

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER



Happy Holidays

2nd June 2023 Issue #8

## End of Year Message

### Principal John Maddock

Dear students, parents & guardians,

I hope this message finds you well and that you are enjoying the start of the well-deserved summer holidays! I'd also like to take this opportunity to wish our third year students the very best of luck in their June exams - you have worked hard now all year

and are very well prepared, so go in there and take it as an opportunity to show off everything you have learned in secondary school!

Looking back on this academic year now really fills me with pride in seeing how all members of our school community have come together following the sudden and untimely passing of our late principal Colm. It has been truly inspiring to see student growth, resilience and achievement despite such a difficult start to the year. Indeed Colm's memory lives on through the students he has inspired in the school and it has been truly remarkable to see the continued growth of his Model United Nations and Debating initiatives, which is a real testament to Colm's legacy.

This academic year has also seen a number of firsts, which have marked important milestones in the development of our school, our first Junior Cycle results, our ever first transition year group who staged our school's first ever musical! We have had growing sporting success this year with wins in soccer, basketball and volleyball.

- Continued pg.3

## Board of Management

We would like to thank all in the school community for such a busy and productive (and fun) school year. We have finished our first Transition Year, which was capped off with three sold out nights of "Beauty and The Beast" and our first Transition Year graduation evening.

The Board of Management would like to report to you on our efforts to secure a permanent home for our school. We have been canvassing local councillors and TDs expressing our deep concern that we do not yet have a site purchased for us.

John Maddock and the Chair met with Minister Stephen Donnelly TD and Minister Simon Harris TD to seek their assistance in pressurising Norma Foley and the Department of Education to make progress. John also met TDs Steven Matthews, Jennifer Whitmore and John Brady to gain their support. John, Mildred Fox, Eilish Fanning and I also met with County Councillors from the Wicklow town area in the County Buildings.

Educate Together (including the CEO Emer Nowlan) have also been meeting with the Department of Education in recent weeks regarding our position. Thus, while we don't have definitive news to report, I am hopeful we will hear good news soon. This time last year 11 Educate Together 2nd Level schools did not have a site, now there is only Wicklow. So some progress is being made. In the meantime I would urge all parents/guardians in the school community to make as much noise as possible with their local councillors and TDs- in a democracy your vote matters to them!

Finally the Board of Management would like to thank all the teachers, SNAs- all staff- for making the 2022-23 school year such a success. We would especially like to thank John and Shauna for stepping up and shouldering a huge responsibility a year ago. All in the school should pat themselves on the back for the work done.

Danny Haskins  
Chair, Board of Management

## Creative Schools Project

For the past two years, ETSS were fortunate enough to have been granted funding and a Creative Associate as part of the Creative Schools Initiative with the Arts Council. Helen Flanagan, our Creative Associate, worked with Amanda and our school community to devise a Creative Schools plan, which meant that each subject area could develop their creative approaches to teaching and learning, and that we could all partake in a creative project.

We decided to plan a project in memory to our late principal, Colm. We designed two large scale paintings inspired by our local area and English literature, which we're sure Colm would have very much enjoyed. Two quotes from Seamus Heaney and James Joyce are included in the murals - an homage to Colm's choice of names for his first classes in the school, Heaney and Joyce. The paintings are vibrant, fun and moving - a huge thank you to artist in residence Aisling Corcoran for helping us to capture the spirit of ETSS Wicklow so effectively.

Helen has also worked with a documentary team, who filmed and photographed all the artistic processes along the way. This final documentary was presented to the Arts Council as part of a Creative Schools assembly in Richmond Barracks in May. Needless to say, our presenters Sonny, Katie and Hannah gave an excellent

presentation of our project and left quite the impression on behalf of our school.

Amanda would like to thank all students and staff who got involved in the project. Hard work pays off and we are so delighted to have these beautiful paintings for years to come.



Mural designed in memory of our late Principal, Colm Kehoe

### Maths Centre

In January 2023, our maths department set up a Maths Support Centre here at ETSS Wicklow. This is a free service in which students are provided with extra guidance in maths. It is open to students of all abilities in all year groups. The sessions run every Wednesday from 1:15pm – 2:15pm and have been a huge success this year. We look forward to re-opening our Maths Support Centre in September 2023!



***The Maths Centre having a blast!***

### Astro-Pi Project

In October this year, 4 groups of 1st and 2nd years embarked on a coding challenge known as Astro Pi Mission Space Lab. This challenge offers teams of students the chance to have their experiments run on board the ISS. Phase 1 of this competition was for students to design and enter an experiment that focuses on either life on earth or life in space. Of the four groups we entered, two groups progressed to Phase 2. Each team that progresses to Phase 2 receives an Astro Pi kit (a small computer with a set of sensors). Students use these devices to code their experiment.

This was a long, difficult process and students spent many evenings creating, testing and editing their code with the help of teachers Ali and Patrick. Of the two teams that reached Phase 2, one of our teams' experiments received 'flight status' and their experiment will now be run on the ISS. The team was made up of 2nd years Rosie Anderson, Katelyn Byrne and Ioana Bosneaga. The next phase of this programme will begin early in the next school year when students will receive the results from their experiment and can analyse and write their final reports.

### Educate Together Debating Final

ETSS Wicklow's late principal Colm had a wealth of experience from his work in education in Ireland and abroad, but he also had a great passion for debating which led to the creation of the first all-Ireland Educate Together debating competition. He really loved to inspire young people to take an interest in the world around them and fostered student voice that saw students grow in confidence because of their participation in the competition.

In his memory, ETSS Wicklow continued to grow and build this wonderful educational opportunity with the same kindness, generosity, passion and professionalism that he did. So, on Monday 24th of April all Educate Together students came together for the first in-person debating final at ETSS Wicklow, debating the interesting motion 'Cancel Culture is Beneficial for Society'. Congratulations to Galway ETSS who narrowly after some tough debates secured victory over Clogher Road.



***Amazing scene at the Educate Together Debating Final***

### STEAM Event

1st year students exhibited their STE(A)M projects at the JCT pilot programme for STE(A)M in Tullamore. STEAM education is an interdisciplinary approach to learning that combines science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

Students designed hypothetical prototypes to address climate action in ETSSW. We are very proud of our 1st year students Marty, Vyga, Brigid, June and Odhrán who represented our school at the stand and addressed the conference with their views and ideas at the conference with Alicia, Amy and Amanda.



***ETSS Wicklow Making waves at the National STEAM event***





## Wicklow Library Visit

Wicklow library provided a warm welcome to our first-year students in a series of visits over the winter term. Librarian Loretta Rose and Archivist Gerlanda Maniglia brought the students on a tour of their fantastic local library highlighting its many facilities such as computer access, group study rooms and research facilities. Not to mention the extensive collection of fiction and nonfiction book suitable for their age.

A quick trip to the reading room, with beautiful views over Wicklow Bay, was followed by an examination of the replica of the Book of Kells and a visit to the gallery and exhibition space. Then it was down to the local studies hub where the students were given a tour of the local studies collection and were invited to return to carry out research for their history projects. All of the students were encouraged to join the library online which will give them access to the physical books in the library as well as eBooks and other resources online.



## Spanish Exchange 2023

Wednesday 10th March 2023, the very first international, full-immersion language exchange happened at ETSS Wicklow and we welcomed a group of 18 students and 2 teachers from Institut Nicolau Copèrnic in Terrassa, Barcelona, for one week.

This exchange was organised by our resident Spanish teacher Sheena Roche, in collaboration with the coordinators in Barcelona, Àngels Matarin and Gemma Vidal, who undertook a trojan amount of work to make this exchange happen for all students.

A big thanks also to our principal John Maddock, to Emma Clarke, a key parent who put our schools in contact, to Chris and Anthea Lang at Squirrel Scramble adventure centre, Bray, to all the facilitators in both schools and to all the parents and families for being an integral part of this hugely successful and exciting project!



*The Spanish Exchange group of 2023*

## Erasmus French Trip

As part of the Erasmus plus programme, forty-four French students and four teachers from Collège Adam de la Halle in Archiduc Northern France, visited ETSS Wicklow on Tuesday 14th of March. Students spent the day attending classes, playing sports and went on a trip to the historic Glendalough. ETSS Wicklow's French students really enjoyed having the opportunity to practice their French and showing our visitors around their school. As well as introducing them to Irish culture, they also had the opportunity to experience Irish food and dance. Our students are looking forward to continuing their friendships through the penpal program set up by ETSSW's French department.

*-Continued from pg. 1* STEM is really thriving in the school through our partnership with the UCD school of Mathematics and Statistics, our Maths Support Centre, involvement in the BT Young Scientist, and national JCT STE(A)M initiative. The Arts also continue to grow in the school through our Creative Schools project, our first ever Erasmus language exchange, and new literacy initiatives in the school. Following such a busy and exciting year for the school community, the foundations have further been built upon to ensure the continued growth and success of ETSS Wicklow in the coming years.

*Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to our dedicated teachers, SNAs, support staff and parent volunteers. Your commitment to our students' education and well-being is truly commendable. I believe that together we have created a vibrant and nurturing learning environment and I am confident that the school is set now to continue to grow in this regard.*

*On behalf of the entire school community, I wish you all a safe, enjoyable, and fulfilling summer break. May it be a time of relaxation, exploration and personal growth.*

*-Acting Principal John Maddock*

## Model United Nations 2023 A Huge Success

After months of hard work and preparation, the day finally arrived for WICKMUN 2023 – in-person! ETSS Wicklow's late principal Colm Kehoe had great ambitions for the future of a youth MUN event in Wicklow. He had established 'WICKMUN' within months of opening a brand-new school and under his leadership WICKMUN 2020 not only survived the COVID pandemic but thrived in an online setting created by Colm (a first at the time!) so that students could still connect nationally despite the global pandemic.

MUN in a nutshell allows students from schools across Ireland to roleplay delegates from UN member states and simulate committees where current issues are debated. The benefit for students is clear, as it provides an opportunity to develop and use real world skills such as; research, drafting, critical thinking, teamwork, deliberation, negotiation, conflict resolution, leadership skills and make new connections.

WICKMUN took place from Friday 21st – Saturday 22nd April with 18 schools, 25 delegations, 16 chairs, 19 advisors and 156 delegates; it was a really huge conference. Of course, a big well done to the student team who led this conference brilliantly behind the scenes – Secretary General Hannah O' Callaghan, Deputy Secretary General Lenna Smith, Bobby Connolly Head of Press, Admin and Media, Caleb Gunn our Head of Security and Eoin Edwards the Conference Manager. Simon Harris, the minister of Justice opened the event on Friday discussing Colm's great contributions and minister Jennifer Whitmore spoke about Gender equality on the 2nd day of the event. Every delegate deserves great praise for producing an opening speech, creating a resolution, developing a policy statement and researching issues on the agenda from the points of view of their countries so that they could properly represent them at the conference.

Colm's contribution to ETSS Wicklow and the Educate Together Ethos is immeasurable. He put his school on the map for many reasons. It is a real testament to Colm's passion for MUN and his commitment to student-centred learning, to see his students continue his vision for 'WICKMUN' & the Educate Together Debating competition. As we finish another academic year we hope that students and staff of ETSS Wicklow have made Colm proud, as we know that hosting this conference and the continuance of his debating competition was a great dream of his which we hope will continue to inspire future generations.

## RockMUN Fun!

This year I went to a MUN conference in Blackrock College and had a really good time. Some people might not know what MUN is and what they are missing! A Model United Nations conference is a meeting of students from different schools. Each school is assigned to one or more delegations (countries) and each person in the same delegation is sent to a different room called a committee. Each committee is specialized in one topic, where debates take place.

However, debating is not the only thing that you do in a MUN conference. There is the General Assembly (GA) where you are with your delegation, then in the committees, you make friends from different schools. I'm a Spanish student and I had never experienced anything like this before. At first, I was scared, which is normal if it's your first time, but now I'm very proud of myself and I encourage you to join the MUN group in order to experience new things and have fun!

Vega Quetglas TY1



Minister Simon Harris with WICKMUN  
Secretary General Hannah O'Callaghan



General Assembly



The Press/Media Team working hard!



Minister Simon Harris giving a speech  
at the opening ceremony



### Tickets to Success

This year we launched a new initiative called 'The Ticket to Success' which recognises students hard work in school and gives them a chance to win some fantastic prizes (as chosen by students) each term like Apple AirPods, Apple Pencils, Dundrum Vouchers, One4All Vouchers, Sports Direct Vouchers or Homework Passes. This has been a huge success with students and is something that we will keep going next year.

Here is what 2nd Year student Bobby Connolly had to say about it; "The Ticket to Success initiative is fantastic and the potential for awards creates a positive take on school life in general as there are many super prizes up for grabs. I personally really enjoy Ticket to Success and hope the school will keep this amazing initiative up and running for the future."



*Students enjoying Problem Week!*



*Our Tickets To Success winners with their prizes!*



*D.E.A.R - Drop Everything And Read*

### Whole School Literacy & Numeracy Plan

We have some exciting and innovative literacy initiatives happening in the school this year including DEAR time, book club at lunch time, and book week to promote reading for pleasure amongst our student body. All teachers in the school are referring to Junior Cycle Action Verbs in their subjects to help students increase their vocabulary and experience greater success in exams. Students are also being encouraged to develop their editing skills for writing with the use of the 'Proof Reading Wheel' in their journals in classes throughout the day.

This term, our maths department launched an exciting 'Problem of the Week' initiative that is run through tutorial time to help students develop their problem-solving skills. We have also adopted a universal approach to teaching different concepts that appear in many subjects, for example, using SALT (Scale, Axis, Label, Title) for graphs and timelines. Teachers are highlighting numeracy moments in their subjects to help students develop their understanding of key numeracy vocabulary and experience greater success in this area.

Our afterschool 'Maths Support Centre' on Wednesdays has also been a great success and is very popular with students who want extra support in this area.

### Advisory Board of Studies

The Advisory Board of Studies continues its work in maintaining high academic standards within the school through the promotion of innovative teaching and learning strategies. Over the last few years, the focus has been on literacy and numeracy. This focus can be seen in various initiatives in the school such as DEAR (Drop Everything and Read), the establishment of book clubs and library visits, book week and the school's active participation in national events, such as Maths week.

Future initiatives will include the use of keyword notebooks to aid students in revision and reflecting on their own learning. Self correction wheel so students can check their own work before submitting it for assessment. More Peer Observation Weeks (POW) are scheduled for next year, where teachers take the opportunity to visit each other's classes and share insights on teaching methodologies.

2023-2024 looks to be yet another great year for teaching and learning at our school.



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### Green Schools

We are very proud to officially have a Green Schools committee in ETSSW! This committee is dedicated to making the school more environmentally friendly by doing things such as purchasing a compost bin and organising regular litter cleaning sessions. The Green Schools committee hopes to receive our first Green Schools Flag sometime soon! Special thanks to Ali and Mikaela for helping us work towards our goals.



*School Clean-up by our TYs*

### Tag Rugby

For the first time, the students in ETSS Wicklow got the opportunity to play on a tag team together. Both boys and girls are welcome to play tag once a week out in the fresh air. There has been a mixture of all years participating, with 20 students getting involved last Friday. There are great hopes to get a team and a tournament going at the beginning of the next school year. With three weeks left, I hope to see more students getting involved before the Summer Holidays begin.

### Basketball

As the months have passed, our Basketball team has grown in size and ability. We have now entered the U14 leagues for both boys and girls, with both teams having played their first matches.

The boys fought Clonkeen College on the 3rd of February and despite the loss, the boys played better than they ever had. A special mention goes to the three first-year boys who played their first-ever match- Shaheen Mohamed, Alvaro Garrido Villesante, and Bill Lawless. Coaches Lucy and Jess awarded Shaheen Mohamed 'Man of the Match'. Our girls' team played a tournament against St Mary's

Arklow and DCW on the 8th of February. They suffered a defeat but proved themselves to be a solid team who worked well together. A special mention must go out to Ioana Bosneaga, Katelyn Byrne and Urte Matuseviciute who were recruited the day before and went onto the court having never played before! Well done to all of the players- you have done us proud!



### TY Mindfulness Workshop

It was with great pleasure that I recently found myself going back to school (after a 41-year gap!) when I joined my colleague Bronagh Hanna, to provide a workshop introducing "Koru Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Skills" to the two groups of TY students at ETSSW. Mindfulness is simply our innate ability to pay attention to our experience, as it happens, in the present moment and importantly, with an attitude of kindly curiosity. Koru Mindfulness which was originally developed at Duke University in the US provides an accessible and meaningful way to introduce college students to the many benefits of Mindfulness practice. The exercises support brain health in the same way that physical exercise supports the health of the body overall.

The Koru programme has been successfully adapted to meet the needs of senior students in High Schools in the US. Research shows that participating in Koru helps students feel less stressed, reduces self-criticism and improves both sleep and concentration. These skills are especially valuable for TY students with the 2 years leading up to the Leaving Cert. exams just around the corner. Jean Lynch- Counselling Psychologist ( Reg. Psychol. PSsI)



TY Graduation 2023

TY Trip to Avondale







# ETSS Wicklow

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### A Visit from a Feathery Friend!

The Hyde Class got a special visit from a feathery friend! This is Bluebell and she is a budgie, that I was able to breed after many failed attempts at breeding my budgies. I was finally able to breed them successfully and they were able to produce 3 healthy baby budgies. I had the honour of being able to bring Bluebell into school for my English CBA since I was doing it on my birds.



### Awards Day

ETSS Wicklow held its annual 'Awards Day' on Tuesday 30th May. There were awards given out by each subject department. Teachers from each department would nominate students that have shown several qualities in each subject throughout the year, but there was one student that was picked overall. There was a 'Student of the Year' and 'School Spirit Award'. There were unique awards given out to well deserving students such as 'Best Attendance' award and the 'Most Participative Student in School Events' award. Parents/Guardians of award-winning students were also invited to watch the awards ceremony. A big congratulations to all of those who won awards!



### TY Musical – Beauty & The Beast

It was with great excitement that ETSS Wicklow's Transition year students welcomed 350 guests over three nights to their production of "Beauty and the Beast"! They had been looking forward to this day for many months, and it was clear that the production team Shauna, Sheena, Cian and Amanda didn't fail to deliver in the staging of ETSS Wicklow's first ever musical! Putting on a show is no easy feat and requires a tremendous amount of effort, from the actors to the crew to the directors and designers. Each of the students put in countless hours of rehearsal, design and planning and this was evident from the standing ovation each evening.

Principal John Maddock reminded students of the impact that their work can have on their school community and that the production of the TY musical is the result of the efforts of many students and teachers working together toward a common goal. The success of the production would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the teachers and students. They worked long hours behind the scenes. From the set design to the costumes to the artwork, and the amazing set. The bringing of "Beauty and the Beast" to life on stage was a great achievement for the students, school and parents – Well done!



### Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator

Ceire Hatton was appointed as the new Home School Community Liaison Coordinator in September. Her role in the school is to work with the parents/guardians, along with the teachers and the wider community to enhance each student's learning opportunities and to promote attendance, participation and retention. Her job involves making home visits to help and offer support around any issues that may impinge on a child's reaching their full potential.

She has also been busy organising personal, leisure and academic classes, events for parents in the school to encourage a more active role in their child's education. Parents/Guardians are always encouraged to be part of the decision making in ETSS Wicklow and we would encourage you to become involved in our PSA so your voice can be heard and to be part of the policy formation in the school. Coffee mornings in September provided a great opportunity to work with staff in focus groups and discuss possible links between the home and school. Christmas and December saw parents taking part in wonderful wreath making classes that fostered these bonds between home and school. A six week parent operation challenge in January gave parents the opportunity to focus on their health and well-being.. Whereas 'One Book One Community' in March focused on Literacy. Ceire is looking forward to meeting you all at some great parent events and initiatives next year.



### Messages from our Year Heads



#### Sarah Hayward 1st Year

Congratulations 1st years on completing your first year here with us in ETSS Wicklow. It really has flown by and seems like only yesterday we were planning for your arrival- our 1st Year Group of 2022/2023. Thank you for all of your hard work, your positive attitude, your commitment and for really immersing yourselves into the spirit of ETSS Wicklow; making our school a better place to be a part of.

Parents and guardians, a sincere thank you for all of the support over the past year- from the weekly journal signing to ensuring they arrive to school on time and regular communication in between- you have been crucial to their successful transition into secondary school.

I'm really looking forward to working with you all again next year, hearing about what exciting things you got up to over the holidays and supporting you to have a successful transition into second year. In the meantime, wishing you all a wonderful summer- make sure you get out into that sunshine and have some lovely experiences- spend time with your friends and family, do some reading, or pick up a new hobby. Thank you, Sarah

#### Craig Ledwith – 2nd Year

As the days get longer and the sweet scent of summer fills the air, a little message to everyone as school becomes a distant memory for the next few months.

To my 2nd years – Congratulations on successfully completing another academic year. This year you all demonstrated resilience, determination and personal growth as you faced fresh challenges such as tougher exams and the introduction of CBAs. Take a moment to reflect on your achievements and be proud of how far you have come.

It's now time to recharge the batteries and relax during your well-earned break. Summer offers a plethora of opportunities for adventure, friendship and personal growth. Whether you're off on a foreign adventure, delving into a new book or getting stuck into hobbies old and new, make sure to make the most of these precious moments. Before you set off on your summer adventures, please take a moment to thank your incredible teachers, SNAs, staff and classmates at ETSS Wicklow. Their unwavering dedication and support have made this school year such a remarkable one.

Wishing you a summer filled with joy, laughter, and unforgettable memories. Enjoy the sunshine, embrace new adventures, and return to us healthy, rejuvenated and ready to conquer new heights.



#### Jake Firman – 3rd Year & TY



It has been a fantastic year in school, one that I have thoroughly enjoyed and cherished as the 3rd Year and TY Year Head. It humbles me to have witnessed such growth and development over the last 9 months. All of you are a credit to the school and your families and my only hope is that this upward trend is continued for many years to come.

To the 3rd year students who are sitting their Junior Cycle examinations, go n-éirí an t-ádh libh, I'm confident that you will reap the rewards of the tremendous effort you have put in over the last number of months in school. Use your summertime

wisely and be ready for the unique opportunities and challenges that TY will present to you.

To the TY's, who will return in September as the very first set of Leaving Certificate students, the very best of luck. You are a unique cohort of students, who have been blessed with the opportunity and responsibility of shaping our school. Continue to use that opportunity wisely. Be the best role models you can be to those who are coming behind you. Set a precedent for years to come and create a legacy to be proud of!

To John, Shauna, and the teaching cohort of 2022/23, Bon Voyage Amigos, Feicfidh mé sibh go luath!