



Blackrock College Bulletin

Bulletin No. 04 2025 – 2026

Dean's Report

The first half term — the longest of the academic year — has been a busy and vibrant one as the **2025/2026 school year** has settled into full swing. Both inside and outside the classroom, students have been deeply engaged in a wide range of activities and events.

Our **Clubs and Societies Day** on September 9th showcased the remarkable breadth of extra-curricular opportunities available at the College. Highlights of the term so far have included a highly successful **House 10s rugby competition** with excellent participation, a closely fought **Karl Ashe Memorial Trophy Tournament**, the **College Sailing Regatta**, and the **Swimming Gala**. Over 200 students travelled to take part in the **Sedbergh 500th Anniversary Rugby Festival**, and many more have been active across numerous sporting pursuits.

In the arts, preparations are well underway for the **Senior Musical – *The Addams Family***, which takes to the stage in November. Just before midterm, students also enjoyed the **annual Royal Russell MUN trip** to London. Looking ahead, **Rock-Ed** returns on **13th November**, and we continue to encourage all students to get involved in an extra-curricular activity after the break.

Beyond the extra-curricular sphere, this half term has seen a full calendar of College wide initiatives, including **Environmental Action Week**, **Wellbeing Week** (featuring **Jersey Day**), **retreats for 3rd, 5th, and 6th Years**, **Maths Week**, and the **3rd and 6th Year Family Masses**. **Study skills workshops** have also supported students as they prepare for the challenges ahead.

Our **Transition Year programme** continues to provide a wealth of opportunities, with preparations for **Blackrock College Radio (BCR)** in

November gathering momentum. The **Weekly Application and Progress Cards** remain an important tool in celebrating success in the classroom and identifying areas for continued growth as we move towards the **Christmas Examinations**.

We wish everyone in the **Blackrock College community** a very happy and restful **October midterm break**, and we look forward to welcoming all students back refreshed and ready for the next exciting half of term.

Webwise Youth Panel Meeting

We are proud to share that two of our students, **Cian O'Flannagáin** (Fifth Year) and **Ross Murphy** (Fourth Year) took part in the **Webwise Youth Panel Meeting** held on 3rd October 2025. This national event brought together 35 post-primary students from across Ireland to discuss online safety, digital wellbeing, and the impact of emerging technologies like Generative AI.

Our students contributed to workshops exploring the opportunities and challenges of AI in young people's lives, participated in debates, and helped shape ideas for **Safer Internet Day 2026**. As Youth Panel members, they act as ambassadors for their peers, supporting campaigns and resources that promote a safer, smarter online experience for all.

This is a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop leadership skills, engage in national policy discussions, and represent youth voices in shaping the digital future. We commend them for their commitment and enthusiasm!



Whole School Assembly



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Science Club

Over the past few weeks, students in the Science Club have been busy exploring a wide range of activities designed to ignite their curiosity and deepen their understanding of the world around them. Whether you are fascinated by space, intrigued by dissections, or captivated by chemistry, Science Club truly has something for everyone!

In Week 1, students proudly submitted their entry to the *BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition*. Since then, they have taken part in a variety of exciting hands-on experiments across Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Engineering.

Students built model lungs and took part in a guided lung dissection, bringing textbook biology to life. In Chemistry, they reacted magnesium with acid to produce hydrogen gas — confirmed by the unmistakable 'squeaky pop' test! They also explored reaction rates through the iodine clock experiment, racing to slow the reaction precisely to 50 seconds.

Engineering and teamwork took centre stage during the spaghetti-and-marshmallow tower challenge, where students collaborated to design and construct the sturdiest structures using just two simple materials.

More interactive experiments, trips, and competitions are planned for the weeks ahead, offering even more opportunities to experience the wonders of science beyond the classroom.



Geography Field Trip



Our **6th Year Geography** students recently conducted their field study along the **Glencree River** in Co. Wicklow. The investigation focused on **erosion processes at a meander**, with students collecting a range of measurements and observations to assess the hypothesis that erosion is actively shaping the river's course.

It was a **productive and insightful day of firsthand learning**, giving students the opportunity to apply classroom theory to the real-world landscape.



TY Outreach Programme

The Transition Year Outreach Programme began last week, marking the start of a meaningful initiative for our TY students.

Each Tuesday evening, students—accompanied by staff members and **Mr. John Carling** from the **Legion of Mary**—travel to the city centre to offer support to those in need. They provide tea, coffee, and sandwiches to anyone seeking assistance, along with essential items such as clothes, hats, gloves, and socks.

This programme offers students a valuable opportunity to engage with their community, demonstrate compassion, and make a positive difference in the lives of others.

If you have any good quality second hand, hoodies, jackets, tracksuit bottoms, hats, or gloves that you would like to donate please give them to your son to hand in at check-in.



The Blackrock Lion

The students of **Global Citizenship** have proudly completed **The Blackrock Lion** — a striking visual symbol celebrating the rich multicultural nature of our school community.

The lion's mane features over forty colourful handprints, each painted with the flag of a country represented within our student body, beautifully showcasing the diversity that strengthens our school.

This inspiring project was brought to life through the creativity and dedication of the following Transition Year students: **Andrew Donohoe, Daire Hannan, Dan Hayden, Daniel Goss, Evan Brophy, Finley Hannon, Harry O'Brien, James Odlum, Jimmy Johnstone, Luke Baveria, Luke O'Connell, Robert McKimm, Ross Murphy, Stephen Hall, and Tate Tomkin Beddy.**

A sincere thank you also goes to **Ms. Byrne, Ms. Maguire, Mr. Maher**, and all members of the Art Department for their invaluable guidance, support, and patience throughout the project.



Wellbeing Week

Blackrock College's Wellbeing Week took place from October 6th to 10th, centred around the theme ***Bi Cineálta*** — Irish for *Be Kind*. This powerful message was woven into every aspect of the week's activities, reminding the entire school community that kindness matters every day, not just during Wellbeing Week.

The week began with the raising of the new ***Bi Cineálta*** flag — a vibrant symbol encouraging everyone to practice kindness throughout the year.



Among the highlights were the popular **Cuppa Clubs** held in the library. Separate sessions for junior and senior students offered hot chocolate and cake in a relaxed setting, providing space for open and honest conversations about wellbeing. The atmosphere was warm, welcoming, and deeply supportive.



Sixth-year students enjoyed a **Tea 'n Talk** during their extended morning break, with delicious cakes provided by the Wellbeing Committee. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with friends and teachers and to speak openly about mental health and self-care.



On **Thursday**, the school came alive with colour as students celebrated **Jersey Day**, swapping uniforms for their favourite team jerseys. Each student donated €2, raising an impressive €1,500 for **Jigsaw** and **Barnardo's**. The day combined fun, community spirit, and compassion in equal measure.

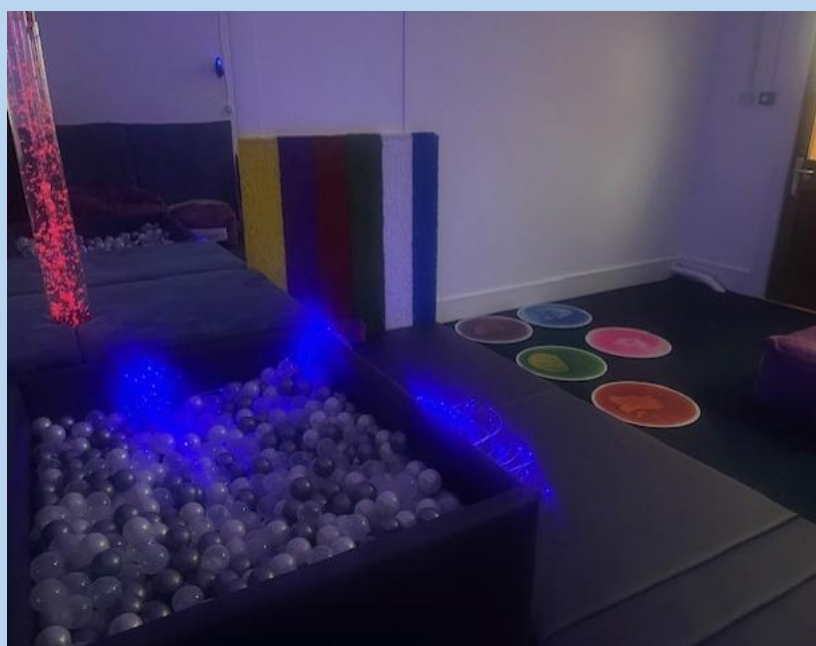


Throughout the week, **Wellbeing Walks** encouraged students and teachers to step outside, clear their minds, and enjoy some fresh air together — a simple yet powerful way to promote mental health.

Fifth and sixth-year students also participated in a workshop on **Emotional Intelligence**, facilitated by **Brian Kingston**, which offered valuable insights into understanding and managing emotions effectively.

In **RE classes**, students explored meditation to cultivate mindfulness and inner calm, while **SPHE classes** focused on the Anti-Bullying module of the *FUSE* programme, reinforcing the importance of respect, empathy, and inclusion.

The **AEN Department** kindly opened the *Cubbie* and *Oasis* spaces to all students seeking quiet moments of reflection or relaxation, providing calm, supportive environments throughout the week.



Overall, **Wellbeing Week** was a resounding success — a thoughtful, engaging, and heartfelt reminder of the power of kindness and community. The **Bi Cineálta** flag now flies proudly over Blackrock College, symbolising an enduring commitment to kindness, empathy, and wellbeing.

Debating



Blackrock College debaters recently competed in the **UCD Junior Schools Competition**.

Rock A: Fergal McPolin & Jasper Turner

Rock B: Maurice Nelligan & Neil Doyle (1st Place)

Rock C: Sheng Yu Han & Dara Meehan (1st Place)

Rock D: Brody O'Reilly & Ted Margey (2nd Place)

Motion: *This House Would make all vaccinations mandatory.*



Junior Debaters:

Brody O'Reilly, Jasper Turner, Ted Margey, Sheng Yu Han, Dara Meehan, Neil Doyle, Maurice Nelligan, Fergal McPolin.



Senior debaters hosted the Junior v Senior Debate on Wednesday 15th October.

Jamie Browne Lynch, John McCallig, Fionn Kilfeather, Fergal McPolin, Jasper Turner and Neil Doyle.

Motion: *This House Believes That social media has improved human communication.*

Side Proposition (Seniors) won this round with **John McCallig** (5th Year) and **Fergal McPolin** (3rd Year) nominated as best speakers.

Economics and Commerce Society

The Economics and Commerce Society was delighted to welcome **Mr. Mark Spain**, Chief Financial Officer of Bank of Ireland, as part of its **Guest Speaker Series**.

Committee members **Hugh Murphy** and **Don Banks** led an engaging interview with Mr. Spain, covering a wide range of topics including the role of a CFO, the impact of technology in finance, career development, inclusion in the workplace, and strategies for managing challenging situations.

Fifty-two students attended the event, all eager to gain insight into the world of business and become inspired by Mr. Spain's professional journey.

The Society extends its sincere thanks to Mr. Spain for his time, openness, and valuable advice — and for motivating our students to pursue their ambitions with confidence and curiosity.



Maths Week/Numeracy Day 2025



Maths Week 2025 was celebrated throughout the school with an outstanding level of participation from students across all year groups. The week was filled with fun, challenge, and creativity — proving that maths can be both engaging and enjoyable!

This year's events included a variety of competitions and activities designed to

test critical thinking skills and teamwork.

Yearly Maths Quiz Winners:

- 2nd Year: **Evan Healy**
- 3rd Year: **Oscar Bennett**
- 4th Year: **Fionn Spillane**
- 5th Year: **John Pierce**
- 6th Year: **James Donohoe**



Pinball Challenge:

Winner: **Conor Sheehan**

(There were an impressive 426 pinballs!)

2nd Year Treasure Hunt

This event saw 120 enthusiastic participants from 2nd and 4th Year, racing to solve clues and complete challenges. The winning team came from **Maths 28A** — well done!



Equation Bee Winner:

- 2nd year: **Sheng Yu Han**

A huge thank you to everyone who took part for their energy, teamwork, and enthusiasm — qualities that truly cannot be measured.

A special word of thanks goes to **Ms. A. Dillon** for her creativity, organisation, and invaluable contributions to making Maths Week such a success.

Blackrock College Equation Bee 2025

As part of Maths Week, **2nd Year** students took part in the inaugural Blackrock College Equation Bee — a fast-paced mathematical showdown inspired by MIT's famous Integration Bee.

Over 100 students competed in the qualifier round before the top eight advanced to the live finals. Each round saw two students go head-to-head, racing against the clock to solve a linear equation in just three minutes, creating an electric and competitive atmosphere.

After a fiercely contested series of rounds (with some equations solved in under 35 seconds!), Sheng Yu Han was crowned Grand Solver and Best Mathematician in 2nd Year, earning the title — for one year only — and a €20 voucher.

Well done to all who took part, and congratulations to Sheng Yu on an outstanding performance!



Senior Musical Rehearsals



Rehearsals for this year's Senior Musical — ***The Addams Family*** — are in full swing! The cast and crew have been working tirelessly after school and on weekends to bring the spooky charm and quirky humour of the Addams clan to life.

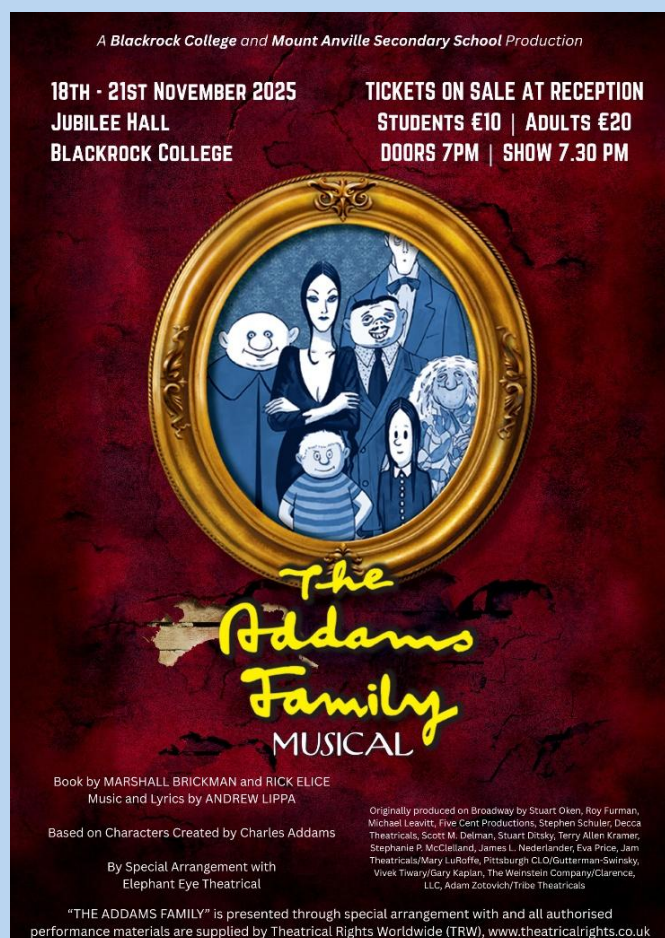
From perfecting musical numbers to fine-tuning choreography and character work, the enthusiasm and dedication of everyone involved have been outstanding. Excitement is building as opening night draws closer!

Mark your Calendars...

Show Dates: Tuesday 18th November – Friday 21st November

Tickets on Sale at Reception: €10/€20 Student/Adult

Do not miss out! Guaranteed fun for all the family!



Lunchtime Art Creative Hub

This year, Thursdays have been bursting with fun and creativity during lunchtime activities in the Art Room! Second- and third-year students have been enthusiastically taking part, working on a wide range of projects — from vibrant abstract canvas paintings to weekly themed artworks.

Last week, in celebration of **Jersey Day**, students painted their favourite team jerseys on card cutouts, highlighting the incredible diversity of sports and local clubs represented within our school community.

Following that, students got into the seasonal spirit by creating Halloween-themed clay pieces, which they decorated and brought home just in time for the midterm break.

A huge well done to all the boys who joined the Lunchtime Hub this term for their creativity, energy, and enthusiasm. There are plenty more imaginative artwork projects and fun to come throughout the rest of the year!





ART CLUB RETURNS

WEDNESDAY THE 5TH OF NOVEMBER

ALL WELCOME . 1.00 TO 3.00 PM



Chess



Congratulations to eight of our chess players who were selected to represent Blackrock College at a recent chess tournament. The teams were led by captain **Theo Galligan**.

Congratulations to **Daniel Hayden** who placed 10th out of 304 individual participants.

As teams, **Blackrock B** and **Blackrock A**, placed 9th and 17th respectively out of 77 competing teams. Well done to all involved.



Inter-House Swimming Gala Photos

Following the report on the Inter-House Swimming Gala which featured in Bulletin 3, we are delighted to share some of the photos from what was a thoroughly enjoyable evening of competition.

The images capture the energy of the races and the great spirit shown by all who took part. Well done again to all the swimmers for their efforts and achievements.





Sedbergh School's 500th Anniversary

From October 10th–12th, 216 students and staff from Blackrock College travelled to **Sedbergh School** to celebrate its remarkable 500th anniversary. It was a true honour for Blackrock to be the only school invited to take part in a nine-game rugby festival marking this historic occasion.

The weekend was about far more than just rugby — it was a celebration of friendship, camaraderie, and the strengthening of the long-standing bond between the two schools.

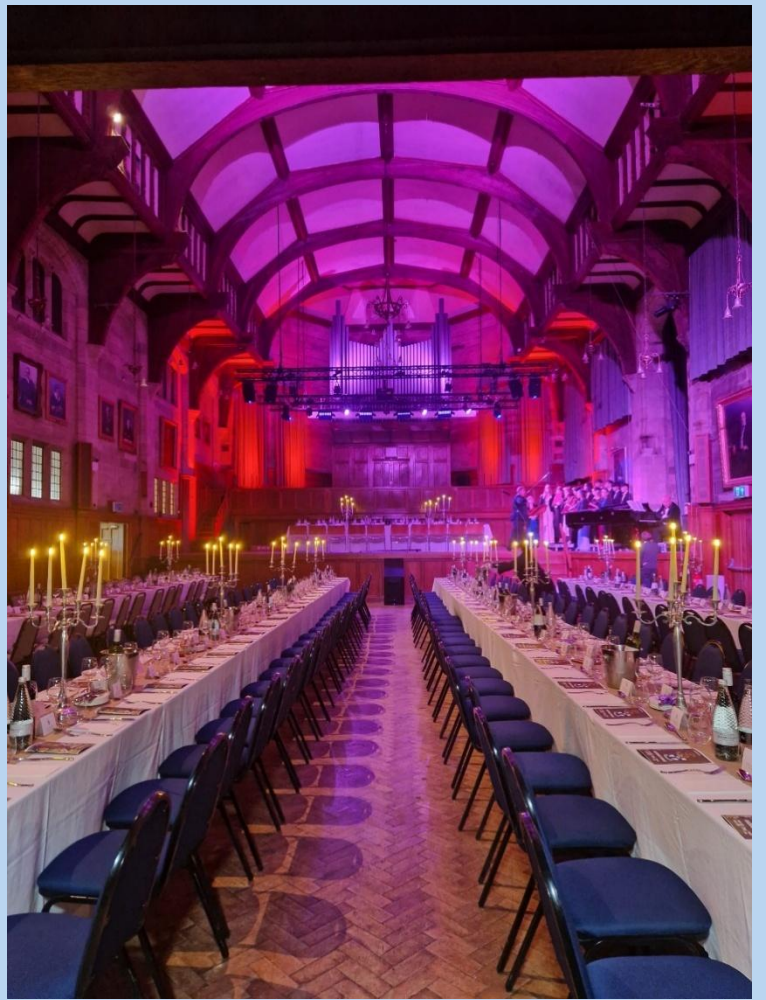
The trip began with an early 7:30 a.m. ferry crossing, followed by a visit to Anfield Stadium before settling into the hotel for the evening. On Friday night, 23 members of our Senior Panel, along with coaches, College management, and parents, attended a gala dinner at Sedbergh School. Both principals, **Ms. Markey** and **Mr. Harrison**, spoke eloquently about the enduring friendship between Blackrock and Sedbergh, and the shared educational values that unite them.

Saturday saw an early start as the first four matches kicked off at 11:30 a.m., followed by the next four at 12:45 p.m., culminating in the showcase fixture: Sedbergh School 1st XV vs Blackrock College 1st XV.

It was a truly memorable weekend — filled with competitive spirit, mutual respect, and lasting memories. With eight of our nine teams victorious, and countless friendships forged, the trip perfectly captured the spirit of sport, connection, and celebration that both schools hold dear.







Rowing

We are delighted to announce that **Jack Tuite** has been selected to represent Ireland at the **2025 Coupe Beach Sprint Regatta** in Cádiz, Spain, taking place from October 30th to November 2nd.

This prestigious international event brings together Europe's top junior rowers to compete in the fast-paced and dynamic discipline of Beach Sprint Rowing, which tests athletes' skill, endurance, and speed both on land and water.

Jack, who rows with **Neptune Rowing Club**, will join a talented team of junior athletes from across Ireland as they take on elite competitors from all over Europe.

We are incredibly proud of Jack's outstanding achievement and wish him — and the entire Irish team — the best of luck as they represent their country on the international stage.

Gaelic Football

Blackrock College recorded an impressive victory over **St. Mac Dara's** on a scoreline of 4-11 to 1-8 in their latest group game. The match began evenly, with both sides exchanging scores throughout the first half. Blackrock's only goal before the break came from **Ciaran Roche**, leaving the team narrowly trailing 1-5 to 1-6 at halftime.

The second half continued in a tightly contested fashion, with both teams battling hard for possession and territory. However, in the final ten minutes, Blackrock showed their class and composure to pull away. **Tom White** fired home a superb goal to give the team momentum before **William Davy** struck twice in quick succession to seal the win.

In defence, **Brody O'Reilly**, **Hugo Ryan**, and **Daniel Sheeran** were outstanding, cutting out several dangerous attacks and driving the team forward from the back. This robust performance gives Blackrock great confidence heading into their next two group fixtures against **St. Declan's** Cabra and **Clonkeen College** after the midterm break.

Senior Soccer

The Senior Soccer Team have begun the defence of their **FAI Schools Leinster Cup** title in fine form, recording two impressive away victories.

The campaign kicked off with a preliminary-round fixture against **Blessington Community College**. While the 4–0 scoreline may flatter slightly, the contest was far more competitive than it suggests. The team showed real quality and composure, opening the scoring after just two minutes and adding further goals early in the second half before sealing the win late on as Blessington pressed for a reply.

In the first-round, 'Rock faced a spirited **St. Michael's College** side. An early strike from **Sam Long** (6th Year) gave us the lead, but St. Michael's levelled from the penalty spot in the 38th minute. The response was immediate — **Jack Kelly** (6th Year) restored our advantage before **Long** struck again to make it 3–1 at half-time. Two quick goals after the break put the result beyond doubt, though St. Michael's rallied late to narrow the gap, with Blackrock emerging 5–3 winners after an entertaining encounter.

The squad now look ahead to their next challenge — an away trip to **CBS Kilkenny** after the midterm break — eager to maintain their momentum and continue their strong title defence.

Sailing

Well done to **Jacob Browne (2nd Yr)** for participating in the **Topper World Championships** in Holland in July 2025.



U16 Badminton Team

The **U16 Badminton Squad** produced an excellent performance last Thursday, recording a commanding **6–0 victory** at home against **Sandford Park**. From the very first serve, the team showed focus, determination, and composure, never allowing the visitors to settle into the match.

The quartet of **Dylan Cao, Harry Spencer, James Farrell, and Henry Hu (2nd Year)** worked superbly together, each securing convincing wins in both singles and doubles. Their consistency, communication, and energy on court proved decisive throughout.

It was a fantastic way to open the season, and the boys will be eager to build on this strong start as they prepare for their next fixture.



Basketball

The U16 squad continued their fine form with two impressive league victories.

In their opening game against **St Conleth's**, 'Rock built a solid 23–15 halftime lead. Despite a late surge from the opposition, Blackrock's early dominance proved enough to secure a 42–38 win.

The week's highlight came in a thrilling clash with **St. Kilian's**. A well-drilled opponent kept 'Rock under pressure, but with 40 seconds remaining, **Tom O'Brien** sank a crucial three-pointer to level the game and force overtime. Showing great composure and determination, the team took control in extra time to claim a dramatic 48–45 victory.

Sergio Martinez (50 points), **Tom O'Brien** (13), **David Freeman** (12), and **Denis Lucey** (11) led the scoring across both games, while **Ed Lynch** and **Patrick Burns** impressed with their strong defensive play.

Under 14A's v St Michael's



Junior 3rds - 5ths Roundup

The **Junior 3rds** enjoyed a fantastic trip to **Sedbergh** over the weekend of Friday, 10th October, producing a thrilling performance against Sedbergh's U15B side.

Led superbly by captain **Peter Donnelly**, the team started strongly, taking a 12-0 lead into halftime. Sedbergh responded quickly after the break, closing the gap to 12-7, but a second maul try restored 'Rock's advantage at 19-7. The hosts rallied once more to make it 19-14, setting up a tense final ten minutes.

A superb defensive effort saw the J3s hold firm to claim a well-deserved victory at the final whistle.

The team now look ahead to their upcoming fixtures on **Wednesday, 22nd October**:

- **J5s vs Gonzaga (Away)**
- **J4s vs The High School (Home)**
- **J3s vs St. Michael's (Home)**



Don't forget – Mark Your Calendars!

Monday, October 27th to Friday October 31st

Mid-term Break



Monday, November 3rd

Child Protection Training Day - **Class Suspended**

Wednesday, November 5th

Transition Year Tours (a.m.)

Thursday, November 6th

Mass of Remembrance (6.15pm)

CAO talk for parents of 6th Year (7pm)

Monday, November 11th to Friday, November 14th

Science Week

Thursday, November 13th

Leman Auditions

Thursday, November 13th

2 Year Family Mass (6.15 pm)