their class groups; (2) it simplifies lessons where a class group is reduced due to many pupils being away for extra-curricular activities.

There is also of course its primary function, which is to set our students up for effective study in the short term and exam success in the long term. We encourage you to check in with your child on the topic of Exam Revision too, as this can only help them develop the habit of using it regularly for their independent work on our core focus of learning.



Showing Respect for Every Person
Welcome to new members of our school community

We have been blessed with our new staff this year: they are settling in well and already giving generously to our students. Whether with us for the whole year or in a short term substitute capacity, all are equally welcome to our staff. It has been heart-warming to see how they have immersed themselves in school life in a variety of ways: Ms Faulkner (Home Economics, Learning Support & S.P.H.E.) & Ms Elwood (French & Learning Support) supported Ms Conneely as she leads our school choir and they produced a beautiful result at our Opening Mass on Thursday. Mr Thomas played a core role in offering hospitality to our prospective parents at Open Night, also on Thursday last. Mr Bohan (History, C.S.P.E. & S.P.H.E) is heavily involved in supporting the main cast of The Wizard of Oz as they rehearse with Robbie from Samepage. Mr Hays (Science & Learning Support) brings his rugby expertise and led St Paul's to a victory over his own local team in Loughrea last week. Ms Richards (Religion & Learning Support) has embraced our identity as a faith school, and she and Leaving Cert students recently joined members of our local community for morning mass during Religion class. Mr Kelly (Gaeilge & Maths) was willing to join Mr Tierney in presenting awards certificates to local 6th class pupils on Open Night and he has been generous enough to stay on after school on Fridays to coach girls' basketball. We extend a massive thanks to Ms Kenny for her contribution to girls' basketball - having sourced new equipment & encouraged Mr Kelly's involvement as a coach she ensured that the initial training sessions of the year got off to a great start.

Your children are warm in their welcome of new staff and it is commendable that they resist the temptation to take advantage while new staff members find their feet. Mr O'Frighíl and I were delighted to see so many applications for our teaching vacancies, as it supports us as we strive to recruit talented educators for our school.

We welcome Tatiana to our support staff and Pat has returned as our caretaker for a few weeks while Mike recovers from shoulder surgery.

As ever we thank you for your prompt payment for lockers, school insurance and what you can reasonably offer to contribute to the voluntary contribution. It takes very significant sums to run a school and this would not be possible without the high levels of parent support we are fortunate to have at St Paul's.

I close with a word to the young people who have only just joioned us, our new students, the majority of whom are in 1st year: I sincerely hope that your early weeks have been positive and that you feel we are the right school for you. If there are aspects of school life you need guidance or support with please let your Year Head know. Mr O'Frighíl and I are also available and as I have no doubt you already know Carole & Máire will do what they can to help too. Please know that we can only help when we know our help is needed. You as parents & guardians are also welcome to make contact, of course.

Warm regards to all in our school community,

Linda