

ST MARY'S KNOCKBEG COLLEGE

NEWSLETTER



WINTER ISSUE 2025

MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER 2025

A message from management

*'A thrill of hope,
The weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn'
O Holy Night'*



'O Holy Night' is a Christmas carol long associated with Knockbeg College. The central message of the carol is one of hope. Hope for what is needed - hope for society and hope for the world. As we approach Christmas, we will keep this message close to us. By carrying hope within us we can counter the doom, endure challenges and dream about possibilities. By carrying hope we can support others when they need it.

Knockbeg as a community has much to be optimistic about at this moment. Our long-awaited pitch development is finally underway. The vast majority of our students have worked hard since September and those in exam years are well placed for the challenges of the New Year. A number of our extra-curricular activities are still going in their competitions, with big dreams for 2026.

Please allow us the opportunity to thank all who work so hard here in our school for the ongoing progression of our students and school. Thank you to all who volunteer on behalf of our school from Board, Parents' Association, Past Pupil Unions, Bishop Denis, Graiguecullen-Killeshin Parish team and various committees.

We wish every member of the Knockbeg College community a joyful and blessed Christmas and look forward to returning on January 5th.

John Maye - Principal

Conor Ronan - Deputy Principal

KNOCKBEG FEAST DAY

On the 8th of December, we celebrated our annual Feast Day, led by Bishop Denis Nulty, who reminded us of the importance of being rooted in our history, values, and Knockbeg identity.

We were honoured to welcome past pupil and former Laois footballer Ross Munnely. Ross spoke about showing up every day, meeting disappointment with determination, staying humble, celebrating others, being a good friend, and setting goals while enjoying the journey. He reflected on the pride he felt when he received his Knockbeg jumper as a student. He was inspired by those who came before him. Ross encouraged our students to think about their future with purpose and gratitude.

A huge thank you to Bishop Denis, to Ross Munnely, to special guests Monsignor Byrne, John and Mary Behan and to all students and staff who made the day such a meaningful celebration of faith, community, and Knockbeg identity.



KNOCKBEG FEAST DAY



CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

On Wednesday, 17th December, the Knockbeg Christmas Carol Service took place. The service featured over 60 students in a variety of roles, including the nativity play, readings, candle lighting, and performances by the school choir.

A special thank you to the school choir and Music Department for the beautiful music, as well as to our Religious Education and Art Departments for their hard work and dedication in preparing such a meaningful service. Well done to our First Year students who took part in the nativity and contributed so positively to the occasion.

Many thanks to Fr. Dunphy, who led the service and helped make it a reflective and memorable celebration for our school



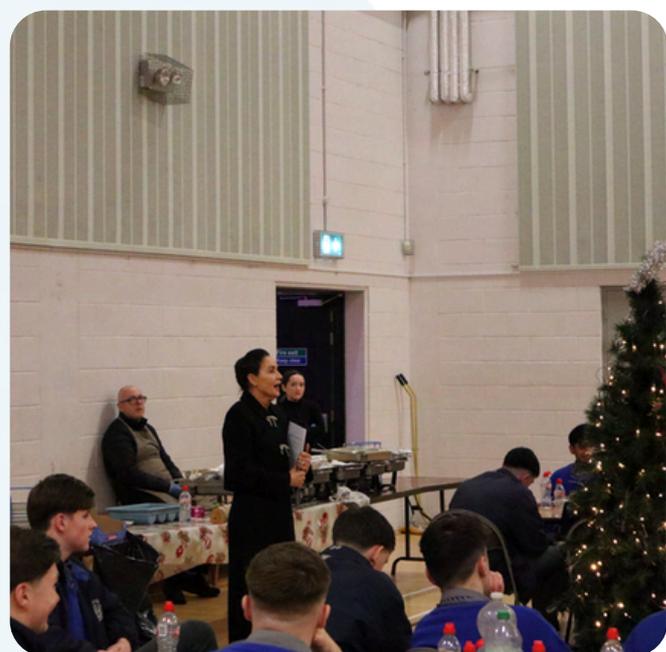
CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE



L2 CHRISTMAS DINNER

Our Leaving two students enjoyed a wonderful Christmas dinner on Thursday 18th December. The celebration included a thoughtful and inspiring speech on the importance of belonging by the President of the Past Pupils' Union, Mr John Behan, as well as an excellent rendition of O Holy Night by former teacher Ms Aoibheann Foley.

Several students also received prizes for various awards throughout the dinner. Sincere thanks to Ms Moran for organising such a lovely occasion for the lads.



CHRISTMAS IN KNOCKBEG

On Friday, 19th December, our school community celebrated the final day of term before the Christmas holidays. To begin the day, all students came together for a Christmas quiz, prepared and MC'd by Mr Downey. The highest-scoring teams from each year group were presented with prizes, and GAA jersey raffles added to the excitement throughout the quiz.

Following this, students enjoyed hot chocolate in the refectory before heading out after break to take part in the annual Christmas Mile. The day ended on a high note with the much-anticipated Students vs Teachers volleyball match, where the students emerged victorious this year, much to everyone's delight.

It was a fantastic way to finish the term and celebrate the festive season together.



CHRISTMAS IN KNOCKBEG



CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY

The annual Knockbeg Christmas Jumper Day was a huge success, with wonderful Christmas cheer, colour, and creativity on display throughout the school.

Most Festive Students

Nazar Martynyshgn and Illia Kornoukhov

Most Festive Teachers

Ms Treacy and Ms Rudyte

Best Upcycled Jumpers

Céadon O'Connor and Cillian Mullins

They were presented with their prizes by Ms Hott on behalf of the Sustainability Committee.

Well done to everyone who helped spread the festive joy and Christmas spirit throughout the school



MUSIC DEPARTMENT CAROLING

Our School Band and Choir were delighted to support the Simon Community, taking part in fundraising on Thursday the 18th December by caroling in the Fairgreen.

Christmas is an important fundraising time for the Choir, and between the Christmas Jumper Day it ran, and Caroling, the group raised over €615.



L2 POLITICS DEBATE

The Knockbeg College L2 Politics and Society students took part in a debate on the 9th December in St. Leo's College. Great speeches and arguments put forward by both teams. Well done to all. Thank you to St. Leo's for hosting and to Mr Maxwell who took on the role of judge. We're already looking forward to our next debate.



ART DEPARTMENT

Eoghan Mitchell served as Knockbeg's Ambassador for Art in the Visual Art Centre as part of the Visual Collective Programme. He delivered a thoughtful reflection on how meeting different artists helped shape his understanding of what art truly is. He spoke about how each person he encountered had their own unique answer to the question "What is art?" and how, although he didn't fully agree with any single definition, he realised that all artists care deeply about what they create — and that this passion gives art its meaning. Eoghan explained how he borrowed pieces of their perspectives to form his own belief, concluding that art is ultimately something each person must define for themselves.

The 2025 Collective of TY students organised the wider session, expressing their ideas through music, spoken word, and visual pieces. Their work showcased the range of talent within the group and highlighted the power of collaboration.

Congratulations to all the schools involved on a truly inspiring joint project.



ART DEPARTMENT

Our Art Department truly brought the festive spirit to life, transforming the school with vibrant and creative window displays that lifted everyone's mood and added a special seasonal touch

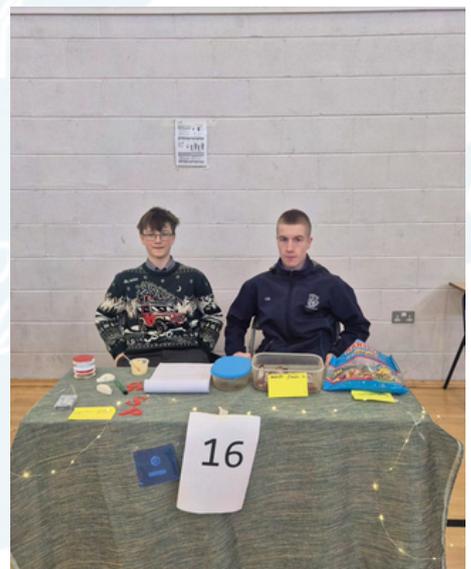


TY CHRISTMAS MARKET

Our Transition Year Christmas Market held on Friday, December 5th, was a tremendous success, showcasing a diverse range of products and services.

Well done to the TY students for showing such great entrepreneurship and initiative.

Many thanks to their teachers, Ms Moran and Ms McManus, for organising the event



TY ACTIVITIES

Many thanks to a number of our TYs who volunteered Thursday 11th, Friday 12th & Monday 15th Dec. on Barrack St. in Carlow. They gave of their time to help raise funds at the Rotary Club Tree of Remembrance. All money raised will be distributed to various charities during the festive period.



TY ACTIVITIES

During December our TY groups learned about the driver education system as they began their journey towards applying for theory tests, completing driving lessons and, in time, obtaining their learner permits. The students also gained hands-on experience with basic car mechanics. Many thanks to James O'Shea for sharing his knowledge and experience with the lads.



Our TY mini-companies had a fantastic day at the Student Enterprise Fair in The Exchange (Potato Market), Carlow on Thursday, 11th December.



FIRST YEAR ACTIVITIES

Our First year students enjoyed their trip to the IMC Cinema in Carlow on the 26th November. Many thanks to our Meitheal leaders for organising the outing.



On the 11th of November, our first-year students braved the elements on their local history trip across Laois and Carlow. They visited key landmarks including Timahoe Round Tower, the Rock of Dunamase, Killeshin Romanesque doorway, Carlow Castle and Brownshill Dolmen.



FIRST YEAR PIZZA PARTY

Kudos to our First Year students, who celebrated their remarkable attendance with a well-deserved pizza party, achieving an impressive overall rate of 90%!



SENIOR FOOTBALL

Leinster Colleges SFC Quarter-Final: Knockbeg College 1-14 Ardee CS 1-15

Knockbeg College were left counting the cost of a frustrating and controversial afternoon as their Leinster Colleges Senior Football Championship run came to an end following a one-point loss to Ardee CS in SETU Carlow.

Played in testing conditions with a strong wind and driving rain, Knockbeg did well early on while facing into the elements. However, Ardee began to assert control as the half progressed and built up a commanding lead, going in 11 points clear at the interval. Knockbeg improved significantly after the restart and made good use of the wind, with Ennae Byrne keeping the scoreboard ticking and Patrick Reynolds landing two excellent two-pointers to inject life into the contest. Despite struggling to fully close the gap in the third quarter, Knockbeg remained in touch heading into a dramatic final ten minutes.

The defining moments arrived late on when a Knockbeg penalty, awarded for a foul on Ruaidhrí Lawlor, resulted in a well-taken goal that was subsequently ruled out following discussions between the match officials. Soon after, Knockbeg were further hampered when reduced to 14 players, with a black card incident adding to their frustration.

Still, Knockbeg refused to fold. Donnacha Lawlor and Ruaidhrí Lawlor drove the team forward, and a late goal brought Knockbeg to within a single point in injury time. A final opportunity to force extra time narrowly missed the target, allowing Ardee to edge through to the semi-finals.

It was a bitter end for Knockbeg, who showed great resolve and character but ultimately fell just short in a game that will be remembered as much for its controversy as its drama. A special mention to our 6th-year footballers, who wore the Knockbeg jersey with great pride throughout their time in the school. Their commitment, leadership, and dedication have been a credit to themselves and to our school.



2ND YEAR FOOTBALL

Knockbeg College 2nd years have qualified for the South Leinster A final after an impressive win over Clane in the semi final on the fourth of December. They started their campaign with a 5-14 to 6-10 win away to Good Counsel. They topped their group following a facile win over Ard Scoil, Athy winning 9-12 to 0-2. This set up a home semi final versus Clane, the team who beat them in the equivalent of a South Leinster Final in 1st year.

Knockbeg turned the tables this time with a comprehensive 1-21 to 2-5 victory in Killeshin last Thursday. Clane opened the scoring with a 2 point free but Knockbeg responded well with points from Aidan Fitzharris, Fionn Harris who notched 6 points on the day and Frankie Doyle. They went in at half time leading 9-4 after playing against a slight breeze.

Immediately after half time Ethan Lawlor had his second goal disallowed for a square ball which looked like a particularly harsh call after being set up by Conor Whelan. Shortly after a Clane goal made it 0-10 to 1-4 but Knockbeg responded well with scores from Lawlor. Mark Kennedy then pounced for an excellent goal to put daylight between the teams again as he finished the afternoon with 1-3. Knockbeg continued to dominate with the help of the Killeshin duo of Evan Brennan and Harry McNamara central to affairs. They continued to raise the white flag with an impressive array of shooting from all the forwards and could breathe easy when they conceded a second goal late on.

They now look forward to the final against Naas CBS which will be played after the Christmas break.

Knockbeg Panel: Evan Brennan, Harry McNamara, Johnny McGrath, Kevin Jones(Killeshin), Conor Whelan, Aidan Fitzharris, Ethan Lawlor, Darragh Maher, Tristan Cotter, Darragh Dowling, Ollie Nolan(Palatine), Jake Kelly, Mark Kennedy, Liam Hyde, Ryan Jacob, Barry Stynes, Alex Moore, Charles Lacey(Ballylinan), Frankie Doyle, Jake Brennan, Liam Nolan(Micheal Davitts), Fionn Harris, Dara Morgan, Oisin Bannon, Darragh Mulhall(Arles Killeen), Padraic Hogan, Jon Slattery(Fighting Cocks), Sam McElroy Norman, George Conway(Arles Kilcruise), Harry Buitelaar(Castledermot), Oliver Hughes(O'Dempseys), Sean Townsend(Carlow Town), Dara Kavanagh(Stradbally), Finn Clancy(Athy), Conor Cantwell(Asca), MJ Whelan(Barrowhouse), Sean Lawler(Grangenolvin), Jonathan Shortt(Baltinglass), Noah Kelly(Eire Og), Mark Broderick(Tinryland).



FIRST YEAR FOOTBALL

Our first year footballers had impressive victories in both group games to Ard Scoil Athy and Good Counsel in the Br. Hubert Cup.



JUNIOR FOOTBALL

Our Junior footballers recorded a home win against Ard Scoil Athy and an away loss to Good Counsel, which was nonetheless, enough to secure qualification for a home quarter-final in the South Leinster Championship.



BASKETBALL

On the 27th November, Knockbeg College's Junior basketballers battled bravely in the Midlands A final but ultimately fell to an immense Portlaoise CBS side, losing out despite a determined performance.

Although the defeat was disappointing, the team can take huge pride in their campaign so far. They have secured a well-deserved place in the All-Ireland play-offs this January.

With their resilience, improving teamwork, and big-game experience, Knockbeg will move forward full of belief and hungry to make a deep run.



BASKETBALL

Knockbeg College were proud to host the u15 Cup on the 11th December, welcoming teams in truly awful weather conditions that didn't dampen anyone's spirit. Our lads put in a strong performance, winning one game and unfortunately losing out to an excellent St Mary's CBS side, while St Mary's CBS Portlaoise—who were absolutely brilliant throughout—topped the group with deserved success.



Well done to our u14 team on their performances in the cup tournament held in Portlaoise CBS on the 16th December. For many, this was their first ever game of competitive basketball, and they showed great effort, enthusiasm and teamwork throughout. Although we lost to a strong Portlaoise side, the boys responded brilliantly with a well-deserved win against Marist. A very positive experience and a great foundation to build on for the future.



KNOCKBEG CHESS INVITATIONAL

A total of 106 chess players from Knockbeg College, St Leo's College, St Kieran's College (Kilkenny), CBS Carlow, Kilkenny College, Tullow Community School and Presentation College Carlow gathered in the Knockbeg Study Hall for a morning of strategy, competition and great fun on Friday, 5th December. The event was expertly overseen by Red King Chess, ensuring a smooth and enjoyable tournament for all involved.

At the conclusion of play, prizes were presented to recognise both individual and team achievements, with Knockbeg College delighted to take home the team prize.

Most importantly, the event was marked by fantastic energy, enthusiasm and sportsmanship throughout the room.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Febin Manoj

Huge congrats to 6th year student, Febin Manoj, who has been selected to represent Ireland at the U19 Cricket World Cup in Namibia and Zimbabwe in January



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Charlie McHugh

We are extremely proud of TY student Charlie McHugh, who has been selected as the recipient of the Carlow Nationalist Golf Award 2025.

Charlie has proudly represented Knockbeg at both Junior and Senior regional competitions and has also represented Leinster at Under-14 and Under-16 level in the Interprovincial Championships.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Matthew Durojaiye

Well done to L1 student Matthew Durojaiye who represented Traill International School Bangkok in the Federation of British International Schools in Asia (fobisia) tournament. Matthew's performances were instrumental in helping Triall to become tournament winners.



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Cian O'Sullivan

A fantastic achievement for Cian O'Sullivan, who has been selected as Laois Minor Footballer of the Year after an outstanding Championship-winning campaign with Crettyard.

