



THE

KINTULLAGH VOICE

EXCELLENT RESULTS FOR ST LOUIS

Page 3

December 2020

The Newsletter of St Louis Grammar School, Ballymena



SUPPORTING FRONT LINE WORKERS

Pages 5&6

**Top Grammar
School NI**
A Level Grades x 3 Subjects
A*-C 100%



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WELCOME YEAR 8!

Well done to our Year 8 students who have completed their first term at Secondary School and are now fully fledged members of St Louis Grammar.

Starting secondary school is a huge change, with bigger buildings to navigate, many more exciting and interesting subjects to get used to and lots of new teachers and friends to meet.

We are extremely proud of how well our students have settled into their new environment and 'bubbles'. Every student should be commended for their responsible and motivated attitude towards both class and home work.

Many more exciting opportunities await our Year 8 students during their time at St Louis and we look forward to helping and supporting them on their journey through school!





EXCELLENT RESULTS

St Louis Grammar School celebrated yet another year of outstanding A Level and GCSE results.

Despite a challenging end to the academic year, the A Level grades were superb with 100% of students attaining at least 3A*-C grades. A remarkable 90.2% achieved A*-B across all their subjects. Furthermore, 32 students earned 5As or better. These fantastic results have enabled students to accept places across Ireland and the United Kingdom. For example: Jude Dobbin is studying Languages at University College Cork; Evanna Woodside has enrolled at the University of Dundee to study Medicine; Ciara Shannon is at Newcastle University studying Law and Roisin Hardy is now a Physiotherapy student at Cardiff University.

GCSE results were also tremendous as 100% of students achieved 7 or more GCSEs at A*-C grades (including Maths and English). Astoundingly, 93.3% of all entries were awarded A*-B grades. In addition, 65 students attained 8A*/A grades or more. Each Year 12 student enjoyed their own success story on results day but special recognition must be given to the top achievers. Lucy Donaldson, Ceothan Gormley and Cara Pirie who each achieved an incredible 10A* grades.

These exceptional results reflect St Louis' position of top Grammar school in Northern Ireland.

Principal, Mr Rafferty said, *"I would like to congratulate our students and staff on the wonderful set of results. We are immensely proud of how all our students have coped in such uncertain times. Despite Lockdown, our teachers' sterling efforts in preparing pupils for their examinations must be commended. Credit must also be given to their families for their unwavering support and encouragement in such challenging circumstances."*

Our Sixth Form students are now well into the process of working towards their AS and A Level grades. The resilience, fortitude and patience that these young people continue to demonstrate throughout changing circumstances is inspiring.

The class of 2020 have gone on to pursue their first choice pathway in high demand degree and apprenticeship courses. We wish them every success for the future."



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MEET SOME YEAR 8s

Hello, I'm Hannah Tohill. I went to St Columba's, Kilrea and I'm now in 8 Laragh. My favourite subjects are Geography, PE and Art. I have a lot of hobbies outside of school including gymnastics, swimming and horse-riding. When I was six, I was Northern Ireland Champion in gymnastics. I have also participated in the All Ireland Schools' Swimming Competition. My time so far at St Louis has been great! It's like a brilliant book and we're only in the opening chapters – I'm excited to see what comes next!



Hi, my name is Molly Doherty and I'm a past pupil of St Comgall's, Antrim. My form class is 8 Layde. I'm enjoying studying Irish at school especially as my Dad can also speak Irish. I have always found Maths fun and look forward to PE lessons. I love music and play the tin whistle, Irish flute, classical flute and piano. I've achieved grade four on the classical flute and grade five on piano. The teachers at St Louis have been so nice and welcoming and I'm delighted that I have made many new friends.



Hello, I'm Fintan Keane and I came from Creggan Primary School. I'm now in 8 Lisbreen. My favourite subjects here are PE as I've loved playing soccer and basketball in lessons. I also like ICT because I think I will find the skills I'm learning very useful in the future. I play gaelic for Creggan and we have won the U12 South West Championship. The thing that I love the most about St Louis is that everybody is happy!



Hello, my name is Anthony Beattie. I came from St Joseph's Primary School, Dunloy and I'm now in 8 Lurig. In St Louis, the subjects I like the best are Maths, Science, Technology and ICT. Maths has always been a favourite subject since Primary School and I'm enjoying new practical and problem solving subjects. My interests outside of school are playing the guitar in which I've achieved grade 3 and also gaming. The people in St Louis have made my first term brilliant!



Hi, I'm Dara Dickson and I'm in 8 Lismoyle. I went to Mount St Michael's Primary School in Randalstown. I'm a sporty person so PE is always going to be my favourite subject! I play gaelic for Randalstown and I'm also a keen runner. Most weeks I would try to run 5k. I'm the eldest in my family and I'm really enjoying my secondary school experience.



Hello, I'm Anna McMullan and I'm in 8 Lyndon. I live in Rasharkin and went to St. Colmcille's Primary School, Ballymena. I have two big brothers at St. Louis, Conan in Year 12 and Ben in Year 14. Since Primary 7, English has become one of my favourite subjects and I'm also really enjoying Science here at St Louis. I play guitar and have achieved grade 5 in singing. In the past, I have won my singing category at Ballymena Festival. I play Camogie for Rasharkin too. St Louis has been brilliant so far and I love the variety of subjects we get to learn!



Hi, my name is Alex McCrory and my form class is 8 Lír. I went to St. Mary's Primary School, Portglenone. My big sister, Annie, is in Year 11. My favourite subjects at St. Louis are Music and Science. Mr Guiney makes music very entertaining and I love doing experiments in Science! In my spare time I play Gaelic and swim but unfortunately have had to stop both for a while due to Covid. I also like to play xBox.



8 LÍR

This is a special year for St Louis. With a grand total of 172 students in Year 8, the largest intake in our school's history, a seventh class has been created!

We are proud to introduce 8 Lír.





FIRST TERM AT ST LOUIS

I came to St Louis from St Brigid's Primary School in Ballymoney. I had made the decision to come to St Louis ever since I was in P.5 and went to the school's Open Night with my big brother. I just loved everything about it!



Coming here meant that I was the only pupil from my primary school so it was a major decision and change! It also meant I had to leave my best friend behind as she had decided to go to a different school. Although it's been a big change, I know I made the right decision.

I have made so many new friends in St Louis and I enjoy spending break and lunch times with them. Also, if I don't know what to do, or am unsure about something, there is always someone to ask.

I really like learning all the new subjects that I wouldn't have had the chance to learn in primary school, and learning about subjects I had studied before in more detail.

Another big change for me is getting the bus to and from school every day as it takes just under an hour each way. I was worried about what would happen if I missed the bus or caught the wrong one, but my big brother and older pupils have helped me and I know I am now confident enough to get the bus on my own if I have to.

A tip I would have for Primary 7 pupils is that it is ok to go to a different school than your friends. I still chat to my best friend every day and we meet up as often as we can. I have also made lots of new friends too. I have loved my first term at St Louis!

By Cara Moore

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Mr Quinn was one of the heroes during the initial lockdown as he volunteered with the Order of Malta where he worked with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

His role mainly consisted of facilitating patient transfers across various hospitals including Altnagelvin, Waterside, Causeway, The Royal, City and Antrim Area. For the most part, he was based generally at Antrim Area Hospital and signed in for ten hour shifts dependant on location near the end of the final transfer.

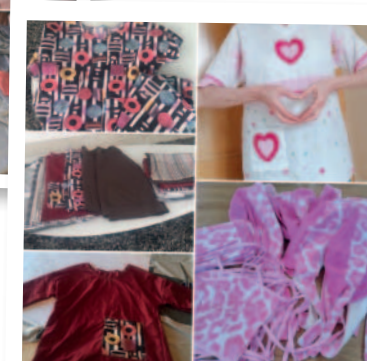
These journeys involved transfers between hospitals, nursing and residential homes, as well as private residences.

Mr Quinn said it was a truly rewarding experience and he even received a call from 'Good Morning Britain' but modestly replied that his voluntary work, "was only a small effort compared to so many!" No matter how small Mr Quinn thinks his contribution was, it played a big part in helping our health care system in the battle against Covid-19!

SLG SCRUBS *Supporting front line workers*

During lockdown members of staff teamed up to make much needed scrubs for the NHS through Scrubs Northern Ireland. This was at a point in early lockdown when there was a severe shortage of PPE.

The Art Department created kits for staff and pupils to cut and stitch scrubs. There was a tremendous and overwhelming contribution of fabric from across the school community in the first week of lockdown. Members of staff dedicated many hours of their time to this project for a period of eight weeks! The staff involved included: Mrs McDonald, Mrs McAuley, Miss Lennon, Mrs McLarnon, Ms Gildea and Mrs McClintock, with pupils and past pupils Evanna Gildea, Miriam and Kate McClintock. The dedication, kindness and teamwork displayed by this group of ladies in contributing selflessly to those in need, sums up beautifully the spirit of St Louis.





SLG FACE SHIELDS

Supporting front line workers

St Louis staff were busy making face shields to help and support front line workers fighting Covid-19 during the lockdown period.

Almost five hundred face shields were made in the first batch. Mr Convery and Mr Trainor delivered over three hundred of these to the Health Care Co-Ordinator at Dalriada Doctors. Local physiotherapists and Medical/Dental practitioners also contacted the school to avail of these.

During the summer, Technology Technician, Noel Rugman, and his family made yet another batch of approximately one thousand face shields for Dalriada Doctors Clinic.

Coincidentally, former Head Girl of St Louis in 1986, Rosemary Kane, contacted the school to express her appreciation of the kind gesture as she benefitted from the face shields in her role as GP working in Covid Centres. She reflected on when she recognised that the shields were made by St Louis, "There was a lot of comfort to me when I saw the school crest and name". In such worrying times, acts of kindness mean more than ever before!



STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM



Maeve Henry
Head Girl



Méabh Fyfe
Deputy Head Girl



Miriam McClintock
Deputy Head Girl



Ciara O'Neill
Deputy Head Girl



Neve Wilkinson
Deputy Head Girl



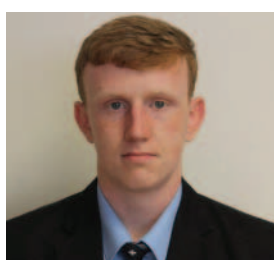
Declan McMahon
Head Boy



Sonny Brady
Deputy Head Boy



Patrick Ferris
Deputy Head Boy



Rory McCloskey
Deputy Head Boy



Daniel McNicholl
Deputy Head Boy



MESSAGES FROM OUR HEAD BOY & HEAD GIRL

Being Head Boy this year has been a unique experience. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen many of our opportunities curbed. There are events on the school calendar that we look forward to every year which have had to be cancelled and we are still having to face uncertainty regarding our exams.

Despite all this, it has not stopped me from thoroughly enjoying my role as Head Boy. It is a great honour to be given this opportunity to utilise the skills and qualities which I have developed over my time here in St Louis to represent the school as best as I can.

The last seven years have provided me with many special experiences.

I am honoured to be chosen to fulfil the role of Head Girl. I feel very lucky to have this opportunity, and to work along with the rest of the Student Leadership Team to act as a representative for all our peers and to lend our knowledge to the continuous progression of our school.

St Louis has always opened doors for me, right from when I first started almost seven years ago. I have had so many opportunities both academically and in extra-curricular activities, where not only have I been able to thrive on a personal level, I have also gained confidence along with numerous other essential skills which will set me up for my future.

What I love is that there is something for everyone at St Louis whether you enjoy sports, music, public speaking, whatever it is, it allows you to have the chance to meet people with similar and different interests to you. Personally, I have played camogie for seven years here, and I have made some of the most amazing memories and friendships through it which I will remember for life.

For example, in Year 15, I was given the chance to be a member of the school's first team of anti-bullying prefects. This role was not only rewarding but was also invaluable in helping me to effectively lead this year's prefects.

Overall, I have had an amazing time at St. Louis, and I will be very sad to leave come the end of the year. The best advice I could give which is especially applicable during these times, is to enjoy the good moments, and when things get tough always speak to someone. A problem shared is a problem halved!

Declan McMahon

This year is a very important year for us, as we face our final school exams before we move on, and we are all wondering what lies ahead of us regarding exams. It can be very tough not knowing what is going to happen, but there is a huge support system within our school to help. We have created roles called 'Pupil Health and Wellbeing Prefects' which involves Year 14 students whose main role is to ensure all our pupils in different year groups feel comfortable and safe.

Especially in our position in Year 14, we would usually have events throughout the year to mark our final year here, including our school formal which we are all devastated cannot go ahead. However, we are hopeful that we will be able to celebrate our time at St Louis in some way in 2021.

This is a very strange time for everyone, but I hope that everyone has a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year with their family.

Maeve Henry

LOCKDOWN ARTWORK

Our current Year 9 pupils explored typography during lockdown when they were in Year 8 and created some beautifully inspired work.

Year 10 created digital and hand rendered designs inspired by food and the artist Jon Burgerman.





SPORTS DAY 2020 GOES VIRTUAL!

Years 8-10 were challenged to showcase their skills and talents in a bid to win prizes!

With over 250 pupils entering the competition, as well as plenty of staff getting involved, we witnessed talent, from drawing to baking, from football to athletics! All were equally impressive. Our random name generator selected the following winners:

- **Minnie Donnelly** with her trampoline skills - Full PE Kit
- **Eoghan McGrenaghan** with his athletic long jump attempt - TeamKit voucher
- **Luke McAllister** with his soccer skills - TeamKit voucher
- **Maria Black** shooting incredible shots at basketball - Art Acrylic Paint Kit
- **Aoife Campbell** for her trampoline skills - Voucher of her choice
- **Meabh McVeigh** for her camogie skills - O'Neill's kit



LIFE IN A 'BUBBLE'

Have you ever wondered what goes on in bubble classes? Ever wondered if school life could ever be normal again? The staff and students at St Louis Grammar School have adapted expertly to the new situation we find ourselves in. We come prepared and ready to face the day ahead despite the dangers we could be facing. Bubble classrooms are a major factor in keeping the threat that is COVID-19 at bay.

Years 8, 9 and 10 students are all put in their form classes together and have an allocated room that they stay in for the majority of their day. We call these classes our 'bubble' rooms. Everyday life in the bubble isn't as boring as it may sound. You get to be around your friends in a safe environment on a daily basis. These bubbles not only protect us but also our teachers and family members.

When you come into school – through the allocated entrance – you are to sanitise your hands from the hand sanitiser stations situated at the door. When you have done so, you make your way to your bubble classroom, or if you are in a practical class, then you are advised to wait in a socially distanced line outside the classroom. If you are leaving your bubble classroom you have to clean the tables down. I don't think I would like to sit at a dirty table, would you?

Lunch is one of the best times of the day. When we get our lunch at our allocated time, we sit in our class groups in the canteen. During lunch you can go outside to your designated zone. It's so much fun! When we switch between classes we always wear our masks in the hallways.

Even though so much has changed, there are still good things about being in a bubble. As they say 'every cloud has a silver lining'. I believe that the silver lining in this pandemic is being able to go to school in a somewhat normal way. Being able to see your friends is a big part of school life that many students enjoy and it makes us feel better. Our form class is like a second family to us and especially after knowing them for three years, I feel like mine know me better than I know myself, so they will always be there for you if you need it. Many of us hadn't seen our friends for months so it's good to be able to socialise with them safely again. There are still fun aspects of being in a bubble: playing football with your friends at lunch; laughing with your friends and learning subjects in fun and interactive ways. What could be better than being able to be with your friends every day?

As we all know this year is different than those before it. Many students and staff have been able to adapt incredibly and have shown great morale despite the current goings on around them. It is hard if you have friends in different years or classes that you can't see or talk to, but is it not better to be safe than sorry? We have all had to adapt to many new rules and procedures. It may have felt strange at first to wear masks and sanitise our hands every day but we have shown exemplary behaviour and this has demonstrated why our school is one of the best, not only in academics but also in our behaviour.

Even though we all enjoy our bubble classes I myself cannot wait to be able to talk to my friends and be able to interact with them, especially since I have lots of friends in other classes. However, for now, I'm still happy to be safe in my bubble rather than be in danger.

By Keira Young, Year 10.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

One of our key priorities this academic year at St. Louis Grammar, is to promote positive Mental Health and Wellbeing. We have been working hard during this first term to develop and communicate a range of support available to students. All pupils should now be familiar with how to access our school Worry Box should they need any support or advice. The Worry Box can be accessed through our school website and allows students to confidentially email their Year Head with any worries or concerns.

Students have also been made aware of a range of counselling services available in school through advertisements within school and on Form Class Teams. External agencies provide counselling support services to our students three days per week with Mrs Toner and Mrs O'Neill providing drop in services on the two remaining days to ensure student welfare support is available every day. Wellbeing and Anti Bullying Prefects have also been appointed and introduced to all students.

Every Friday morning all students also spend time listening to our wellbeing assemblies which focus on a range of topics including the importance of physical exercise, staying connected and helping in our local community.

To further monitor wellbeing, we have developed a bespoke student wellbeing survey which all students complete every six weeks. This provides students with the opportunity to confidentially reflect on how they are feeling in relation to many aspects of school life. The Pastoral Care Team in school monitor student feedback and implement appropriate intervention strategies on a collective or individual basis.

In November we collaborated with Action Mental Health an external agency which promotes the mental health and well-being of people in Northern Ireland. This external agency delivered Provoking Thought Workshops to Years 8-12 via zoom on the importance of personal resilience. In December, workshops will also be delivered to our Sixth Form students.

The past few months have brought change and challenge. We are so proud of how all of our students have adapted and we will continue to promote student well-being within our school. We cherish that the corridors of St. Louis are once again filled with the sound of teenage chatter and laughter.





ANTI-BULLYING HEAD PREFECTS

Knowing what is right
Doesn't mean much



Unless you are doing what is right!



DECLAN McMAHON

Hi, my name is Declan McMahon and I am the Head Boy in St. Louis for the academic year 2020/21. I am also responsible for our team of Anti-Bullying Prefects this year. Last year, I was a member of the school's first Anti-Bullying Leadership team where we provided an opportunity for pupils to reach out if they were experiencing bullying behaviours, and I am very pleased that I have been able to carry that role into this year. The Anti-Bullying Prefects will always be there as an outlet for you to come to, whether it is in the case of experiencing bullying behaviours yourself, or if you have seen a child displaying bullying behaviours. Remember, knowing what is right doesn't mean much unless you do what is right. We will always be available for you to speak to and will make time for you, so feel free to approach us at any time.



REBEKAH O'NEILL

Hello, my name is Rebekah O'Neill. This year I was very fortunate to be given the role of Head Prefect of Anti-Bullying. I know that it can be a horrible thing to go through, therefore I am offering any help or advice I can give to anyone who needs it. St. Louis is a place where we all come to feel safe and be with friends as well as receive an outstanding education. As a Head Prefect of Anti-Bullying I would like to maintain this safe space for everyone in the school. Our teachers here in St. Louis are extremely supportive, however, the thought of speaking to teachers about these issues can sometimes be a bit scary. That is why my team and I are here. Think of us as just fellow students who you can have a chat with about anything.



SEAN RICHMOND

My name is Seán Richmond, I am one of three Head Prefects with responsibility for Anti-Bullying. It is my intention to promote a kind and respectful environment in St. Louis Grammar School for all students to experience. In rare cases, this is not always the case, and I have been elected as someone who you can feel comfortable with to approach and voice concerns or mistreatment that you may have experienced or witnessed in and around our school. We understand and know that a child displaying bullying behaviours can be hidden from the eyes of teachers and principals. We are here to make you feel like you can speak to us and that you will receive help.



BRIGID DELARGY

Hi my name is Brigid Delargy and I am delighted to be one of the St Louis Anti Bullying Head Prefects. I want to be a person that any pupil can confide in, should they be made to feel uncomfortable or upset in anyway. No one should ever have to suffer in silence and I want to help anyone who should find themselves in that position. Please speak to myself, a teacher or someone else in my team if you ever need to report a child displaying bullying behaviours.
'Knowing what's right doesn't mean much unless you do what is right'

Additional Prefects:

Kaytlin Graham-Da Cruz

Rory Campbell

Weronika Chylinska

Marcella Kelly

Catherine McBride

Emma Murray

Daire Toner

Our Prefects
can be found
in the
'Creativity Hub'
every friday at break
and will
be wearing a
yellow badge.



DANIEL McNICHOLL

My name is Daniel McNicholl and I am the Deputy Head Boy overseeing pupil health and wellbeing at St. Louis Grammar School. Mental health and well-being means a lot to me and I am delighted to have been given this responsibility. I have often felt stressed about revision, exams and football and at times felt overwhelmed. Taking time to yourself to relax or exercise are just a few of the many effective ways of coping with stress. I find that by speaking to close friends, teachers and members of pastoral care in school, I can positively deal with stress. This has resulted in a huge weight being lifted off my shoulders allowing me to focus on schoolwork and football for my club, Roger Casement's Portglenone. If you would like to talk to someone, the Pupil Health and Wellbeing prefects are very approachable and supportive.



GEORGIA McCANN

Hello, my name is Georgia McCann and I am one of the Head Prefects responsible for Pupil Health and Wellbeing. Health and Wellbeing is about more than looking after your body and physical health. It is also about being kind to your mind. It is important that we allow ourselves to feel stressed, worried, or upset rather than suppressing these emotions. Sometimes your own mind can be your worst enemy, so it is important that we do not battle tough times alone. I would love to offer support to pupils struggling and be someone they can turn to when they feel alone. I always set aside time for my friends and family who mean everything to me. They also help me to see the world from another angle and put my problems into perspective. My mum always reminds me to make my mind a peaceful place as it is the only one I will ever get. Sometimes we all just need to be reminded of that.



CILLIAN McLARNON

Hello, my name is Cillian McLarnon and I am one of the Head Prefects for Pupil Health and Wellbeing. Health and Wellbeing is of great importance to each student within our school. Positive wellbeing ensures a positive mind-set which results in exceeding in school, both academically and personally. There are many ways to prevent schoolwork and outside life from affecting your wellbeing, such as meditating, going for a walk, or something as easy as deep breathing. For example, I use sports like Gaelic football in order to de-stress. If anyone is feeling stressed or under pressure, the Pupil Health and Wellbeing Prefects are always here to talk to you no matter what problem you are having.



SOPHIE ELLIOT

Hello, my name is Sophie Elliott. Being given responsibility for pupil health and wellbeing as a Head Prefect is very important to me because I want to make sure that all students feel as though they have someone they can share their problems with. I feel very strongly about the issue of mental health as I myself have struggled to cope with pressure during exam time, but using strategies such as timetabling my revision, taking time out to exercise and making sure I balance my social life with school work have taught me that no problem is too big to be solved. The best piece of advice I can give to anyone who is struggling is that a problem shared is a problem halved. So don't be afraid to approach me or any of the other pupil health and wellbeing prefects.

"IT'S GOOD TO TALK"

Our Prefects can be easily recognised by the light blue Pupil Health and Wellbeing badge worn on their uniform.

Additional Prefects include:

Rachel Bonnes
Onagh Donaghy
Nicole Laverty
Maria McAleese
Aine McElean
Lauren Ward

PUPIL
HEALTH &
WELLBEING
HEAD PREFECTS



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PRAMERICA SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY AWARDS

Congratulations to Emma Smyth who was recognised as a worthy finalist at the virtual Spirit of the Community Pramerica Awards on Tuesday 15th September.

Emma and her family have helped to raise money for Cancer Fund for Children. Emma also volunteers and fundraises for charities including the Autumn Leaf Club, an organisation for elderly people that allows them to meet others through organising old-style dancing events, day trips and meals.

She also volunteered in Ghana for two weeks working in a local village school and hospital and successfully fundraised £1800 in order to improve living conditions there.

Emma also ran a cake sale for Children in Need, raising £200 and has contributed to the Road of Hope for over 14 years.



Emma commented on her remarkable charitable work, *"I realised that there were many problems in the world that needed support to find a solution"*. This is an inspirational attitude and Emma has made such a difference to so many people's lives.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

Niamh Neeson, in Year 15, recently took part in the Dermot Earley Youth leadership Initiative.

It is a tribute to Dermot's lifetime of sporting and professional achievements and his commitment to serving the community. The programme empowers young people to enhance their leadership capabilities to better enable them to reach their full potential and have a positive impact on the world around them.

Niamh was one of only fifteen students that took part in the initiative and she travelled to Belfast for each tutorial. There were three modules that Niamh had to complete throughout the programme. The first module was based on the core values of Youth leadership. For the second module, Niamh delivered a presentation on the importance of GAA in schools.

The initiative was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic but this did not stop Niamh working hard to complete her third module from home. Fittingly, she created a community action project video on mental health and the effects of lockdown.

After Niamh had completed all three modules, she was awarded a 1st class honours in Youth Leadership from NUI Galway in St Mary's University College Belfast.

What a fantastic qualification to earn at such a young age!





ABP ANGUS YOUTH COMPETITION WINNERS

In December 2017, Thomas O'Kane, Peter Graham and I entered the ABP Angus Youth Challenge.

This is a competition where 14-16 year olds in schools across Northern Ireland undergo a series of interviews and presentations in order to win five Aberdeen Angus calves. It was the first time the competition had taken place in Northern Ireland.

We made it through to the final three teams after completing several interviews and a presentation focusing on our knowledge of the UK beef industry and the importance of family farming.

At Balmoral Show in May of 2018, we were presented with five Angus X British Friesian calves to raise over eighteen months. As a team, we all took responsibility of looking after the calves including vaccinations and feeding as well as the weighing of calves at regular intervals to measure their performance by calculating liveweight gains.

We got so much experience from the competition and acquired many new skills including presentation and interview skills and the ability to work as a team in looking after the calves.

Amazingly, we went on to win the competition after completing a final report focusing on the sustainability of the family farm and participating in a final interview. The results were announced live on Youtube in March. We won £1000 in prize money for the school!



In agreement with the school and our teacher Ms Gildea, and in keeping with the theme of our winning project, we have decided to spend the prize money on promoting sustainable agriculture through farming families in Africa.

Five farm bundles each comprising of a cow and a goat and five chickens have been purchased from the Irish development charity Concern; these will go to five villages in Africa to help provide a sustainable food supply for families there.

Furthermore, £500 has been donated to our St Louis school in Ghana. This money will be used to support and develop the small farm attached to the school. Students will be taught about sustainable farming techniques appropriate to their area and a sustainable food supply will be generated for them and their families.

Participating in and winning the first ABP Youth Challenge in Northern Ireland has been a very memorable experience and we want to thank everyone for their support and encouragement. We are very happy that farming families in Less Economically Developed areas will also now benefit from our involvement in this innovative and very worthwhile competition.

By Conall McCafferty

EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

For European Day of Languages 2020, our Year 9 and 10 students embraced the challenge of cooking or baking something to represent the countries around the world where different languages are spoken.

We were overwhelmed by the wonderful sweet delights and savoury dishes produced. Prizes were given for presentation and a traditional dish of the country. Our winners were Ethan Allen and Kate McClintock (Year 10) and Emma Killough and Éibhleann Ardif (Year 9).

Our Year 8 students also showed off their artistic talents and painted Language Stones to represent the languages they learn here at St Louis. The winners were Darryl Clarke and Conor McIlhatton. A magnificent effort was made by all - very well done!





THE SHOWSTOPPERS

Unfortunately, GCSE Home Economics Classes have been unable to carry out their practicals in lessons due to Covid restrictions. However, this has not stopped them from producing masterpieces at home!



MEET SOME YEAR 13s

Hi, my name is Hannah Murray. I'm from Moneyglass and I came to St Louis after completing my GCSEs at St Benedict's, Randalstown.

I am really enjoying my time here so far as everyone has made me feel so welcome. The teachers are very helpful and overall I've had such a positive start to Sixth Form.



I have chosen to study Health and Social Care, Irish and Sport (Double Award). Hopefully, I will be successful in securing a place to study Midwifery at University.

In my spare time, I play for my local club, Moneyglass, and have won two All-Ireland Finals and many county championships with them.

Hello, I'm Joey McDonnell and I'm from Portglenone. I'm a past pupil of St Conor's College and came to St Louis for Sixth Form.

The subjects I am studying are: Moving Image Art, Drama, IT and Sports Studies. I've chosen MIA and Drama because I really enjoy writing and storytelling. As for IT, I think it's good to learn about technology in this new age and I'm interested in learning more about Sports Studies.



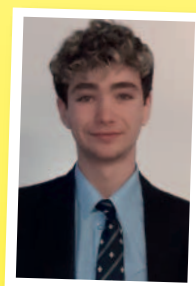
My experience at St Louis has been absolutely phenomenal! Since September, I've been lucky to settle into an amazing friendship group. Classes have been extremely engaging and the teachers are very welcoming.

In the future, I'd love to pursue a career in screenwriting. Just creating a story and characters, allowing them to develop and seeing them come to life is oddly thrilling to me.

Besides school, I like to listen to music, talk to friends or play video games. I am also invested in a lot of fiction, primarily comic books and their media adaptations. Over the years, I have also taken part in a few local charity events, where I've acted as a character on different holiday trails.

Hi, I'm Sam Crawford and I'm from Ballymena.

I'm studying English, Politics, History and PE. I prefer essay based subjects and I love sports, so for me this was the right combination and balance. Also, in the future I'm thinking about working towards a Law based degree, therefore the literary based subjects lend themselves well to this potential career pathway.



In my spare time, I play soccer for Northend Football Club in defense. Basketball is another favourite sport of mine but I don't play competitively.

My Sixth Form experience has been great so far – I'm enjoying that it's now our turn to be the more senior pupils in school. Another advantage of studying for AS Levels is that there is more time to focus on the subjects we've chosen.

ICT YEAR 8

As part of their ICT curriculum, Year 8 pupils learn about the importance of online safety.

Olivia, Teia, Alex, Cara and Eimhear (8 Lismoyle), created colourful and informative leaflets for their peers highlighting the risks involved in having an online presence – information which is more important this year than ever before!

Well done to all Year 8 pupils for creating such descriptive and vibrant brochures!





“ACTIVATE YOUR CURIOSITY”

This year Mid and East Antrim Borough Council had organised a series of STEM events to highlight the importance of Science, Maths and Engineering for the future careers of our students in the Ballymena Area.

One of these events involved producing a poster describing an idea and design which would help humanity deal with social or environmental issues going forward. St Louis had three winning entries at different Key Stages and their projects are outlined below. The winners received Amazon vouchers and will see their posters in the “Hall of First Attempts” in the Braid’s Summer School hosted by Prof Brian Cox. This event will take place in June 2021. Our winners, along with some lucky Year 10 students, will also be asked to attend the Summer School.

The winning entries:

My idea is to design a portable multi-sensory play table for people with severe learning disabilities. It will aim to help prevent self-harm as well as being a fun thing for them to do. The idea is inspired by my brother who has cerebral palsy. As a very active family who often spend time outdoors, we can find it really difficult to entertain him and prevent him from self-injury. I hope this design would be a perfect solution.
Darach Bradley, Year 11

Plastic is a huge problem for marine life such as turtles, sea birds and dolphins with many dying from eating plastic bags or getting tangled up in plastic waste. For the competition I designed a solar panelled, remote control dolphin which would swim the oceans and collect plastic rubbish from the seas to prevent animals from dying a horrible death.

Rory Mulholland, Year 8



I designed an indicator paper that could be used to detect ‘club drugs’. In just three years, cases of drink spiking have risen and whilst victims are mostly women, men are victims of it too. The paper is small and discreet and if a drug was present in a drink, the paper would change colour indicating the drink is unsafe.

Rebekah O’Neill, Year 14



YEAR 8 ART AND DESIGN

In Art and Design, Year 8 have been creating wonderful monster designs. Madeleine McCaffrey demonstrated excellent literacy skills to develop a story around her creation.

‘It was my wedding day, I was walking down the aisle, on my one and only, wedding day. I was so, so overjoyed! But. That’s when it hit me...the Infection. It started at my toes, then my feet and soon, my whole body. I sprouted wings and a tail, horns and spikes. “Why Me?” I thought, “Why Now?” I dropped to my knees and I looked around...everyone was horrified, I was... A Monster...’

Madeleine McCaffrey, 8 Lurig





ONLINE JUNIOR MATHS CHALLENGE – MAY 2020

Congratulations to all our current Year 9 and Year 10 pupils who participated in the Junior Maths Challenge in May. Many of these pupils were awarded certificates.

Well done to everyone who took part!

Current Year 9s

Robert Crooke – Gold, Oisín Doherty – Silver,
Eoghan McGrenaghan – Silver, Ashley Anderson – Bronze,
Finn Connon – Bronze, Ceallach Crawford – Bronze,
James McVeigh – Bronze, Mikey O'Brien – Bronze

Current Year 10s

Siobhan McGale – Gold, Niamh O'Shea – Gold,
Eve Magill – Silver, Patrick Murphy – Silver,
Clodagh Maguire – Bronze, Grace McElholm – Bronze,
Kate McGilligan – Bronze, Ruairi Robb – Bronze,
Jelisejs Sestakovs – Bronze, Keira Young – Bronze

Congratulations to the 6th form students below who all received bronze certificates in the Senior Maths Challenge in November 2020!

Year 14 Pupils

Hannah Carey, Jack Fitzpatrick, Ciara O'Neill, Ruxandra Ursan

Year 15 Pupils

Jack Addison, Ruairi Duffin, Ceothan Gormley, Liam McAuley,
Ciaran McDonnell, Aimee McDowell, Cara Pirie





BOOKBUZZ

To celebrate Book Week NI, all Year 8 pupils were involved in Bookbuzz! It is a reading programme from Booktrust, which supports schools to encourage reading for pleasure, independent choice and to develop a whole school reading culture. Students were given the chance to choose their own free book to keep from a wide range of titles and genres which were chosen by a panel of experts.

In St Louis we work hard to develop a love of books and reading throughout the school community. We know the huge impact that reading has for communication skills, general knowledge and success across the curriculum. We are confident that Bookbuzz will begin, encourage and nurture a life-long love of reading.



REVOLTING RHYMES

Year 9 Drama classes have been taking inspiration from Roald Dahl's 'Revolting Rhymes'.

Students rewrote traditional nursery rhymes and fairytales featuring surprise endings in place of traditional happily ever after conclusions. They also created their own masks to reflect characters in their rhymes!



Once upon a time...
Have you heard the story of Jack and Jill?
She poisoned his food and made him ill.
To get revenge once and for all
He set her up for a terrible fall.
"Come for a walk", he smiled so sweetly,
Then pushed off a cliff discreetly.
He lives alone now, happy and free,
And makes what he likes for his breakfast and tea.

Or perhaps you know of Red Riding Hood?
You think she was kind? You think she was good?
That's not the truth - that girl was cruel!
Torturing animals made her drool.
Poor tiny ants - she made them fry,
She would laugh out loud with an evil cry.
Off with the legs and wings of bees,
She hid their bodies deep in the trees.
One day a wolf who looked so tough,
Gobbled her up and growled "ENOUGH!"

Finally, the story of Goldilocks,
Whose demise was caused by smelly socks.
He mother warned her to keep them clean,
But she didn't listen, if you know what I mean.
She found out that bears have sensitive noses
A moment too late, now she's under the roses.
We all can learn from her terrible fate,
If you don't wash your feet, it might too late

By Alex Warren

There was a boy called Jack who loved his cow Daisy,
Who sometimes behaved a little crazy.
Jack's mother wanted to sell her for lots,
But Jack could only think the worst thoughts.
'What if they kill her and use her for leather?',
He said crying, as he couldn't keep it together.
Jack's other friends were Jack and Jill.
One day Jack fell and hurt his head falling down a hill,
Jill took a tumble and broke her spine!
So, you could say - things weren't so fine.
Jack went down into the local square,
And found a man who had time to spare.
Jack said, 'Here is a cow it could be yours for a pound or two.'
The man said, 'All I have are these beans and a shoe.'
'I'll take the beans' replied Jack,
'Wise choice,' the man said as Jack walked back.
Jack's mother was annoyed that all he got was a pile of beans,
Something that's more useless than a pile of jeans!
Jack's mother threw the beans in the bin.
But now that when the twist will begin.
As the beans grew overnight,
There came a light up in the sky so bright,
The light came closer and closer,
And it turned out it was a giant built like a bulldozer,
He came crashing down on to Jack's house
The only thing left unflattened was a mouse.
As he marched around the quiet town standing tall
He knocked poor Humpty off his wall.
He stomped over land and mountains until there was sea
When suddenly he fell down dead by the sting of a bee!

By Darragh Brennan, 9 Lismoyle





UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS WITHOUT WORK EXPERIENCE? Advice for Year 13

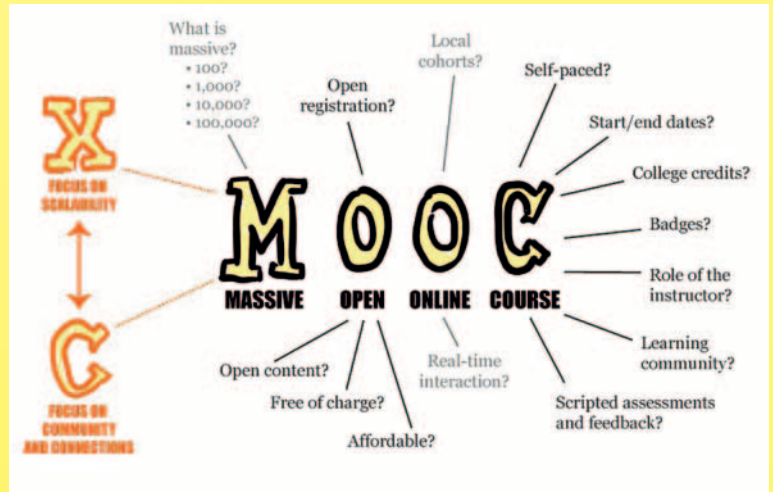
The personal statement is a key part of the UCAS application when you apply to university – this is the chance to show the admissions tutor who you are, what you're interested in and why you deserve a place on the course you're applying for. You'll know from research that admissions tutors like to hear about the work experience you've already gained, particularly for courses like Medicine, Nursing and Teacher Training. But what if you haven't had the opportunity to gain any work experience because of the Covid-19 pandemic, where there are many workplace restrictions in place.

The CEIAG department have some advice in relation to this and strongly advise Year 13 students in particular to seek out ways to develop their personal portfolio of experiences in order to develop the personal statement section of the UCAS form.

The CEIAG department recommend:

1. Completing a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)
2. Undertaking a virtual work placement
3. Participating in university webinars
4. Checking out other university outreach events
5. Listening to Ted Talks or Podcasts

Our current upper sixth student Ellie McLean discusses her experience of completing online courses from home:



When a summer work experience placement wasn't looking likely due to the pandemic, I took the opportunity during lock down to upskill myself by taking on a MOOC in 'The Impact of Childhood Mental Health on Learning'. I wanted my personal statement to be competitive for Medicine and I believe that by showing commitment to further study and lifelong learning within the field of medicine helped with that. I currently have offers to attend interviews and I am excited by the prospect of discussing my completion of the course with the panel.

Really what we are saying is- no placement? No Problem.



PAST PUPIL FOCUS – EIMEAR HIGGINS

I'm Eimear Higgins, a former Head Girl of St Louis. I left in 2015 and I am currently working as a Junior Doctor.

After saying goodbye to the Hill of Kintullagh and with the help of my teachers, friends and family, I travelled a few miles up the road to Queen's University Belfast to study Medicine.

It was a great course to study with a mix of practical and written elements and lots of fun along the way with friends old and new. Through all my experiences at university, the friends that I made at St Louis have remained. I lived with them for all five years of my degree and although it's great to meet new people, there's something very comforting about coming home after class to old friends.

I qualified in 2020, just in time for a global pandemic! We graduated early and began work in May, four months before our original start date which was to be in August 2020. Starting work as an F1 Doctor (Foundation year 1) has been both exciting and extremely challenging.

I started in Causeway hospital, Coleraine, on the surgical wards. It has been great to start off my career close to home, it is a very small world and I often run into people I know which I always enjoy. A typical day involves a ward round with Senior Doctors, deciding on plans for each patient. Then it's my job to put those plans into action, getting scans or taking blood tests. There are nights and weekends to work too, during which you see more emergencies. My favourite part about the job is chatting to the patients. A day might be busy or stressful but the stories they bring and their appreciation makes things worthwhile.

In December I move to Antrim to the medical wards. As a Junior Doctor you change ward and specialty every four months which has both pros and cons I suppose. Next year I will be doing jobs in General Practice, Acute Medicine and Renal Medicine in Belfast.

Due to Covid, there are extra parts to the job that I never imagined would exist. Everything takes longer to do and there are a multitude of new hoops to jump through but I am always supported by great colleagues who are all going through the same challenges.

In the future, I hope to be able to travel the world with my work. Medicine is something that you can take anywhere. I have been to Australia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Singapore with my degree, working in hospitals there. At present, I'm not sure what I wish to specialise in. I enjoy the adrenaline rush of emergencies in A&E but I also love taking time to talk to patients and listen to their stories. There are so many different avenues that can be pursued in this career and many people change the road they travel many times before finding what is right for them.



For those wishing to pursue a similar path, I would say to believe in yourself. It's not overly easy but many people have done it before so why not you? I found the careers advice for Medicine in St. Louis invaluable. Don't think that you have to study solely Science to get in. My A-levels were Chemistry, Biology and Irish. Irish was by far my favourite subject and I spent many summers in the Gaeltacht with my friends from St Louis. It is definitely important to have a range of interests, for any degree or just for life in general. For me, I still love Irish, playing sport with friends from home, music and I have recently got into poetry! However random they may be I would urge people to continue hobbies from school but also to be brave in pursuing new interests.

Most of all I would say try to enjoy your time at school. We still laugh about the time a bat appeared in our Geography classroom, only for Mr Whiteford to come rescue it with a Quality Street tin! Heading to Romania with school in both Summer and Winter was a highlight for me, or our trip to Paris in fourth year with Mr Boyd. I very much cherish the friends and memories that were made in St Louis and how it was a stepping stone to getting me to the job I am in now.

Sending best wishes to all St Louis staff and pupils, past and present.

Eimear





PAST PUPIL FOCUS – JUDE DOBBIN

My name is Jude Dobbin and after seven amazing years at St Louis, I decided to go to University College Cork to study World Languages.

The reason I chose this course is because the French department in St Louis made me fall in love with languages with the incredible teaching of Mrs Fleming, Mrs O'Kane and Dominique. Even though Cork is over 300 miles away, it is the only course I could find that allowed me to study such a wide variety of languages. As of right now, I am studying French, Japanese and Mandarin.

My course is incredibly demanding and very tough, but I have loved the challenge! Of course, I have not got to fully experience it with being 100% online, but that just goes to show how it will be even more incredible once things begin to return to normal.

My accommodation in Cork is a 5-minute walk from campus and a 10-minute walk to the city centre and has all the necessities! From Moneyglass to a big city was a very welcome change! The university's library is gigantic and has some amazing facilities, like a VR room and fancy group project rooms (no Mrs Boyd though which is about the only thing missing).

It obviously is not the first-year experience I always imagined, but we are all in the same boat and I have managed to make friends, nevertheless. A fellow first year took it upon himself to create an online group of fresher students. With the help of myself and about 20 other first years, we have been working to get all first years in UCC to join it, so they have an opportunity to meet people. Making friends virtually is a little surreal but fingers crossed for semester two and beyond!

Although my time at St Louis was cut slightly short due to Covid, it was still some of the best years of my life. Year 14 was by far the best. Getting to experience "Hairspray" with such a fabulous team of people was a dream come true and I will never forget it.

My entire career pathway has been shaped by the language department in St Louis. Even if I was the only person studying A2 French, Mrs Fleming was absolutely incredible, and all the future A-Level French pupils will be very lucky to have her!

Despite studying languages, I have not hung up the acting cape just yet! The second theatres re-open you can bet I'll be on the Cork amateur dramatic scene! The skills taught by Mrs Devlin will stay with me forever!

I've also joined the film society in UCC and can't help but analyse every camera angle and lighting technique due to the fact that Mrs McDonald has permanently drilled "CLEMS" into my head during Moving Image Arts.



My time at St Louis was amazing and I have some wonderful memories. But I wait with anticipation for the future, especially as my course offers the opportunity to spend a year abroad in the country of one of the languages I study. So come 2022/2023 I will be living and studying in Tokyo, Japan.

After I've graduated? Who knows! I might try applying for drama school to do a Master's degree or do my TEFL course and go back to Japan to teach English.

One thing for sure is that many opportunities are there for me if I want them and what I've learned from my time at St Louis, both academically and socially, will help me wherever I go.



ANTI BULLYING WEEK

St Louis raised awareness of bullying behaviours and the impact on those who experience it through several activities in school such as: a virtual assembly, freeze frames in Drama and a poster competition for Year 8.



100 MILE CYCLE FUNDRAISER

My Name's Doddie Foundation founder is one of the most recognisable personalities in rugby- Doddie Weir. Since he was diagnosed with Motor Neurones disease, Doddie Weir has dedicated himself to raising funds to aid research and investigate potential cures.

Ryan Thom, a Year 12 student, completed a 100- mile cycle on Sunday 18th October in an attempt to raise £5,000 for the Doddie Weir Fund. Cycling alongside his father and Ex Scottish and Ulster Rugby International Simon Danielli, Ryan began his cycle in the early hours of the morning in Warrenpoint and headed around the east coast.

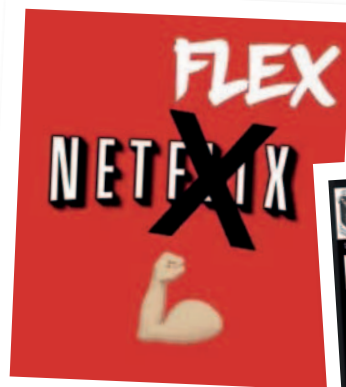
Ryan used his time during lockdown to train for this event and went on to raise over £16,000 to date, alongside his team of cyclists for the foundation. Ryan is a meticulous student who is a perfectionist at everything he does! We are incredibly proud of what Ryan has achieved and we thank everyone in the school community who contributed to Ryan's efforts. Well done Ryan!



NETFLEX IS NETFLIX WITH A TWIST!

Like the ever popular app, it has a wide array of workouts which are quick and handy to choose from. At a click of a button you will be navigated to your chosen workout on YouTube, as well as our own SLG PE YouTube channel. Netflex provides workouts for everyone, beginner to expert, dancer to fitness guru. There is a wide range of handpicked workouts and SLG GAA challenges to choose from! We aim to keep all of our young people healthy and active through these tough times!

Please head over to our school PE twitter account @StLouisPEdept to access our new and brilliant resource!



@SLGBallymena



www.stlouisgrammar.com



ULSTER COLLEGES ALL STARS 2020

Congratulations to Emma Louise McAreavey who was selected as corner back on the Ulster College Ladies Gaelic All Star Team 2020. The trials were a tough process of elimination and were very well contested. Emma Louise was one of the 30 All-Stars selected from over 150 girls throughout Ulster.

Emma Louise then travelled to Kinnegad in County Westmeath to compete in the Inter provincials and take on the College All-stars from Munster, Connaught and Leinster. Even though the results didn't go the Ulster girls' way, we are extremely proud of Emma and all that she has achieved with St. Louis Grammar School!

Emma Louise is a stand out performer for St Ergnats Moneyglass and the County Antrim team. She is well known for her brilliant attitude, commitment and the raw talent she has, and we have no doubt that she has a very bright future ahead of her. We wish Emma every success!



Massive congratulations to Caoimhe Molloy and Maura Downey who received College All-Stars in 2020 for Camogie. Caoimhe and Maura were selected out of approximately 120 girls to be awarded a college All-Star. What an achievement!

Caoimhe received her first All Star and has a very promising future ahead playing Camogie.

Maura received her second All-Star in a row!

Unfortunately, due to Covid, the girls were unable to participate in the annual Inter Provincials.

These girls have worked tirelessly throughout their time in St Louis on and off the Camogie pitch, and to have their talent, hard work and skill recognised is truly fantastic. An excellent achievement for the girls who have shown the upmost dedication and commitment to St Louis Camogie over the last number of years. Well Done girls! We are so proud of you- you deserve every success!



RORY MCCLOSKEY

I was delighted to be selected by St Louis to attend Hurling All-Star trials. The trials were held in Queen's University and were based over two days. There were approximately 150 players from all over Ulster at the two trials, and the standard of Hurling was very high, so the pressure was on to stand out. I was awarded left half back on the team and after receiving the news I was over the moon and felt very privileged to have got the award.

After Christmas I travelled back to Queen's University again for the launch where I received my kit and got my photo taken. It was a great day and a good opportunity to spend time with All-Stars from other schools.

The awards presentation night was meant to be in April but it couldn't take place due to Covid-19. However, that doesn't take away from receiving my All Star and would like to thank everyone who helped me earn the award!





ACCOMPLISHED ARTIST

Congratulations to Year 10 student, Caoimhe McGroggan, whose beautiful watercolour paintings have been chosen for exhibition in Midtown Makers Shop in Ballymena. Caoimhe commented on her success, "I first started to draw about a year ago and began painting during lockdown. I've really enjoyed producing artwork for Midtown Makers and am very thankful for this opportunity. I hope to make a career out of drawing in the future".

This certainly is a wonderful start for a pupil who has super command and delicate touch with paint! Well done, Caoimhe!




SCIFEST AWARD WINNERS




Congratulations to Bronagh Dempster, Daniel Montgomery, Liam Young and their teacher Mr Trainor on the huge success of their project, 'Helping Sensory Overload' at the SciFest Awards. They were winners in three categories: Boston Scientific Medical Devices Award, Newstalk Best Communicator Award and Intel Best Technology Project Award.

Bronagh provided a summary on what the app does and their success, "We submitted our app: HSO – Helping Sensory Overloads; which we have been working on for the past year. Our app, which was originally made for those with Sensory Overloads and ASD, monitors the ambient sound levels in an area and provides a warning, alerting the person that it is too loud in that specific area. A notification would be sent to the carer, teacher, parent or person who has the app downloaded to alert them that the area is unsuitable. We were beyond excited when we received three awards for our project."





ONE MINUTE WITH..



AISLING SMITH

- Name: Aisling Smith
- Club: Ballymena & Antrim
- Favorite race: Armagh Road Race
- Hobbies: Camogie, dancing, Gaelic
- Childhood hero: Ciara Mageean
- Best athlete you've ever ran with: Elsa Moore
- Best athlete you've ever ran against: Kirsti Foster
- Best race you've ever been involved in: Ulster Final 2020 @ Mallusk
- Best trainer within the squad: Eimear Johnston
- Worst trainer within the squad: Rhea Waring
- Best motivator: My parents
- Any superstitions: Bless myself before a race
- Best advice ever received: Push yourself, there's no point giving up now
- Area of game to improve: Push myself more
- Biggest strength: I always finish strong
- School you like to see do well: Slemish
- Advice for younger players in SLG: Believe in yourself and never give up





JUNK KOUTURE GRAND FINAL

St Louis' All Ireland Junk Kouture Finalists spent Monday 23rd November filming with RTE in Castle Leslie!

The girls' performances will be shown on RTE Player in December with Louis Walsh, Michelle Visage and Fashion and Textile University Lecturer as judges.

Good luck girls – your creations have been awe inspiring!

Teams:

Rhianna Heffron, Neve Wilkinson and Katie McCaw.

Ciara Fraser and Kimberly McCallum.



THERE'S NO STOPPING 'THE POETRY SLAM'!

Year 8 competed in our annual 'Poetry Slam' to mark National Poetry Day on Thursday 1st October.

Although current restrictions did not allow for our usual venue of the Library and our inter-class competition, pupils still got their creative juices flowing and performed original poetry, raps and songs for their own bubbles! The day was a huge success for showcasing the imagination and flair of our pupils. Well done to everyone who took part!



POPE JOHN PAUL II AWARD

The Pope John Paul II Award involves volunteering activities in the parish, such as taking part in GIFT programmes, helping with the money collection, saying readings at Mass; as well as volunteering in the local community. Examples include helping with the Christmas shoebox appeal, our own school project, 'Friends for Romania', and assisting local elderly people in the parish. In the school year 2019/20, seven pupils completed the PJPII Award: Marcella Kelly, Callum Grant, Emer McAtamney, Brenda McGuigan, Leah Barker, Rebecca McDonald and Tara Murphy; along with the help of our award leader, Miss Ferris.

On April 2nd 2020, the Pope John Paul II Award ceremony was supposed to be taking place at St. Mary's Church in Belfast. Instead, we had just recently been placed into a national lockdown, not allowed to leave the house except for our daily walk and visit to Tesco. We were disappointed to not have the chance to celebrate our achievements with peers, and like everyone else, were adjusting to the 'new normal' of staying at home!

However, we were excited to finally get the chance to enjoy the celebration of our achievements, albeit through Facebook Live. The ceremony took place on December 1st and it was a lovely opportunity to come together and celebrate through Mass and prayer. We also received our medals and certificates through the post.

"Dear young people, let yourselves be taken over by the light of Christ, and spread that light wherever you are."
Saint Pope John Paul II

Leah Barker



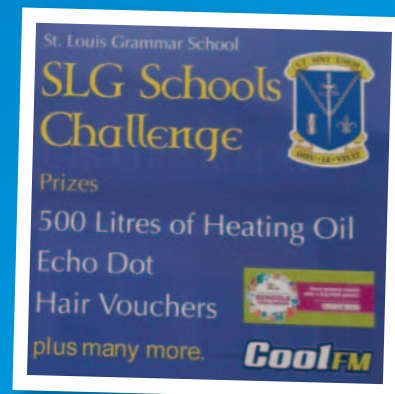


THE STUDENT COUNCIL

Since the beginning of the academic year, The Student Council has been fundraising to purchase new equipment and resources for our School Pod. The members of the Council acquired a variety of excellent prizes, including 500 litres of heating oil. The wider school community have been very generous in buying tickets and the draw is due to take place mid-December.

After Christmas, the Council hope to cheer up the January blues by launching the 'St Louis Cash Call'. Students and staff will have a chance of winning £250 for a £1 entry fee, however there is only one rule, 'You got to be in it to win it'. This will be zoomed live across all classes at the end of January.

In a very different year, The Student Council have displayed excellent leadership and organisational skills. They are fantastic ambassadors for our student body.



POET IN PE

Orla Stewart, 8 Lisbreen, wrote a beautiful poem about her love of PE. She was awarded some special SLG merchandise from our PE Department. This is definitely a poem to be framed in PE!



STAR PUPILS

Congratulations to the following pupils who have been selected by their PE teachers, out of the whole year group, as the star pupils within PE.

These pupils have worked extremely hard in their PE classes from September, displaying great effort and determination throughout. They have shown a very positive attitude to PE and have demonstrated wonderful effort and enthusiasm to all activities. They have also displayed excellent sportsmanship and worked brilliantly with their peers. Well done to our star pupils!

Conlon Boyle – Year 8, Molly Doherty – Year 8,
Eddie Smyth – Year 9, Erin McMullan – Year 9,
Connor O'Hara – Year 10, Emily Flavin – Year 10

Why I Love PE

Now I know that English and Maths have their place,
But you don't get a medal for scoring an ace,
You don't hear the crowds as they call out your name,
Nor read in the papers as they rejoice in your fame.

No running in corridors, or shouting class,
Walk up right and proper – "stay off the grass!",
That's well and good – but it's not really for me –
That's why I love it when it's time for PE!

Running and panting and giving your soul,
Laughing with teammates as you score your first goal!
Sweaty and messy, exhausted and sore,
But there's no other subject that I could love more!

Out in the freedom with a stick and a ball,
Or running cross country – I give it my all,
Swimming and splashing like a dolphin at sea,
That's why I love it when it's time for PE!

Orla Stewart





OBITUARIES

Alex Mc Donnell RIP

Alex was Head of Geography and taught in St Louis from 1975 up to his retirement in 2000. He was also a member of the Board of Governors until 2008. Sadly, Alex passed away in May 2020.

He will be remembered as a dedicated and inspirational Geography teacher, a real professional in his dealings with students and staff. He was a genuinely fair minded and compassionate person both in and outside of school.

Since his retirement, he continued to follow the fortunes of St Louis and was indeed a great advocate for the school.

We remember him for all that he contributed and the impact he made to the school over those years of service in SLG.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him in the wider St Louis Community.

Declan Martin RIP

Declan, a former Deputy Principal, was a History and Irish teacher in St Louis for a remarkable 35 years.

He was passionate about instilling his love for his subjects within the pupils whom he taught, whilst also being renowned for his kindness and generosity towards everyone.

Declan met his wife at St Louis, Jeanne MacKenzie, a teacher with the Education Board. Originally from Belfast, Declan made Ballymena his adopted home and raised four children there with Jeanne: Eoin, Caitriona, Deirdre and Aisling.

He threw himself into helping the local community and was a valued member of St Vincent de Paul, the Order of Malta, Ballymena SureStart and the Youth Encounter Programme. In retirement he even wrote two books on Irish Political Postcards!

Unfortunately, Declan passed away in August 2020. A past pupil commented on the legacy he left behind which will resonate with all who were fortunate enough to know him, *"A great man and a great teacher...he changed innumerable lives for the better, which is the best epitaph you could hope for".*

PEIG DENVIR (NÉE DOOEY) RIP

A former St Louis student and sporting great, Peig Denvir (née Dooley), sadly passed away in October 2020 in Newcastle, County Down.

Peig played at midfield on the first ever All-Ireland senior winning side from Ulster that defeated Waterford in Cappoquin in October 1945. She added a second medal a year later with her twin sister, Kathleen (Dooley), joining her on the team.

She captained St Louis Ballymena to the school's first Ulster senior camogie title in 1946 – after she won her first All-Ireland medal. She also was on the first Dunloy team to win the Antrim club championship later in 1946!

Peig's achievements are an inspiration for our sports enthusiasts in St Louis. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family.



Peig is on the far left of this picture taken after Antrim's first All-Ireland success.

FOND FAREWELL

We wish Mr Henry all the very best in his new teaching position in St Colman's College, Newry – a school much closer to his hometown of Warrenpoint!

He made a wonderful impact on both students and staff when he joined St Louis in 2012.





NEW STAFF

We welcomed the following teaching staff to St Louis in August 2020:

Miss Canavan – Teacher of ICT/Computer Science

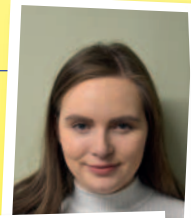
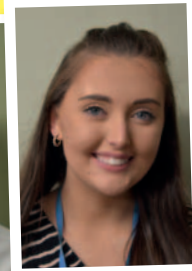
Miss Drennan – Teacher of English

Miss Lavery – Teacher of Technology and Design

Mr Maguire – Teacher of Maths/Science

Miss McCann – Teacher of Drama

Mrs McCloskey – Teacher of Religious Studies



A REFLECTION...

Words

Written, spoken or unspoken
can unite us in friendship
or separate us in painful memories.

Words can reveal who we are,
or disguise us from whom we should be.
Words can forgive, heal and liberate us,
Instil peace or cause hostility.
Words can incite and alienate,
embrace and unify.

Words can be welcoming and enriching,
encouraging and joyful;
or they can be weapons of distrust,
vulgar, deceptive and insensitive.

Words can express empathy,
be compassionate and consoling.
Inspiring and enlightening.
They can empower and be life-giving,
stimulate positivity and promote optimism.

Words spoken can never be taken back!
They resonate links with the past,
keep us in touch with the present,
and give us hope for the future.

Words said on the spur of the moment
can be thoughtful or thoughtless,
leading to varied consequences,
in the minds and hearts of those who hear them.

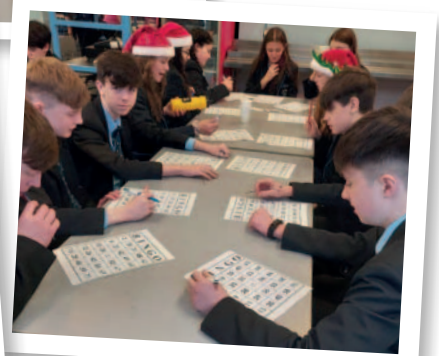
A word is sacred;
A word is our bond;
A word is memorable
A word is immortal
The Word is God. Amen.

Fr Francis, M. Beirne PP

HOUSE PRIZE DAY

Winners of the house points this term, 8 Lisbreen, 9 Lyndon and 10 Layde were treated to a 'Big Breakfast' in our school canteen on Friday 4th December.

Each class 'bubble' sat together and enjoyed the reward for their superb team work! There was also a game of bingo with six amazing voucher prizes. The lucky winners received either a TeamKit voucher, a Game voucher or a One4All voucher.





BBC TWO MINUTE TALES

BBC Northern Ireland's Two Minute Tales is a short story competition for 5-16 year-olds aimed at promoting creativity and imagination.

This year, two St Louis students have been shortlisted as finalists in this prestigious competition!

Firstly, Eva Scott, current Year II pupil, was a runner up in the 14-16 age category for the spring/summer competition in which the theme was, 'Home'.

Eva's story, 'The Homesick Dragon' was voiced by actor, Philip Sacramento. It was broadcast on the Lynette Fay Show on Radio Ulster.

Annie McCrory, Year II, was shortlisted as a finalist in the same age category for the most recent series where entries had to be based on the theme, 'A Christmas to Remember'. Her entry, 'Frost Frenzy' will be broadcast on the Lynette Fay Show on Wednesday 25th December. The overall winner will be announced on Christmas Eve!

Good luck to Annie and we will be tuned in to Radio Ulster to hear her wonderful story! A compilation programme featuring all the two minute tales will be broadcast at noon on Christmas Day on Radio Ulster.

Both girls fulfilled the competition's criteria of creating 'magical and fantastical fiction!' They are extremely talented young writers!



THE HOMESICK DRAGON

Sir Jameson sat bragging about being the kingdom's bravest and most accomplished knight. Toby, the kitchen boy, put a feast of roast beef down in front of the pompous knight. He wished he could have even a small portion of the knight's wealth.

An old cripple called from the corner of the room, "You can't be the bravest knight if you haven't killed Margon. Whoever vanquishes the beast gets all the treasure he protects." Everyone knew the huge dragon that guarded the treasury tower.

"Then I'm off to get my reward." The knight stood up valiantly. "You. I need a servant. You are to come with me, and you'll get your reward." The knight pointed at Toby who almost dropped his tray. Toby nodded eagerly. "Yes sir." What an opportunity!

Toby rode beside Jameson on a grey dapple called Aster through boggy wood, following a rough road. They found a ferocious dragon scrambling on top of the tower. Shields and swords littered the grass around the tower. The dragon blew a gust of snaking fire down towards them. Jameson's horse bolted, throwing him to the ground. Toby jumped down from Aster and Jameson sprinted to him. He swung his leg up onto Toby's horse. "You kill it." With that, Jameson pulled on Aster's reins and they galloped away, leaving Toby speechless in the middle of nowhere with an angry dragon.



Toby walked carefully towards the dragon and it growled down at him. Toby suddenly had an idea. He cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted up at the dragon, "Do you want help getting down?"

The dragon stilled and stared down at the small boy. Then it smiled sadly. "Yes, please. No one ever offers. I want to go home." Toby grinned and started to think of a plan.



FROST FRENZY

Thief. Scoundrel. Nuisance.

People were always shaking their fist at Jack Frost, and he had learned to shake his right back. Skulking down the street, hair threatening to impale stray leaves and hands thrust into motheaten pockets, he seethed as he recalled past winters. "My darling dahlias!" He wailed in an ear-splittingly high falsetto. "My pilfered petunias! My verdant violets, victims of such a vagabond! Curse you, Jack Frost!". His arched eyebrows, encrusted with icicles, plummeted downwards. "Same old, same old."

You see, unlike his big fish counterparts, Jack had never really been accepted by many. The constellations of condensation he left on windscreens were bemoaned by harried commuters, and often suffered a torturous death involving kettles of scalding water. His glistening roads, cleansed of all human litter or filth, were soon defaced with zig-zags of coarse salt and grit. Flowers bedecked in grandiose ice finery were executed in gardeners' relentless pursuit for perfection. After a while, it simply began to wear a guy down.

Rounding the corner, he sniffed resignedly and kicked at the mounds of leaves. It just wasn't fair. He made the world an art canvas, in return for what? Nothing. Instead, a nonagenarian in a tired red coat stole all the limelight. Maybe he would set aside his tools and call it a day; a swanky retirement hotel in the depths of the Arctic was calling his name.

And then it happened.

Lights crowded his vision.

Camera flashes ambushed the pavement.

Shouts of "Jack! Jack! This way!".

As his gaze focused, so did the blur of headlines.

JACK FROST UNMASKED: A HERO OF OUR MODERN ART, blared one. FROST HAS GOT HIS BITE BACK, screeched another. WE HAVE FROST FEVER!, rejoiced a third.

Things were finally looking up.

ALL IRELAND CAMOGIE FINAL

We were proud to have five St Louis ambassadors on Antrim's All Ireland team.

Miss Drain, along with four past pupils, Amy Boyle, Caoimhe Conlon, Ciara Gribben and Lucia McNaughton were fantastic in representing their county. Unfortunately, their opponents, Down, were victorious on Saturday 5th December but we know that there will be many more opportunities ahead!



SLG COAT AND SCARF

Keep warm during the Winter months with the official St Louis coat and scarf!

They are available to buy in our school shop which is open at break time each day (located beside canteen). The coat costs £33 and sizes range from age 10/11 to large adult. The scarf is £16.95.



CHRISTMAS RECIPES

Check out our Home Economics Department's Christmas baking recipes. Impress over the festive season with the perfect celebratory pavlova or cute reindeer cupcakes that will be sure to bring smiles to all faces!

CHRISTMAS PAVLOVA

If pavlova is your choice of dessert for Christmas Day, then this decadent but easy to make showstopper is sure to be a hit!

Ingredients

For the pavlova

- 6 large free-range egg whites
- 350g/12oz caster sugar
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp cornflour

For the filling

- 600ml/20fl oz double cream
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 50g/1¾oz icing sugar, sifted
- 200g/7oz strawberries, hulled and quartered
- 300g/10½oz raspberries
- 200g/7oz blueberries
- 50g/1¾oz pomegranate seeds
- a few mint leaves, to decorate (optional)
- icing sugar, for dusting



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/140C Fan/Gas 3. Line a large baking tray with baking parchment and draw a 30cm/12in circle in the middle of the paper. Draw a 15cm/6in circle in the centre of the larger circle to make a ring.
2. Put the egg whites in a clean mixing bowl and whisk with an electric whisk until soft peaks form when the whisk is removed. Gradually add the sugar a little at a time, whisking on maximum speed until they are stiff and glossy. Mix the vinegar and cornflour in a cup until smooth, then stir into the egg whites.
3. Spoon the meringue onto the ring drawn on the baking parchment. Using a large spoon make a shallow trench in the meringue for the cream and fruit to sit in.
4. Transfer to the oven and immediately reduce the temperature to 140C/120C Fan/Gas 1. Bake for 1 hour–1 hour 15 minutes, until the outside is hard but still white. Turn the oven off and leave the pavlova inside for an hour or overnight to cool and dry.
5. To assemble, whip the cream, vanilla paste and icing sugar until stiff peaks form when the whisk is removed. Spoon the cream into the trench in the meringue. Arrange the strawberries, raspberries, blueberries and pomegranate on top and decorate with a few mint leaves, if using. To serve, dust with icing sugar and cut into wedges.

REINDEER CHRISTMAS CUPCAKES

These easy reindeer cupcakes are great fun for the festive season!

Ingredients

For the pavlova

- 125g/4½oz butter, softened
- 175g/6oz caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs
- 200g/7oz self-raising flour
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 100ml/3½fl oz milk
- 100g/3½oz dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids), melted

For the chocolate icing

- 50g dark chocolate, chopped
- 3 tbsp double cream

To decorate:

- giant chocolate buttons
- crisp-coated chocolates (such as Smarties or M&M's)
- mini pretzels
- black writing icing
- mini marshmallows, sliced



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius. Line a 12 tray muffin tray with paper cases.
2. Beat the butter and sugar together until light and creamy. Gradually beat in the eggs until well combined. Sift in the flour and cocoa powder and mix until combined. Fold in the milk and melted chocolate.
3. Spoon the mixture into the muffin cases and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until well risen and lightly firm to the touch. Remove the cakes from the tin and set aside to cool on a cooling rack.
4. For the icing, heat the chocolate and cream in a saucepan over a low heat until the chocolate has melted. Whisk the mixture until smooth and set aside to cool slightly.
5. To decorate the cupcakes, spread the icing over the top of the cupcakes. Spoon the remaining icing into an icing bag fitted with a small nozzle.
6. Press a chocolate button onto the cake as a nose, then stick a crisp-coated chocolate on top using a little icing. Stick on two slices of marshmallows as the eyes, and use the black writing icing for the pupils. Stick on the pretzels as the ears.



CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR

Keep your eyes peeled to see what's been going on in the Creative and Expressive Arts Centre for Christmas...



FESTIVE THEMED WORKOUTS

Our PE Department has provided fun, themed workouts to keep fit over the Christmas period!

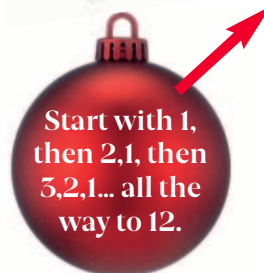
TURKEY BURNERS



CHRISTMAS TREE WORKOUT



- 10 Squats
- 50 High Knees
- 40 Jumping Jacks
- 50 Bicycle Crunches
- 2 Sets – 50 sec Wall Sits
- 10 Push ups (Toes or Knees)
- 20 Side Leg Lifts (On Each Side)
- 10 Burpees
- 10 Squats



Start with 1, then 2,1, then 3,2,1... all the way to 12.

12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS AT HOME WORKOUT

- 1 Burpee
- 2 Push-ups
- 5 Thrusters
- 4 Squat Jumps
- 5 Tricep Dips
- 6 Jumping Jacks
- 7 Sit-ups
- 8 Alternating Lunges
- 9 Air Squats
- 10 Mountain Climbers
- 11 Step-ups
- 12 High Knees

COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY

In a year like no other, we would like to say a huge thanks to our pupils and staff for their cooperation in adhering to health and safety mitigations. All members of St Louis have acted responsibly and remained enthusiastic and motivated despite challenges that Covid-19 restrictions have presented. We also thank parents and guardians for their ongoing support and help in monitoring online learning during any periods of self-isolation. We all look forward to a time when this is a distant memory but in the meantime, we express our heartfelt gratitude for adhering to guidelines from the Public Health Agency.

I have been identified as a 'close contact' via 'HSCtracing' text or through the StopCOVID app		
?	What does this mean?	Go home → Stay home
	Can I go to the shops?	No ✗
	Can I go to work or school?	No ✗
	Can I go out for a walk or exercise?	No ✗
	Can I meet up with friends outside?	No ✗
	Can I go into my garden?	Yes ✓
	Can I visit my friends or family?	No ✗
Does this mean I will definitely get COVID-19?		No but you are at risk - a 'close contact' is a person who has been close to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
How long do I need to stay at home?		As a close contact you need to self-isolate at home because you are at risk of developing symptoms in the next 14 days and could spread the virus to others before the symptoms begin.
14 days		If you develop symptoms book a test.
www.pha.site/coronavirus		



CATHOLICS CARING APPEAL

Each year Catholic Care organises a Christmas Appeal for families who are in need of support at this time of year.

St Louis has a longstanding tradition of donating gifts to this appeal. With a year that has brought challenging times to so many families, our school's response was greater than ever before!

We sincerely thank all the classes, staff, families and the extended St Louis Community who made such generous monetary and gift donations. Well done to Miss Pickering and Mrs McGrogan for the time and effort they spent in coordinating this appeal within our school – it will make a difference to so many people this Christmas.



CHRISTMAS DINNER

Once again, Christmas dinner at St Louis did not disappoint! A special word of thanks to our canteen staff for serving beautiful dinners with all the trimmings on Wednesday 2nd December! Everyone certainly got into the festive spirit!



A CHRISTMAS WISH

We take this time to wish everyone in our school community a safe and happy Christmas.

To say that things have been different this year would be an understatement! Despite remote learning platforms; classroom bubbles; masks and self-isolation groups, our students and staff have shown remarkable resilience and have embraced all the demands thrust upon them with a huge degree of compliance. We really appreciate how everyone in St Louis has shown such responsibility and respect for their own health and that of their peers/colleagues. It is truly remarkable.

As we move towards 2021, we hope and pray for the success of the vaccine roll-out; for the virus to be less of an issue and for our students to have a clear direction as they prepare for examinations.

It has not been an easy term for anyone in education this year.

The lack of extra-curricular engagements and the uncertainty over school closures, community outbreaks and examinations coupled with really diminished social/sporting opportunities has meant our students have been even further disadvantaged as they come to terms with the outfall from the pandemic.

All these uncertainties reinforce the need for St Louis to be a safe haven for all. We have endeavoured to ensure that our students and staff have a routine that will allow life to progress on a day to day basis without external worries dominating.

Our wish is that everyone in the St Louis school community remains safe over the holiday and takes time to reflect upon the essence of Christmas and the Advent Season, which of course is family centred and at the very heart of our school ethos.

