



DOMINICAN COLLEGE SION HILL

NEWSLETTER - EASTER 2025

Welcome from the Principal

As we approach the end of another vibrant term at Dominican College Sion Hill, I am delighted to welcome you to the latest edition of our school newsletter. This publication offers a window into the life of our school - a life that is rich in learning, creativity, compassion and community. As a school in the Dominican tradition, we remain deeply committed to the holistic development of each student, nurturing not only academic excellence but also personal growth, faith, and a sense of social responsibility.

The wide range of activities and achievements featured in this newsletter is a true reflection of our Dominican ethos - encouraging students to explore their talents, think critically, serve others, and grow into confident, capable young citizens. From the arts and sciences to sport, community engagement, and spiritual development, our students continue to embrace every opportunity with enthusiasm and heart.

These opportunities would not be possible without the tireless dedication of our exceptional staff. Their commitment to nurturing each student's potential, both inside and outside the classroom, is the foundation on which our school thrives. Equally, the support of you, the parents and guardians, plays a vital role in the success of Sion Hill.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish our Leaving Certificate students every success as they prepare for and undertake their oral examinations over the Easter break. We are proud of the determination and focus they have shown, and we will continue to support them every step of the way.

Warm regards,

Orla Condren

Principal



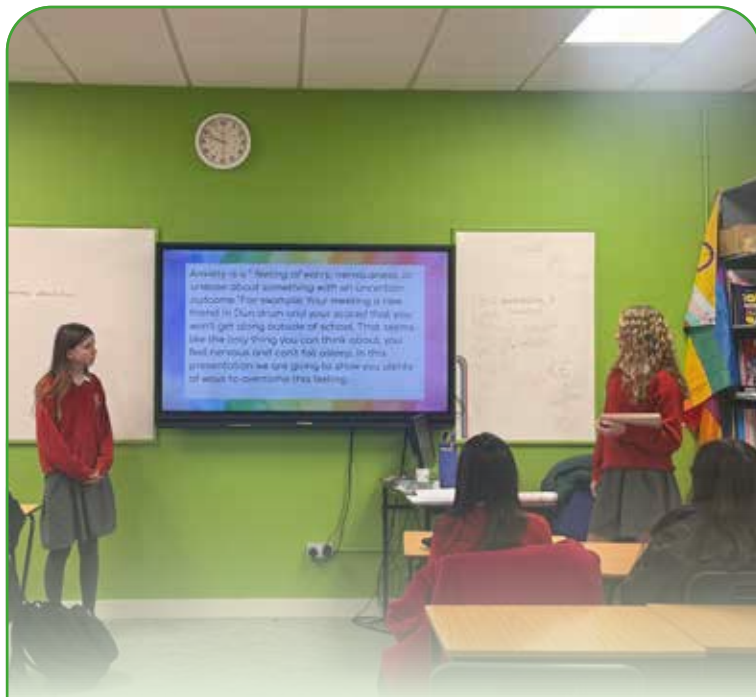
Webwise April 2025

My name is Sarah Davitt and my friend Kayla and I are on a Web Wise Youth Advisory panel. We got this opportunity from our year head Ms Kaye. I thought it would be a great opportunity and it is. On this panel we discuss issues relating to internet safety. The panel is made up of students from the ages of 13- 25. On this panel we have meetings in person and online. Through the panel, I have had the opportunity to talk at Google, Microsoft and speak on Classic Hits FM. Most recently I have been asked to talk on a panel in DCU for the department of education and primary school teachers on internet safety. I am on this panel with leading experts in the field of cyber and internet safety including James O'Higgins Norman (DCU Anti-Bullying Centre), Elizabeth Milovidov (Parent Expert) and many more. On this panel I discuss what it is like being a teen online and what teachers and other working in education can do to help with teaching kids about being safe online. I love being on the youth panellist and I think it is a great opportunity everyone should do. I am grateful that the school has given me this opportunity. (Sarah, 2nd Year)



Dominican College Sion Hill aims to help each student achieve their full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy secure environment.





SPHE CBAs Report

2nd years began 2025 with great success in their SPHE CBAs. 2nd years took action on an element of SPHE they felt passionate about, to promote and raise awareness in the school community. This involved raising money in-house for all students to be able to access free and available period products in all of our school bathrooms, raising awareness for mental health by teaching lessons to other year groups to help them understand their own mental health, and various bake sales to raise awareness and money for charity across the topics of identity, mental health, basic needs for housing amongst others. 2nd year students went above and beyond in their CBAs and it is great to see such a strong sense of initiative and kindness in our community.



Badminton

Badminton has been a huge success this year. This term got off to a great start in January, when our U19 team won their semi-final against old badminton rivals Mount Anville. A close game ended in a 3 all tie, with Sion Hill coming out on top with more points on the board. This meant the team were through to the U19 division 3 Dublin Schools Badminton league final. The team knew it would be a battle, losing to Loreto Foxrock 4-2 back in November. After a brilliant 3-3 battle Sion Hill won, bringing silverware home with them. As a result of winning Dublin, the team represented the county in the Leinster competition in Baldoyle, placing a respectable 3rd on the day. Team: Levina D'Silva, Sree Gade Lekha, Avishi Singhal, Jane Crowley, Jamima Lozada and Dhruvi Mehta.

2nd and 3rd year badminton training continued for this term. It was great to see so many students involved, developing their skills and getting to know new people. Training is now done for this year, and will hopefully expand even further next year. Huge thanks to Ms. Hudson for establishing the Badminton team and taking it from strength to strength this year.



From the Arts Committee

There has been plenty of music around the school recently with the Junior and Leaving Cert practicals and our recent TY talent show. Recently announced to the whole school is our upcoming musical, *Oliver!* Based on the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, the story is set in 1830's London. It's all about this young orphan named Oliver, who lives in a workhouse. He escapes to London and finds acceptance within a group of petty thieves and pickpockets led by the elderly Fagin. Students were excited to hear the news, very cleverly told in riddle form by Ms. Wallace. Auditions will be taking place soon. Good luck to everyone planning on participating, whether on or off stage, "you've got to pick a pocket or two!" (Aoibhe, 5th Years)



Art Practical

Art has featured prominently around Sion Hill recently with Junior and Leaving Cert practicals and 2nd Year Art CBAs all happening in the last few weeks. If you take a walk around the school you will see an abundance of examples of student artwork displayed in many different forms. Not only in Art Class and the Art Club, but in the many poster design competitions that are organised, including the current poster competition to celebrate Autism Awareness Month. You can see a selection of the Junior Cycle practical pieces here as well as some of the 2nd Year Block Prints, before they are shipped off to the Louvre!

From the Mind, Body & Soul Committee

This year, our committee has been dedicated to fostering well-being and positivity within our school. Early in the year, we kicked off with our PositivaTEA event, where students enjoyed a range of tea flavors alongside a fun taste testing competition featuring delicious chocolate treats as rewards. Now, we are excited to mention our upcoming Darkness into Light walk later on this year, on the 10th of May. This walk provides an opportunity for people to connect with their local community and to bring hope to people who have been impacted by suicide. This special gathering symbolises hope, resilience, and growth, bringing our school community together for an inspiring experience. (Fiorella, 5th Year)



Transition Year

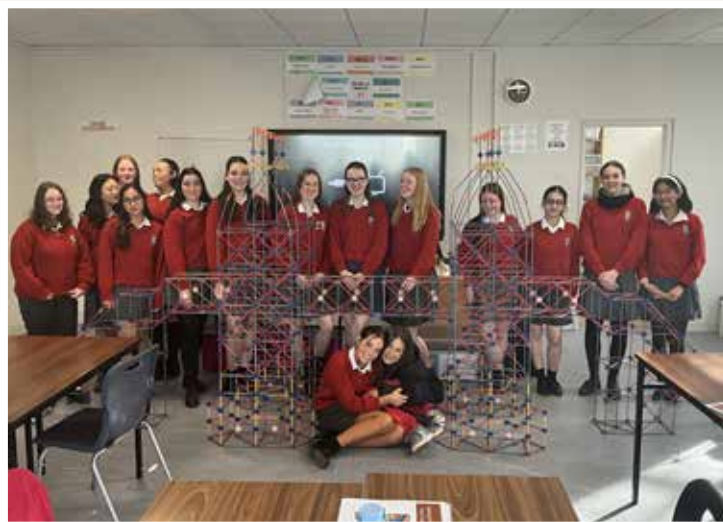
The TY students have had another busy term, filled with activities both in and out of the classroom!

WORK EXPERIENCE

The TY students got involved in various job placements for two weeks in February that helped them gain better insights of the work environment. These placements allowed them to observe professional practices and improve their skills such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and more. The fantastic experience helped them to gain a clearer sense of their own strengths and interests, allowing them to make more informed decisions about their future career paths.

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

The TY's got involved in many different activities this term. They started the term off with a CPR workshop and a yoga class. On the 3rd of March they participated in the 'Develop Me' workshop. This entailed games and team building exercises. It helped them to learn how to work together as a team and communicate well with others, both very valuable skills to learn. The TY's then participated in the 'Soar' workshop. This was a wellbeing workshop designed



to give them a space to talk openly with peers, and gain a better understanding of the challenges young people face. On the 26th of March they participated in a Robotics workshop. They built and programmed a small robot which many students found very fun and interesting. A group of students studying German went to the IFI to watch a German film.

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

On the 10th of January the TY students made their way to the RDS for the Young Scientist Exhibition. They spent time at various presentations and participated in the events that were available at many stalls dotted throughout the exhibition hall. There were many activities to take part in, ranging from playing with a laser harp to collecting as many plastic balls as possible while being in a vertical wind tunnel. The experience was incredibly eye-opening as it gave many people fleshed out ideas about different careers and opportunities.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Sion Hill welcomed three guest speakers working in the pharmaceutical company Pfizer on Thursday the 27th of March to give a talk to the senior years. The talk was very informative as well as enjoyable and was a great opportunity



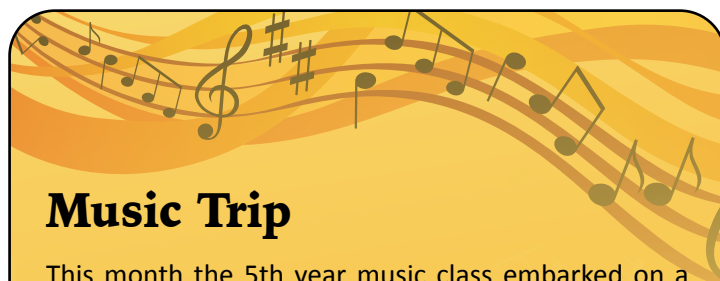
for the students to think about life after school. The speakers each had different stories about how their paths ended up in Pfizer, from being on a gap year in Australia to working as an engineer from the USA, each of them had a unique story to tell us. It was all extremely interesting and gave everyone a new insight on how three people who studied completely different things in university all ended up working for the same company.

VOLUNTEERING

On Friday the 28th of March we took a trip into the city centre to help raise money for the annual Daffodil Day event in connection with the Irish Cancer Society.. We met at Molesworth hall to get our buckets and pins to sell. We all got assigned to different locations and met many generous and interesting people throughout the day.

DELPHI

On Sunday, March 30th, TY's arrived at Heuston Station at 7.30am to get the train to Delphi. On arrival they got straight into the first activities - Bog jumping, Orienteering, Kayaking and Ariel Trek. The activities were very enjoyable and everyone had a ball. The weather was fortunately warm and dry, and even the teachers participated in some of the muddier activities! The evenings were filled with nature walks and finally the group came together at the campfire for toasting marshmallows, singing songs and playing games. The whole trip was a fantastic success!

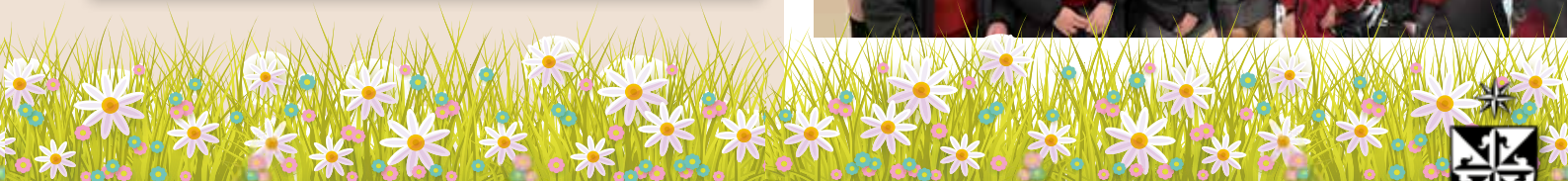


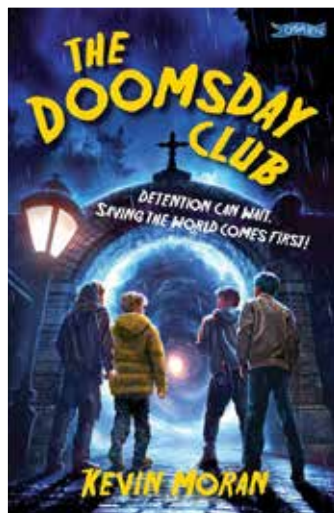
Music Trip

This month the 5th year music class embarked on a trip to the TUD Grangegorman campus to see a live performance of one of their Leaving Cert pieces 'Seachanges' by renowned composer Raymond Deane. Upon arrival, students were given a guided tour of the TUD Conservatoire which was a great opportunity to see all the impressive facilities the college had to offer. The hour long workshop lead by Dermot Dunne delved deep into Deane's complex composition demonstrating the main musical themes of the piece along with the various compositional and instrumental techniques used by the composer to bring the piece to life . After this they were given a complete live performance of the 12 minute piece and had the unique opportunity to meet the composer Raymond Deane himself. Overall, a fantastic day was had by all and the music students gained a fresh insight and perspective to the piece. (Aoileann, 5th Year)

World Book Day

On the 6th of March, 2025, all three of the first-year classes visited Blackrock Library and Dubray Bookshop for World Book Day. All the students visited with their base classes during their English class period. They first arrived at the library and got a tour of the whole building from the helpful librarian. Afterwards they headed to Dubray Bookshop to either pick out a free book with their own World Book Day token or to purchase a book.





Book Launch

On March 14, 2025, thirty first-year students visited Dubray Books in Blackrock for the launch of Kevin Moran's new book, "The Doomsday Club." The novel tells the story of four sixth-class boys who meet in detention and discover a strange beast emerging from a portal outside their school, leading them on an exciting adventure. The first-year students enjoyed hearing about Kevin's journey in writing the book. They also had the opportunity to act out some scenes, and Kevin read aloud a few chapters to the audience. (Sienna, 1st Year)





Model United Nations

From the 14th to the 17th of February, eight students were given a chance to attend the St Andrews Interschool MUN or SAIMUN.

What even is MUN? Well, it stands for Model United Nations and is a type of event that simulates the experience of being a politician and working in the United Nations. It allows young people to gain insight into the political side of the world and gives them the opportunity to expand their skills.

The students selected were Mariam Isakadze, Lija Green, Francesca Fagan, Florence Olivieri, Olivia Przyjemaska, Sarah Thompson, Tamara Bulat, and Nina Carey. We had to represent the delegations of Chile and Peru. We all had to wear really professional clothes as there was a dress code so we were all kind of nervous as we were new to MUN. We were put on different committees and got to debate different relevant world topics.

The days were long and lunch was provided so we had a lot of time to just talk and socialise with other people there. There were people there from all around Ireland and different countries too including Turkey, Italy, and America.

I made a lot of new friends and I felt that it was an overall great experience. We didn't win unfortunately but I think we did a great job considering it was our first time at MUN. I would definitely do it again if I had the chance and I'm sure the others that went would agree. (Tamara, 5th Year)



Knock April 2025

On the 3rd of April, ten fifth year EMBER reps headed off to knock bright and early. We arrived shortly after nine and started our welcome from the Le Chéile Trust. With many different speakers, we learned about how faith can be perceived many different ways through different experiences. This included personal journeys, loss, music and more. We attended a mass in the basilica where Eucharist ministers, Valentina Arismendi Arteta, Eimear Collins, Amy Flett and Elena Thompson represented our school's work towards our faith. We attended different workshops including, proclaiming our faith through music, writing letters to God, mindfulness and learning about the story of Knock. We finished by learning about another school's EMBER committee and what they do. We were very inspired. We left the day having learnt about ourselves and our faith. We were really grateful for the opportunity to go and thankful for Ms. Murray who gave up her time to bring us. (Eimear, 5th Year)





From the Environment Committee

To start off March, the Environment Committee launched Greener Lunch Week, an initiative aimed at promoting sustainable habits and reducing our carbon footprints. The week kicked off with Meatless Monday, where students were encouraged to bring in meat-free lunches. A competition was held for the best meatless lunch, with an eco-friendly prize for the winner. On No Waste Wednesday, the focus shifted to waste reduction, reminding everyone to be mindful of the waste they produce. Throughout the week, a stand in the atrium and open space showcased sustainable alternatives, like reusable lunchboxes instead of disposable packaging, avoiding cling film, using keepcups and refillable water bottles, and choosing Fair Trade products in partnership with Alive. The event also promoted composting and raised awareness about carbon footprints, processed foods, and the importance of checking food labels. (Hilary, 5th Year)



Athletics

My name is Mollie and I'm a member of the athletics team here in Sion Hill. Two years ago when athletics became available as an after school sport I decided to do it and I'm so glad I did. We train every Tuesday after school; for the first half of the school year we train cross country and for the other half we train for Track & Field in Santry (East Leinster Championships) which we are currently preparing for. During the cross country season we competed in three different competitions; in Santry, DCU and Phoenix Park. Santry will be our next competition which I'm really looking forward to as there's always a high standard set from other competitors. I am so glad to be part of the athletics team as it helps with both my mental and physical health and is a great stress reliever! Speak to Mr. Lea if you have interest in joining the Athletics Team in school. (Mollie, 5th Year)





From the Debate Club

I got into debating because I have always loved arguing and discussing things, making my point and quick thinking on the topic or voicing my opinion. So considering all this in general really made me want to do debating.

At first, it was nerve-wracking, especially going up against confident speakers, but I quickly learned that debating isn't just about knowing the right answer—it's about how you present your argument and how you adapt it. So far, it's been a mix of fun and pressure. Some debates have gone great, others not so much, but I've learned from every experience. Right now I'm very confident in public speaking and I don't have as much fear in debating as I did at the start. Debating pushes you out of your comfort zone and builds skills that are useful in everyday life such as critical thinking, quick decision-making, and confidence in public speaking. If you're even a little interested, give it a go—you don't have to be the loudest to be good at it. It's a bit of craic and is very fun meeting new people and doing these competitions with your friends. (Janet Li, 2nd Year)

Debating has been one of the most beneficial experiences that I have had in Sion Hill. I originally joined in first year because I had a few friends taking part. I loved writing about almost anything and I thought that debate would be an interesting opportunity to take part in. At first, I was absolutely terrified. Being a first year in a debate where you are debating against older years in bigger schools can be quite intimidating. Then, when we got our first motion, it was almost like something clicked in my brain. I was writing as quickly as I could and giving it my all. The adrenaline that I feel when I know that I have thought of a new point to add to a motion is honestly similar to the feeling that I get when playing sports. It was exciting to come up with different and probably a bit obscure ideas and then argue

about them with my peers. The most interesting part of debating was that no one gets to choose their side, they are simply given it. This taught me to always consider both viewpoints in an argument. I am still debating as a second year student. Arguing new motions and debating topics that I had previously never heard about is both beneficial to my education and stimulates my love for writing. When I started debating, I didn't think that much would come of it but now, a year and a half later, my public speaking skills have improved as well as my vocabulary and writing abilities. Debating has given me so much confidence in all aspects of my life and I think that it is truly one of the best things to take part in as a young person because I have met so many new people and have been exposed to much more information on topics that I hadn't really thought about until I joined Sion Hill Debating. (Ana Breen, 2nd Year)



From the Ember Committee

The Ember team were busier than ever this term with a number of big liturgical events happening. We celebrated Catholic Schools Week in January and as well as our usual reflections and 'Grandparents Day' display, each class were given the opportunity to walk around Blackrock seeing, hearing, touching and smelling things in our local area to celebrate the theme of CSW, "Alive in Christ". We marked St. Brigid's and St Blaise's day in early February and, of course, we encouraged our classmates to observe Lent by making a sacrifice or taking something up. Most recently we celebrated Le Chéile Day and the theme selected this year was "spreading kindness". We had our usual Le Chéile treats and we gave each student a 'Kindness Bingo' card to fill out on the day where they could mark off positive actions and favours they completed. As the fine weather comes back in our Transition Year students will be continuing their 'local pilgrimage' to various religious institutions and artefacts in the community. We also helped to organise a very special requiem mass for 6th years in March and you can read about how our 5th Year Ember members got on at the Le Chéile Symposium in Knock in this Newsletter.



From the Student Council

The student council is consistently working together with students and faculty to keep a positive environment in our school community. Some of the recent ventures are; In January, we hosted our annual table quiz with students, parents and many other members of our school community. We also hosted a Dominican schools quiz in March, allowing for other Dominican schools across Dublin to travel and visit our facilities.

We had an opportunity to formally present our cheque to Oscar's Kids Ireland with the money we raised from the danceathon. Some of our student council members also conducted research into acquiring free sanitary products for our pupils. The student council is actively working together to maintain a happy environment in school, and plan to continue encouraging others to do so with our annual International Lunch Day on Friday, April 11th. (Beth, 3rd Year)



Coiste na Gaeilge

Tréimhse ollmhór a bhí ann don choiste Gaeilge, ar ndóigh, le ceiliúradh sheachtain na Gaeilge sa scoil! Rinneamar an tseachtain a cheiliúradh le roinnt imeachtaí éagsúla. Bhí tóraíocht taisce eagraithe do dhaltai sóisearacha, tráth na gceist eagraithe do dhaltai sinsearach agus ar ndóigh bhí céilithe lánscoile ar siúl i rith na seachtaine. Dhear daltaí ón gcéad bhliain póstaer le crochadh timpeall na scoile agus bhí duais ann don phóstaer ab fhearr! Bronnadh duaiseanna ar mhúinteoirí freisin as an ngaeilge a úsáid sna ranganna le linn na seachtaine. Bronnadh duais ar an bpríomhoide fiú, a rinne na fógraí go léir i ngaeilge ar an gcallaire. Bhí deis ag lucht na hidirbhliana freastal ar chéilí i gColáiste na Carraige Dhuibhe agus bhí geandáil ghasta ar siúl ann chomh maith. Bhí aifreann chuimhneacháin againn le déanaí freisin agus bhí roinnt paidreacha agus léitheoireachta i ngaeilge le cloisteáil ann. Mar is eol daoibh, bíonn ciorcal comhrá ar siúl chuile Luan ag am lóin agus tá fáilte roimh chách. Ag tnúth go mór leis an gcéad eachtra eile!





From the STEM Committee

The STEM committee was extremely busy this term and had many exciting events to share.

A coding club was set up and is being run by 5th year students. Coding club takes place every second Friday and gives students an opportunity to work on their technology skills.

The STEM committee celebrated Pi day (14th of March) by announcing interesting facts about the day and hosting a pie making competition for all students!

Two groups of 5th years took part in the Irish Mathematics Teachers' Association Higher Level Maths Competition this term. There were around 40 other teams competing. The students really enjoyed the event competing against other schools. The teams performed extremely well given that the competition was geared towards 6th years and it was great practice for next year!

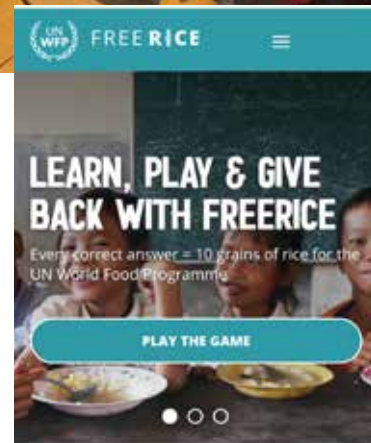
Sion Hill entered two teams into the IAMTA Junior Problem-solving competition for 3rd and 4th years. There were some tough questions, but it was a great experience for everyone involved.

The STEM committee has lots planned to finish out the year and we look forward to seeing you all at our next event.



Free Rice

The second years decided to organise a really innovative charity event over the last few weeks. We started playing 'Free Rice' on our iPads at the beginning of the year in tutor class and if we had free classes. 'Free Rice' is a website made by the United Nations World Food Programme where you can play a quiz game and for each question you get correct, 10 grains of rice are donated to the developing world. It's really accessible and you can change the difficulty level to suit yourself. It also gives you the option to change the quiz category. There are loads of different categories including English spelling, geography, history, maths, science etc so it is really helpful and educational for school subjects. There are also categories like pop culture and sport which are fun too. We got each class to create a class group on the website and track how many grains of rice they collected over the course of a month. In the end, 1 Opal won the 'Free Rice' competition! They donated over 3 Million grains of rice as a class, which equates to about 300 bowls of rice according to the website. On a whole-school level we donated over 6 Million grains, or about 600 bowls of rice. A huge shout-out to Firehouse Pizza in Booterstown who also helped to feed the hungry, by generously providing 8 large pizzas free-of-charge to the winning class, 1 Opal. Even though the competition has ended we encourage all of you to continue feeding people in the developing world by playing the game on www.freerice.com and hopefully we can make the competition even bigger and better next year (2 Opal)



MEET FREERICE

Freerice is an educational trivia game that helps you get smarter while making a difference for people around the world. Every question you answer correctly raises 10 grains of rice for the World Food Programme (WFP) to support its work saving and changing lives around the world.



GAA

This year in GAA we have a really amazing team made up of 1st years and 2nd years. If you're part of a club, you already know how much fun it is, but if you're new to the sport, it's really worth a try and you are more than welcome! We have training sessions each week and every single one is so fun. They are one of the best parts of my week and I love doing it as an in-school sport. It is a great opportunity to make new friends, learn a new sport and improve from the people around you. We have had many training sessions which are on Thursdays and matches can take place any day of the week. So far this year we have played Loreto Foxrock, St Raphaelas and St. Joseph's of Cluny. We also have the 'scoop blitz' coming up which is so fun. Last year, our team won this blitz and it was such a thrilling experience for everyone involved. It has been an amazing experience playing for the school's GAA team and getting to bond with people in our year and other years. Overall, we really enjoy having GAA as an all-year-round activity, and hope to continue playing throughout the rest of our school years. (Amy Breslin & Holly Ryan, & Daisy Whelan, 2nd Year.)



From the Sports Committee

Our aim as the sports committee is to promote sports and physical wellbeing within Sion Hill. Sion Hill provides students with a vast range of sports ranging from hockey, to GAA, to soccer. We also had our annual Fun Run which had a great atmosphere throughout the day! The Fun Run is held every year, it is always enjoyable and showcases amazing school spirit. This year each year had their own colour to dress in and ran thirty laps of the hockey pitch as well as the ten person relay. Teachers also ran a ten person relay with the teachers representing Junior and Senior years, the senior year teachers won. All classes will receive points based on their finishing position in the Fun Run, these will carry onto points for sports day. The hockey teams have had matches throughout the cold weather, our minor hockey team played the Dominican Cup alongside some of our junior and senior players. Our senior hockey team played in the South County Dublin league blitz, which they achieved second in! Sion Hill's summer sports timetable has started with sports including GAA, tennis, multisports, athletics and many more! Our soccer team attended the Dominican Cup alongside our hockey team and our tennis teams have also been playing matches and training over recent weeks. Our athletics team held their Santry tryouts this term and are now preparing their team for the big day. (Sarah, 5th Year)





From the Personal Development Team

Our Personal Development team has been busy creating a no-contact resource cabinet and notice board accessible for all! Our 'Take What You Need' cabinet holds resources for anyone to access from mental health support, to relationship and sexuality support, to resources and information on healthy and unhealthy eating patterns and more. This allows anyone to access help and support without a waiting list and without confrontation, to assess their needs and come to someone for support when they feel ready. Our notice board offers colour and vibrant awareness for all things Personal Development. Come check them out on the 3rd floor of Thomas's outside the Red Stairs Cafe. (The Personal Development Team)



From the Social Awareness Committee

This term, the Social Awareness Committee organised the annual International lunch, which, as always, was a huge success. This event brought the school community together to celebrate the different cultures and nationalities of our school. Different stands representing different nationalities were set up around the concert hall, giving students the opportunity to taste various cuisines and learn about different cultures. In addition, there was a display of wonderful performances from many of our very talented Sion Hill students. It was an afternoon full of delicious food and great entertainment.

In addition, the Social Awareness Committee has started raising money for a different charity each month, by collecting unwanted plastic bottles found around the school and using the deposit scheme to turn the unwanted waste into valuable donations to charity.

