



Issue 3: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021



*A Message from one of Our Senior Teachers*

*'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times .....'* It is unnatural for us not to be able to do the most natural of instincts. It is unnatural not to be able to link arms, not to share a pen, not to don our school tie Monday to Friday. It is unnatural not to hear our young scholar's sounds carry from class to class, to see animated expressions debate class discussions; no longer the purposeful skip to class, now we zoom.

It has become natural for us now to witness life around us. To witness winter's nod to spring's start which can skirt by when in the midst of life's bustle. To witness the endings of winter's frosty masterpieces on our footpaths. To witness the first shoots of spring promising brighter days, inspiring hope. To witness the daily visit of our resident robin playing tig with the sparrow. To enjoy the escapism that our teacher's direction provides; a diversion, to become lost in a period of history, in our English novel, adapting to the arrangement of verbs of another country. To experience, dare I say it, the extreme satisfaction of working through an equation and the dawning of the solution.

The silver lining is 21st century invention in technologies to allow digital human interaction, not forgetting the value and power of family time and of prayer.

Don't quit, take it one page at a time. We are all being carried.

*Ms Alicia McWilliams (Senior Teacher)*

## 20 THINGS YOU CAN DO AND SAY TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH

@BELIEVEPHQ

- "WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP YOU?"
- "I'M HERE WHEN YOU NEED ME"
- Encourage activity, sport and exercise
- Be aware of any changes in behaviour
- "WE WILL OVERCOME THIS TOGETHER"
- Be a role model. Practice self care among your children
- Schedule in some family time to relax
- Help your child to challenge their thoughts
- "I AM HERE TO LISTEN TO YOU"
- Learn about mental health so you can spot signs and symptoms
- Support your child to effectively problem solve
- Do not pressure your child. Have patience
- "EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE OKAY"
- Praise your child for their hard work and effort
- Encourage your child in conversation
- Support and regularly encourage your child
- "HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?"
- Teach them some simple relaxation skills such as deep breathing
- "I AM SO PROUD OF YOU TODAY"
- I LOVE YOU

## Back to Basics

"Right now, we are living in an anxiety-inducing world and we are all doing the best we can."

Following on from our very popular open anxiety sessions, we are now offering one to one sessions so parents can talk through their own experiences with anxiety and how it impacts them or their children.

Come join our Parent Support Officer Julie as she focuses on learning about our own anxiety, helpful strategies, techniques and mindfulness tips.

**When: Every Tuesday in February and March (via Zoom)**

For more information or to book a place call free 0808 8020 400



Leia 8F



## ✠ Our Celebration of Catholic Schools Week – An update from the RE Department ✠

We have just celebrated a wonderful week of positivity and hope during Catholic Schools Week led by the RE Department. We began each day with a beautiful reflection on the theme of the day. This was led by our wonderful Junior and Senior leadership teams and it connected us spiritually together whilst physically apart.

We reflected on the hopeful and positive messages of Bishop Donal and Archbishop Eamon Martin, where they praised the students, their families, and all the staff involved in Catholic Education for supporting the shared vision of Catholic schools as vibrant places of faith and resilience, especially during the challenges of the COVID Pandemic.

In RE the girls have reflected on the themes of faith, hope, love, resilience and community and have come up with such wise and sage advice to support everyone in these challenging times.

Lily-Mae in 10B says, **'My Faith makes me feel like I am never alone.'**

Helen in 10B reminds us, **'Faith is confidence in what we hope for and the assurance that the Lord is working, even if we cannot see it.'**

Hannah in 10B inspires us with her quote, **'Hope is the rays of sunlight that shine through dark clouds.'**

Ella-Jane of 8C designed a beautiful hat with rainbows which says, **'Storms don't last forever'** and **Leia Whitmore dazzled us with such a beautiful portrait of hope.'**

Hannah in 10A told us, **'Hope lies in dreams, in imagination and in the courage of those who dare to make dreams into reality.'**

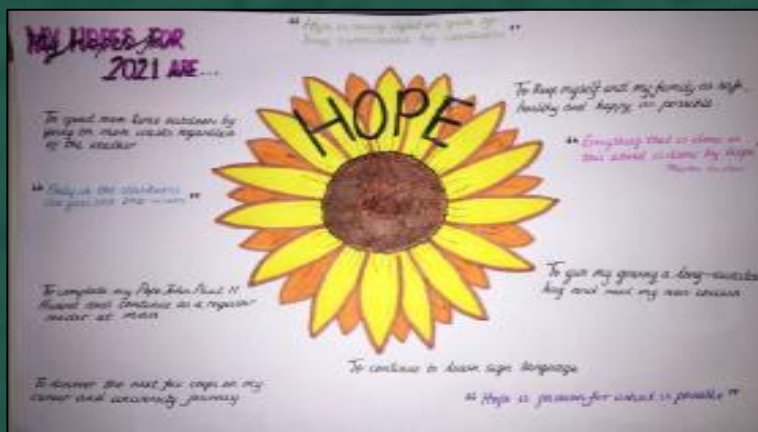
Here is just a small snapshot of some of the wonderful reflections of our brilliant girls.

Thank you girls for inspiring us all with your positivity, your creativity, your gifts and talents, your faith and your resilience. You are an inspiration to your teachers and your families.

The final acknowledgement goes to Evie Doherty in Year 14 who was a wonderful ambassador for her family, her school, and our church community. Check out her wonderful interview with Bishop Donal on: <https://youtu.be/VefEZkRfllc>

*Mrs Teresa Hodgins (Head of Religious Education)*





**Take5** steps to wellbeing

Give Be active Connect Keep learning Take notice

[www.makinglifebettertogether.com](http://www.makinglifebettertogether.com)

Take5 Making Life Better Together HSC Health and Social Care

### Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing

Well done to everyone who submitted their results for our Keep Learning Quiz last week. We were delighted to hear how much our girls enjoyed it!

We are on Week 4 of the 5 steps of Wellbeing with the focus being on the theme of 'Take Notice' in the week ahead. Our thanks go to Ms Pender, Ms Connelly and Mrs Quigg (our very own team of Mindfulness Teachers) for providing us with some lovely Mindfulness videos which our girls will be able to take some time to relax and enjoy with their Form Class and Form Teachers during the week.

This week is also Children's Mental Health Week and the focus this year is 'Express Yourself'. As part of our celebration of this year's theme we are delighted to launch a competition for our pupils to express themselves in a creative way. This could include: baking a cake, writing a poem, doing a TikTok dance, writing a song, painting their face with make-up.....anything creative which they enjoy to express their creative talents! We are asking students to submit one entry each to their Form Teacher, either a picture or short video before **Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February at 12 noon**. The most creative pupils will receive a prize! The very best of luck to everyone!

Ms Claire Barr (Designated Child Protection Teacher)

## Children's mental health week

1ST-7TH FEBRUARY 2021

THE THEME THIS YEAR IS... Express yourself.



This week we will have a competition. We challenge you to find a creative way to express yourself. Submit entries to Form Teacher by 12 noon on Friday 5th Feb!

- Bake a cake
- Write a poem
- Make a tik tok video
- Dress up- wearing make-up and your favourite clothes
- Write a song

Always be creative





## Tasty Treats in Home Economics

Well done to our Year 9 pupils who got busy in the kitchen this week baking muffins. The girls displayed super creativity with an array of ingredients and recipes used. This is just a small sample of the amazing bakes that were on show this week.



## Take-Away Technology

Well done to all the KS3 girls for the excellent practical work they have shown in Technology and Design over the last few weeks. Here are some examples of the fantastic work produced by the girls. Well done ladies and keep up the hard work!



## Year 10 Spanish Webinar

A Year 10 'Languages for Employability' free webinar will be hosted by NICILT Queen's University Belfast on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February** from **3-4pm**.

This webinar will take place on MS Teams live. Pupils will have the ability to post questions in the Q&A section but you will not be able to see other attendees. Places have been reserved for all Year 10 Spanish students.

The link to the webinar will be posted on the Google Classroom of each Year 10 Spanish class on Thursday.



## A Message from Our Head Girl - Taylor

Dear fellow pupils, parents and teaching staff,

I sincerely hope that you are all keeping well during these strange times. In the past, we may have joked about wanting to spend our day leisurely at home and yet here we are in this very position! I'm sure that you too are eager to return to school and to finally be reunited with friends, family and teachers after what seems like a lifetime. However, it is in times like these that maintaining contact is vital, whether it be sending a text to a friend or emailing your teacher, we can all work together to support each other to try and ease this difficult situation.

I am finding learning from home particularly difficult and miss our school's liveliness including the buzz in the canteen and corridors. Additionally, having distractions such as phones and social media doesn't help the situation when we are learning from home. As tempting as it is to perhaps binge watch your favourite show on Netflix, it is important to remain focused, attend the online classes that your teachers are working hard to provide and strive to keep up to date with your work. As well as this it is equally important to have some free time to relax and maintain a healthy mind frame.

With all the uncertainty regarding schools reopening and the alternative measures in place for exam grading, my advice would be to try not to stress or worry about what is simply out of our control. I would urge you to try your absolute best at home, work to your full potential to ensure that you are fully prepared to make a smooth transition back into school life again when the time comes.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our teaching staff for their continued support and dedication. I can imagine giving lessons to a computer screen must be a lot harder than it looks! I also encourage pupils to maybe send an email or message of personal thanks to your teachers. I'm sure they'd appreciate it and they certainly deserve it!

I find solace in the simple words 'This too shall pass'. We must remain optimistic and have hope. By placing our trust in our dedicated NHS healthcare staff and the vaccines currently being rolled out hopefully we will be reunited soon.

I wish you and your family good health and happiness. Stay safe and take care.

*Taylor Brown (Head Girl)*



## Careers Corner

Our new Careers Hub will be going live this week – Year 10 and 13 students keep an eye out for the link to the hub as it will prove a useful resource in helping you decide on your GCSE and A-Level subject choices.

Mr Parlour will be holding a live Microsoft Teams talk for Year 12 students on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February on what Government and Politics is like at A-Level. The link for this talk will be published on the Year 12 Google Classroom this week.



## Dates for Your Diary



**4<sup>th</sup> February 2021** – Staff INSET Day

(No Remote Learning on the Staff INSET Day)

**15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021** – Mid-Term Break





Star Artists Gallery



We continue to be amazed by the creative talents of our girls during lockdown. Just take a look at this selection of fantastic pieces of art work from the last week. Well done girls and keep the great work up!!!



Aimee Year 12



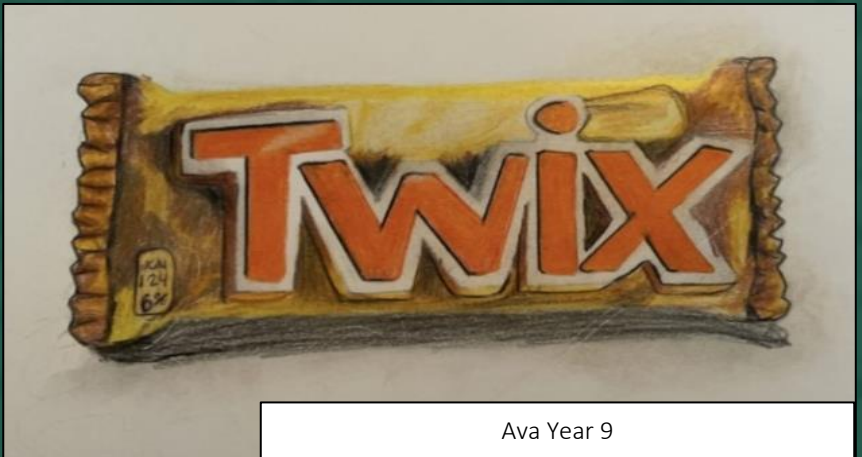
Tara Year 12



Tara Year 12



Kaya Year 12



Ava Year 9

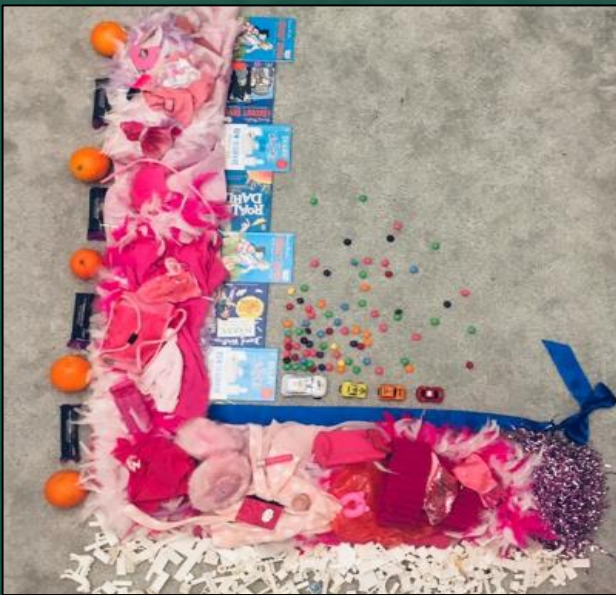


Roma Year 12



Teighan Year 9





Lily-Mai Year 10



Ellen Year 9



Kelly Year 10



Maisie Year 9



Chrissie Year 9



Beth Year 10



Emma Year 12



## Pope John Paul II Award

As our Year 13 students continue to complete the Pope John Paul II Award virtually we want to pay tribute to how pro-active they have been in completing the activities set for them including: composing New Year prayers, sharing their lockdown survival kit, engaging in Catholic School's week by exploring the theme of 'Hope' and sharing their hopes for the year ahead, while also keeping busy by engaging in the Five Steps to Well-being Challenge' by being 'Active' and 'Connecting' with others. Well done girls and keep up the great efforts!



### LOCKDOWN SURVIVAL KIT

- #1. go for a 30 minute walk each day to stay active. 
- Homework Time...** #2. stay up to date with my online class work, and try to get homework done the day it was set.
- #3. spend at least an hour a night with my family. 
- #4. facetime/ text a friend each day to keep in contact and make sure they're okay. 
- #5. restrict time spent on social media- instead try to be more productive like read a book, or study. 
- #6. take care of myself and eat healthily. 

### My New Year Prayer

DEAR LORD, THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING ME IN 2020. MAY THE LORD MAKE MY NEW YEAR A HAPPY ONE.


NOT BY SHIELDING ME FROM SORROW AND PAIN, BUT BY STRENGTHENING ME TO BEAR IT IF IT COMES.

NOT BY MAKING MY PATH EASY, BUT BY MAKING ME STURDY ENOUGH TO TREAD ANY PATH.

LORD JESUS, GIVE US THE GRACE TO HEAR YOUR VOICE, AND THE STRENGTH TO CONTINUE WORKING FOR YOUR KINGDOM IN THIS TIME OF PANDEMIC.

DO NOT ALLOW US TO BE INDIFFERENT TO THOSE WHO TODAY SUFFER THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE, OR WHO SUFFER FROM THE ABSENCE OF WORK.

BUT GIVE US THE COURAGE TO ACCOMPANY AND SIDE WITH THOSE WHO SUFFER VIOLENCE OR INJUSTICE. AMEN.



### MY NEW YEAR PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the year that has passed and the many blessings you have showered us in time.

We beg your pardon in our many failings and trespasses and we pray that the coming year be a more fruitful one.

We earnestly pray for the gift of the Holy Spirit and we call upon our Lord Jesus Christ for His intercessions. His guidance and His light to shine our path.

### Week 3 : CONNECT

My granny lives alone in the countryside on the outskirts of Castleberg in Tyrone, a journey of nearly an hour from Derry where we live. Due to the pandemic it is impossible for us to visit her because of travel restrictions and most importantly her own safety. However at Christmas my family discovered a solution to connect with her and we got her a portal, a device similar to facetime but just not as complicated as it wasn't quite taking off before! The portal has allowed us to have a catch up virtually face-to-face, laugh until we're crying and host many a family quiz together. This ensures that Granny has a smile on her face at least once a day which is what matters. It isn't quite the same as her warm hugs but it will do as our source of connection in the meantime. ❤️

### LOCKDOWN SURVIVAL KIT

- eat healthy
- go for a walk
- take a break from my phone
- facetime my friends
- get up early even if I don't have a class
- read a book
- keep my workspace tidy
- Spend time with my family





## St Brigid's Cross

As we celebrate the Feast Day of one of our Patron Saints of Ireland, St. Brigid on the 1<sup>st</sup> February – why not take the opportunity to enjoy a walk in the countryside to get some fresh air and gather some rushes to make your very own St. Brigid's Cross. Making and hanging a St Brigid's Cross above the entrance to a dwelling is a custom in Ireland to invoke the help of St Brigid in warding off evil, fire and disease.

To make a cross you will need:

- A collection of rushes / reeds
- 4 small rubber bands
- Scissors

Follow the instructions below.



## Prayer to St. Brigid

You were a woman of peace.  
You brought harmony where there was conflict.  
You brought light to the darkness.  
You brought hope to the downcast.  
May the mantle of your peace cover those who are troubled and anxious,  
and may peace be firmly rooted in our hearts and in our world.  
Inspire us to act justly and to reverence all God has made.  
Brigid you were a voice for the wounded and the weary.  
Strengthen what is weak within us.  
Calm us into a quietness that heals and listens.  
May we grow each day into greater wholeness in mind, body and spirit.  
Amen

## Circus Skills Classes

'Your Space Circus' will hold circus skills classes over Zoom teaching:

Juggling (Beginners & Improvers) / Fitness for Circus / Diablo / Hat Juggling / Contact Ball / Staff Spinning & More!

If you are aged 9-18yrs and would like to join in, visit the following website for further details:

<https://www.derrystrabane.com/Things-To-Do/What-s-On>



## Every Day YOUTH Circus Class Schedule

### Mondays:

4 -5pm: Beginners Juggling  
5-6pm: Improvers Juggling

### Tuesdays:

4.30-5.30pm: Fitness for Circus

### Wednesdays:

4 -5pm: Diabolo (All Levels)  
5-6pm: Hats, Cigar Boxes, pick any skill !

### Thursdays:

5-6pm: Contact Manipulation,  
Object Balance & Staff





## English

This week students have been exploring poetry in their remote English classes – analysing poetry of their choice and getting creative writing their own pieces.



### Moraira

The sun beats down on my pale face as the birds sing in the distance.

I sit at the edge of the pool listening to the lapping of the water,

The deckchairs in the shade of the towering palm trees.

The bright blue sea glistens in the midday sun while the soft sand burns my feet.

The sleepy town awakens as the night falls.

We hear the incessant chirping of crickets in the cool evening breeze.

There is a loud bang followed by an explosion of colour that lights up the night sky.

This is why Moraira is my favourite place to be.



## Wabbajack

Wabbajack. Wabbajack. Wabbajack.  
Wabbajack. Wabbajack. Wabbajack.  
Maybe the Wabbajack is the Book of Knowledge. Maybe I'm smarter because I know cats can be bats can be rats can be hats can be gnats can be that's can be thists. And doors can be boars can be snores can be yours can be mine. I must be smart, for the interconnective system is very clear to me. Then why, or wherefore do people keep calling me mad?  
Wabbajack. Wabbajack. Wabbajack.

The subject of this poem is, the Wabbajack, which may be the Book of Knowledge.

The structure of this poem is one run on stanza with indentations at the beginning and end.

The tone of this poem is quite whimsical and almost childish. In the last few lines, it becomes slightly more serious before reverting in the very last line.

## HOW WE THINK ABOUT MAN

Perhaps you find the Scamps comic, and the Vermai brutish.

How then do you imagine we view you humans?

You are the Prey, and we are the Huntsmen.

The Scamps are the Hounds and the Vermai the Beaters.

Your flesh is sweet, and the chase is diverting.

As you may sometimes praise the fox or hare, admiring its cunning and speed,

smirking as the hounds rear its flesh, so do we sometimes admire our prey,

secretly applaud when it cheats our snares or eludes our aim.

But like all worldly things, you will in time wear, and be used up. You age,

wear, and foolish. You are always lost, late or soon.

Sometimes the prey runs upon us and bites. It is a small thing. When

wounded or

wear, we fly away to restore. Sometimes a precious thing is lost, but that risk

makes the chase all the sweeter.

The poet uses enjambment to give some lines more flow like the narrator is going on a manic ramble



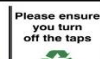
## Physical Education



This week we have all been highly impressed by the creativity of the Year 11 GCSE PE students who had great fun learning about the human skeleton by creating their very own 'Art Attacks' using items from their homes. Well done girls ...we love these!



Great energy saving pledges made by Yr 8!



Signed Niamh Jan 2021



the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.