

Holy Family Community School, Rathcoole

European Digital Schools Award:

HFCS has become one of the first schools in Europe to achieve European Digital Schools Awards status. The Digital Schools Awards European programme is designed to encourage and recognise innovation, collaboration and skills development in digital technology amongst schools. It is backed by the European Commissions' Erasmus+ programme, national government bodies and leading technology companies led by HP. HFCS is among the first schools in Ireland to receive the award, which recognises and celebrates best practice in digital education in Europe.



To achieve European Digital Schools status, our school had to demonstrate strong leadership in digital education and provide sufficient access to resources and infrastructure. Our school culture, professional development strategies and teaching practices were also assessed as part of the submission.

The European Digital Schools Awards requires schools to use the European Commission's SELFIE self-reflection tool to assess their digital learning and teaching practices and identified areas where improvements can be made. As part of the programme, teachers were given access to expert support and resources to help them develop their digital curriculum and ensure pupils are given the skills they need to navigate the modern world. The European Digital Schools Awards programme also intends to open up dialogue across borders and create a growing community of digitally competent schools, where teachers can share learnings from different education systems.

Anna Doody from Digital Schools Awards said: "We know that schools across Europe have taken great strides in recent years to integrate digital practices into their teaching, and one of the most

important and valuable aspects of the European Digital Schools Awards is the ability to network with counterparts in other parts of the world - “By connecting schools, we hope to bring attention to innovations happening elsewhere in the continent and encourage collaboration by opening more channels for knowledge sharing across borders.”

International Trips:

On Wednesday, 8th of February, 64 Transition students and nine teachers from Holy Family Community School, travelled to Lavarone, Italy. They had a wonderful time skiing the slopes of the Dolomite Alps! Well done to all the students for their enthusiasm and good spirits in learning this new skill. They worked hard adjusting to the skis in the first few days and their resilience paid off, as they were able to explore new and more challenging slopes in the latter part of the week. When off the slopes, students got to enjoy two thrilling evenings of snow tubing, which proved to be one of the many highlights of the trip. Their behaviour and attitude were exemplary throughout and this made the trip an enjoyable and pleasant experience for all. As Jamie Hanan Murphy (TY student) so eloquently summarised his experience; “Trip of a lifetime that we will all remember forever”, emphasises just how much this trip meant to the students. The feedback from students and parents has been hugely positive; the opportunity afforded to the Transition Year students to travel on a ski trip is very much appreciated. We look forward to the same memorable experiences on our future ski trips! You can catch up on the video that shows everything the TY students did [here!](#)



Our 5th Year students will travel to Italy after Easter. They will visit Sirmione, Milan, Verona, and Lake Garda, over 4 days. We wish them the very best of luck with the trip, and we can't wait to hear all about it!

Transition Year

Transition Year students have been extremely busy this academic year. They have undertaken a wide range of projects, workshops, and educational trips. These include programmes such as the Bridge To College programme, Localise Community Youth Project, work experience, STEM Passport for Inclusion. They have also participated in, and will participate in, many workshops that will teach them skills for life, for example a barista workshop, a first aid course, a forensics workshop, GAA Future Leaders Programme, Gaisce hike, the works! TY students will also have a trip to Coláiste Acla, Achill Island, where they will participate in a wide range of outdoor activities, as their final overnight trip before their graduation on 22nd May.



A group of Transition Year students also recently took part in the Bridge to College programme, run by Trinity Access, which is a course aimed to show students what college life is like. As part of this course they were tasked with the project of running an event/informing students all about sustainability. Our TYs have plenty planned, with their first project bring a Clothes Swap, to promote sustainability amongst our school community. Follow their project @ hfcs.sustainability_.



Transition Years have been a wonderful year group, and have had a fantastic experience of TY. Many thanks to TY Coordinator, Ms O'Brien, for having organised such a wide range of interesting and educational activities for them.

Sport:

There is a wide range of sports for students to participate in, in HFCS. Most recently, 5th Year student Cormac Dixon, and 2nd Year student Jacob Ciomek, competed in the All-Ireland School Cross-Country finals. Our 1st Year U14 Boys' soccer team reached the Dublin West Final, where they narrowly lost out to Moyle Park College. We have a huge number of camogie, hurling, basketball, and Gaelic football teams as well. We have recently started a badminton tournament amongst teams in our school, and have formed a volleyball team, who have competed and been very successful in blitz competitions.



Sport is a huge part of life in HFCS, and the students who participate in all of our sports teams are wonderful representatives of our school. We are so proud of their achievements.



International Women's Day 2023:

Our school community came together to celebrate International Women's Day, and all of the amazing women in our lives - their strength, resilience, talents, and all-round brilliance! You can watch our International Women's Day video [here](#)!

Our STEM Passport for Inclusion students were invited to an event in Maynooth university to celebrate International Women's Day. In 2019, there were no female presidents of universities in Ireland. By 2022, there were six! Our students celebrated this incredible milestone with a panel of 6 female Irish University Presidents. What a wonderful, inspirational experience for them. They also met and had a chat with TD Simon Harris, again giving inspiration to students about the many routes available to them after finishing 2nd level education.



HFCS Poly Tunnel

HFCS Poly Tunnel has been going from strength to strength this year. We have established a joint school initiative with Old Bawn Community School. LCA students from both schools are working together to complete the field trip component of Agriculture & Horticultural Studies. The initiative has been named 'Sowing the Seeds of Community'. Students have planted daffodils, and they'll be selling them in aid of the Irish Cancer Society for Daffodil Day.

We have thoroughly enjoyed seeing this collaboration grow and flourish, and we look forward to what else will be produced in the coming months!



IMTA Quizzes:

In March, HFCS hosted the Irish Maths Teachers' Association Pi Quiz! We hosted four schools – Celbridge Community School, Old Bawn Community School, Naas Community College, and St Mary's College Naas. Third Year Higher Level students participated in the quiz on 14th March, which is International Pi Day. This was a brilliant event, which our students thoroughly enjoyed.

First Year student, Akhil Prasanth, was awarded the Outstanding Achievement award from the IMTA. Akhil was one of the top scorers from over 15,000 First Year students around the country. We are delighted for, and so proud of him!



SSE Student Committee:

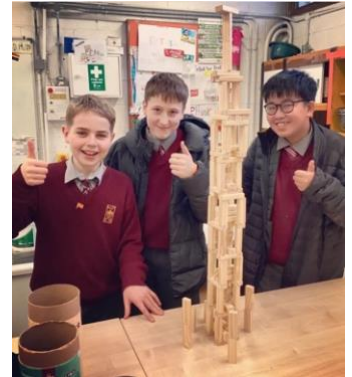
Holy Family Community School has recently appointed a new School Self Evaluation Student Committee. This committee has representatives from each year group sitting on it. They will meet the SSE Coordinator regularly to analyse what is working well in terms of 'Teaching and Learning' and discuss what areas we as a school need to improve on. They will utilise student voice and participation by representing the student body in 'Teaching & Learning' discussions. They will have direct input in choosing our next SSE focus. There will be an opportunity for new members to join in the next academic year.



Lively Lunchtimes:



Every week, a number of activities are hosted for students at lunchtimes. Such activities include games club, chess club, badminton, French club, journalism club, science club, drama club, crafting club. Our newly refurbished library is also available for students to have a quiet space during lunchtime as well. Our Lively Lunchtimes have been a huge success, and are of great



benefit to our students.

Teaching and Learning Committee:

Our staff contribute to and participate in our Teaching and Learning Committee. There have been a number of meetings held so far this year. Teachers present on topics that have benefitted them in the classroom, which they feel would be of benefit to colleagues as well. It is a wonderful opportunity to promote collaboration amongst our staff, and it greatly enriches the teaching and learning environment in our school. Some of the topics presented on this year include; *'Attention Economics and the Use of Roleplay in the Classroom'*, *'Animation As A Tool for Active Learning in the Classroom'*, *'The Use of Magenta Principles'*, and *'The Inclusion of Restorative Practice in Teaching and Learning'*.

National Concert Hall:

Our 5th and 6th Year Music students recently visited the National Concert Hall, where they heard a live performance and in-depth analysis of one of their Leaving Cert Set Works, Tchaikovsky's Romeo & Juliet.



HFCS Visits Dáil Éireann:

Our Senior Cycle Politics and Society students visited Dáil Éireann this term. Here, they met with TD Emer Higgins, who is also a former pupil of HFCS. Ms Higgins spoke to students about life in politics, and encouraged them to become involved in local politics as well. Students then were brought on a tour of the Dáil, giving a practical view of what they study in class.



Wellbeing Week:

We recently hosted Wellbeing Week in our school. The theme was “You Are Enough”. There was a wide range of activities held in the school throughout the week. These included a bake sale, wellbeing walk, talks from BodyWhys and Brighter Thoughts Ireland, and a fantastic Wellbeing Concert! Over 50 students performed on stage to our whole school community. It was a wonderful display of the amazing and varied talents in our school! You can see many of these performances on our Instagram page – @ hfcsrathcoole. There was also a charity focus to our Wellbeing Week, and over €5,100 was raised for Pieta House. We are delighted to be able to support Pieta House, as they provide such wonderful services to many people, both young and old, in our community.



Class of 2023:

Our 6th year and LCA2 Class of 2023 will graduate on 24th May 2023. It has been a pleasure to watch them learn, grow, and develop into the wonderful young adults they have become. We wish them the very best of luck with their futures!



Social Media:

Stay up to date with all of the wonderful things happening in HFCS, by following us on social media! We are on Instagram and Twitter - @hfcsrathcoole.



Happy Easter!

We'd like to wish a joyous Easter to all in the Spiritan Education Trust.

