



# St. Benedict's College

PROSPECTUS **2024**



# Contents

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME	02
OUR IDENTITY	04
OUR AIMS	06
OUR CORE VALUES	08
BECOMING A HAPPY, SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL LEARNER IN ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE	10
CURRICULUM & LEARNING	14
WELLBEING	16
STUDENT LEADERSHIP & STUDENT VOICE	18
HEAD GIRL & HEAD BOY	20
SPORT & EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITES	22
YEAR 8 PUPIL VOICE	26
COMMUNITY PARTNERS	28
YEAR 8 ADMISSIONS CRITERIA	30
VOICE OF A PARENT	32

---

## School Management Information

**Principal:** Mrs Catriona Mc Ateer

**Chairman of the Board of Governors:** Very Rev Fr Forsythe, PP

**School Type:** Catholic Maintained Secondary School

**Age Range:** 11-16 years

**Approved Enrolment:** 500

**Year 8 Admissions Number:** 100

# Principal's Welcome



Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Thank you for taking the time to explore our Prospectus. I hope you find it accessible, interesting, and helpful.

St. Benedict's is a non-selective, all ability, co-educational Catholic College that welcomes, respects and values all its students. As a college, we are committed to delivering high quality Catholic Education to the young people in our local parishes and wider community.

We have high standards for all and are committed to the delivery of academic excellence. This can be seen in our excellent examination results at GCSE. We provide a broad, balanced, and relevant curriculum which meets the varied needs and aspirations of our students. Through our curriculum offer and delivery we ensure that all our students are positively engaged in their learning and are empowered to reach their full potential.

Students are also given the opportunity to develop, deepen and refine their knowledge, skills, and personal capabilities. As an 11 to 16 provider, we ensure our students are provided with clear curriculum pathways to Post 16 study, training, or employment.

We pride ourselves on the excellent Pastoral Care delivered in the College. Our students are at the centre of everything we do. We have high expectations and aspirations for all our students, and we challenge, nurture, and support our young people to learn and to achieve.

We strive to develop our students' self-esteem and self-belief through the development of positive and respectful relationships. Our dedicated, experienced, and hardworking staff work tirelessly to remove any barriers to children's learning and success.

St. Benedict's offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities. All of which aim to discover and nurture individual student's talents and abilities. They provide students with opportunities to build friendships and experience new things.

Like all good schools our best advocates and exponents are our students. They will assure you that our college is a school where everyone is included and valued, where standards and expectations of all are high and where everyone is afforded opportunities to achieve and enjoy success.

St. Benedict's College is determined to grow and to establish itself as a centre of excellence. As we do, we will continue to ensure that every student in our care is happy, safe, and successful.

The students, staff and I would like to extend a warm invitation to come visit us. Rest assured you will be welcomed warmly in St. Benedict's College. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the College, who we are and what we do, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

**Catrina Mc Ateer**  
Principal



# Our Identity

## College History

St. Benedict's College was founded by the Down and Connor Diocesan Trustees in 2006, through the amalgamation of St. Olcan's High School and St. Malachy's High School. St. Benedict's College is a well-established and successful 11-16 Catholic, all ability, co-educational college that mainly serves families from the parishes of Antrim, Duneane, and Randalstown.

## College Crest

### THE CROSS

Represents the High Cross of St. Olcan, associated with Cranfield and the former patron of St. Olcan's High School.

### THE BELL

Represents the monastic life of St. Malachy, the former patron of St. Malachy's High School, and St. Benedict, our patron.

### THE BOOK

Represents the Bible, the Word of God, and is a symbol of Learning. The design which encloses the three symbols, the Triskele, is deeply rooted in Celtic Tradition and represents the Trinity and Eternity.

## College Motto

Our motto is **Guigh agus Foghlaim - Pray and Learn**. The motto of St. Benedict was 'Orare et Labore' - 'To Work and to Pray'. This was adapted to create the school motto 'Guigh agus Foghlaim' - 'Pray and Learn', to reflect our Catholic ethos, our aims, and our Irish identity. For students in St. Benedict's their 'Work' is 'to Pray and Learn'.















## College Mission Statement

St. Benedict's College is a Catholic, all ability, inclusive school committed to delivering excellence for all. Together with home and community, we strive to enable our students to be happy, safe, and successful.

## St. Benedict's Prayer

O Gracious and Holy Father,  
give us wisdom to perceive you,  
intelligence to understand you,  
diligence to seek you,  
patience to wait for you,  
eyes to behold you,  
a heart to meditate on you,  
and a life to proclaim you;  
through the power of the  
Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord,  
Amen

# Our Aims

-  To deliver excellence for all.
-  To ensure all our students are happy, safe, and successful.
-  To ensure all our students are challenged and supported to be the best that they can be.
-  To empower all our students to achieve their personal potential.
-  To ensure all our students' achievements are celebrated.
-  To ensure all our students are included, valued, and respected and that religious and cultural differences are celebrated within the school community.
-  To develop our students' understanding of their Catholic faith and to promote Christian values and attitudes within the school community.
-  To awaken in our students a sense of their own dignity and self-worth and to promote their self-confidence.
-  To promote student health and well-being and develop student resilience.
-  To provide enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities to enrich student experience.
-  To support our students to become independent and lifelong learners.
-  To prepare our students to meet the challenges of a changing world in the 21st century.
-  To work in partnership with parents, parish, and community.
-  To develop a culture of accountability, responsibility, self-evaluation, and self-improvement.

# Our Core Values

Staff and students in St. Benedict's College will:

**Respect ourselves, others, our school, and our community.**



**Demonstrate kindness, empathy, and concern for others.**

**Be inclusive and tolerant of other religions, cultures, and traditions.**



**Be honest and truthful.**



**Be charitable and giving and demonstrate a commitment to service and social justice.**



# Becoming a Happy, Safe and Successful Learner in St. Benedict's College

## TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

We recognise that the move from Primary to Post Primary school is a "big move" and one that can be difficult and stressful for both students and parents. As a college we strive to ensure that all our students are happy, safe and successful from their arrival

in Year 8 to their departure in Year 12. We have a dedicated and experienced Year 8 Team who advise, guide and support our youngest students to ensure that their transition to us is a positive, happy and stress-free experience.



## Before you arrive:

### Primary School Visits (June)

Our Head of Year 8 and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) visit our feeder primary schools. They meet P7 teachers who provide us with a profile of our transferring students.

### Enrolment Meetings (June)

Year 8 students and their parents are invited to an Induction Meeting with a member of our Year 8 Pastoral Team. This meeting is an opportunity for pastoral and academic information to be shared.

Students with additional needs are invited to meet the SENCo.

A Welcome Pack, containing key information about the school, is provided to students and parents at this meeting.

### Welcome Day (June)

Year 8 students are given the opportunity to revisit the school, meet the Year 8 team and begin the process of making new friends. We complete CAT4 Testing to ensure accurate and appropriate class placements. Progress Tests in English and Maths are also used in this process.

## When you arrive:

### Fun Day (August)

All Year 8s are invited to participate in a range of interactive, fun activities designed to allow them to get to know other Year 8 students and the school building and grounds.

### Induction Day (August)

The Year 8 Induction Day sees only Year 8s on site. They get to know their Form Tutors as well as the layout of the school and daily routines.

### Induction Programme (August/September)

An Induction Programme is developed and delivered to all Year 8 students by the Year 8 Pastoral Team who remain constant and are highly skilled and experienced in dealing with the challenges of transition.



## Support in September

- Year 12 Mentors are assigned to each Year 8 Form Class to provide important peer support. Bus prefects also provide reassurance.
- Year 9 class guides are in place for the first fortnight of the school year.
- Year 8s have an early lunch and are allowed on the bus first.
- Year 8s enjoy break and lunch in their own designated recreational area.
- The Homework Club, supervised by teaching and support staff, is available Monday to Thursday until 4.30pm.
- The School Counsellor is available to Year 8 students who require support.



## Pastoral Support in Year 8

We believe that a student needs to feel happy and safe in school if they are to succeed there. Fundamental to our pastoral approach is the promotion of a caring ethos and family atmosphere and the development of positive and respectful relationships throughout the school community.

- Year 8s are looked after by The Year 8 Pastoral Team, a team of Form Tutors who are led by the Head of Year 8, who is supported by the Key Stage 3 Manager. This Team is highly experienced as they remain constant.
- The Assistant Principal advises and supports the Year 8 Team and deals with any Safeguarding and Child Protection issues that may arise in her role as Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- The Learning Support Co-ordinator works in partnership with the Learning Support Team, teachers and parents to ensure that students with additional educational needs are enabled to make a positive and successful start in their new school.
- The School Counsellor is available to Year 8 students who are having difficulty and require support.
- Form Tutors deliver our Personal Development Programme in a timetabled class delivered weekly. The programme addresses issues such as bullying, drugs and alcohol, e-safety, road safety and relationships and sexuality in an age-appropriate manner. A variety of speakers and external agencies support us in the delivery of the programme by addressing assemblies and facilitating student workshops.
- We have a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying.

## Staff Voice



“ I have been Head of Year 8 for six years and I love my job. My main role is to support and guide you and to make sure you settle into our school as quickly and easily as possible. The Year 8 Team and I organise lots of fun activities for your induction to help you recognise all the new faces that you will see and to make sure you feel comfortable navigating the school. I monitor attendance, punctuality, achievement and behaviour and look after the welfare of everyone in Year 8. I will try to resolve any worries or issues that you may have in your transition from primary to secondary school to make sure that you are happy, safe and successful in St. Benedict's.

**Ms Lisa Woods** (Head of Year 8)



# Curriculum & Learning

## KEY STAGE 3

Our Key Stage 3 Curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for all students to reach their full potential. Across Key Stage 3 and in Year 8 all students' study: Art & Design, Drama, English, French, Geography, History, Home Economics, IT, Irish, Learning for Life & Work, Mathematics, Music, PE, Religious Education, Science, and Technology & Design.

Year 8 students are assessed regularly during the school year and receive a Progress Update at Christmas and a full written report in June following end of year examinations. All parents are invited to the College for a Parent Teacher Meeting in Term 2 and individual progress meetings can be arranged on request.

Curriculum opportunities in Year 8 are enhanced by the Shared Education Programme.

## GCSE Performance Statistics 2022-23

**83%**   **55%**   **60%**

achieved 5 or more GCSE grades at A\* - C

achieved 5 A\* - C grades including GCSE English and Maths

46 out of 77 students, achieved 7 or more A\* - C grades

## KEY STAGE 4

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is designed to meet the needs, abilities and aspirations of all our students. We offer a wide range of academic and vocational subjects so students can choose to study subjects that best fit their educational needs. Students studying GCSE or equivalent subjects are provided with pathways that lead to success at GCSE and progression to Post-16 study, training or employment.

For GCSE, all pupils study the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science and Religious Studies. GCSE Subjects can then be chosen from Art & Design, Business Communication Systems, Child Development, Construction, Double Award Science, Drama, English Literature, Geography, History, Irish, Learning for Life & Work, Media Studies, Music, Single Award Science, Statistics, Sport Technology & Design. The Princes Trust Achieve Programme and a variety of Occupational Studies and OCN Level 2 certificates are also offered.

## CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION & GUIDANCE

Careers Education, Information and Guidance is at the heart of the curriculum in St. Benedict's College. Students are guided to make well informed and positive choices regarding their education and future careers. In our college students are encouraged to develop their skills and to recognise the wide range of transferrable skills required for employment. Labour Market Information is a key focus in Careers Education and

Skills in Demand are used to highlight skills shortages and areas for employment growth.

All students at Key Stage 3 receive careers guidance as part of the Employability strand of Learning for Life and Work. At Key Stage 4 all students receive timetabled careers lessons to ensure that they are well prepared for their Post 16 Pathways.



# Wellbeing

We are delighted that we have been designated a **Take Five School** in recognition of the work we do in promoting positive mental health. Take Five Student Champions have been appointed and are helping drive the Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme across the school. Each month we have a whole school focus on one of the 5 Steps to Wellbeing and actively promote it across the College through assemblies and follow up activities. At the end of each half term we celebrate Wellbeing Friday. We suspend the teaching timetable for the afternoon to allow students and staff to come together to engage in a variety of activities all designed to make everyone feel positive about school and life.

# Student Leadership



**Students are given leadership opportunities throughout their school career.**

#### YEARS 8 -10

In Key Stage 3 students can be appointed as the Class Prefect for their form class.

#### YEAR 11

We have Take 5 Student Champions in Year 11 who are working in partnership with our own staff to design and drive our whole school health and well-being programme.

#### YEAR 12

In Year 12 students are given the chance to become members of the prestigious Student Leadership Team and to take on the role of Year 8 Mentor, Prefect, or Head Boy/Head Girl. Year 12 Mentors, actively support Year 8 at the point of transition, attending morning registrations and assemblies with their assigned tutor groups. Two Year 12 Prefects are linked to each year group, including Year 8. They undertake a supervisory role at break and lunch and are available to provide advice, guidance and support to their peers. The Student Leadership Team further support Year 8s in their role as Reading Buddies.



# Student Voice

In St. Benedict's College we recognise the importance of Student Voice. We are fully committed to ensuring that our students are given a voice and that their voice is heard and valued. We have an active Student Council with elected representatives from all year groups. Student Voice Surveys are completed on an annual basis and Student Focus Groups are regularly used. Student comments allow us to evaluate our practice and provision and to identify areas for improvement and development.

# Head Girl

## Shannon McNeilly

*Past Pupil of Mount St Michael's Primary School*



Hello everyone, I am honoured to be the Head Girl of St. Benedict's College. Securing the position of Head Girl has always been a dream of mine. In my role, I am passionate about supporting every Year 8 and ensuring that their time here is enriching and empowering. If you come to our school, I know you will love it. Our teachers are great and there are so many opportunities available to you. I hope you choose to come to St Benedict's. You will have an extraordinary journey here.

# Head Boy

## Bobby Kennedy

*Past Pupil of St Oliver Plunkett Primary School*



As Head Boy and one of the members of the Student Leadership Team, I am thrilled to be able to support younger students, to help shape their young minds and to represent each one of them. In our school you will be supported to build strong relationships, and will be encouraged to learn and to do your best. The Student Leadership Team are not just the older pupils of the school, we are here to be your friends and to guide you through your school life. I hope you join our school and embrace all the opportunities it has to offer.





# Sport & Extra-curricular Activities

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We are fully committed to the holistic development of all students. We deliver an extensive range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities, all designed to develop our students' skills, talents and personal capabilities. Clubs and Societies facilitated by our dedicated staff, are offered before school, during lunchtime and after school. They offer our students opportunities to experience new things and to build new friendships.

## Extra-curricular activities available to our students include:

Alpha Programme, Art Club & Credit Union Art Competition, Breakfast Club, Choir, Coding Club, Cookery Club, Drama Club, Eco Club, Gaeltacht, Hip-Hop Dance Club, Homework Club, Lego Club, Library Club, Minecraft Club, Rotary Youth Leadership Programme, STEM Club, Supported Study (Yr 11 and Yr 12), and 3D Printing Club.

## SPORT

Physical Education is compulsory for all students at Key Stage 3 and 4 and is available as a GCSE option. It encourages students to engage in sporting activities to improve their physical fitness and to maintain positive mental health and well-being. All sporting activities are designed to enhance our students' communication, teamwork and leadership skills while developing self-discipline, self-confidence and resilience.

## Sports available to our students include:

Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Camogie, Cross Country, Dance, Gaelic Football (Girls and Boys), Gymnastics, Hurling, Netball, Soccer, Swimming, Table Tennis, Volleyball and Rugby.

## 2023 Achievements in Gaelic Games

Our Boys and Girls Gaelic Teams, as well as our Camogie and Hurling Teams, have a proud tradition of success. In 2023 our:



U14 Girls Gaelic team were the Winners of the Ulster Development Blitz



U14 Camogs won the Lily Spence Shield, which saw them crowned as U14 Ulster Champions



U16 Boys Gaelic Team were runners up in Ulster College's Campaign



U16 Hurling Team were crowned Ulster College's Champions, when they won the Noone Cup

We are proud of our continued partnership with our local GAA Clubs: Erin's Own Cargin, Kickham's Creggan, St Ergnat's Moneyglass, Tir na Nog Randalstown, and St. Comgall's Antrim.



# Pupil Voice



## Odhran Magill

*Past Pupil of Mount St. Michael's Primary School*

“ Hello, my name is Odhran. I moved to St. Benedict's in August and I have settled in very well. I've made lots of new friends and I am part of the school Gaelic team. It was easy to come to St. Benedict's because it's close to my old Primary School.



## Orla Hutchinson

*Past Pupil of St. Comgall's Primary School*

“ I like my new school because I feel welcome and my big sister also comes here. I have made lots of friends and I enjoy all the different subjects that I do. I really like Art because we have learnt how to paint properly. I am also part of the Dance Club which I do afterschool. It's great fun.



## Ryan McAteer

*Past Pupil of Creggan Primary School*

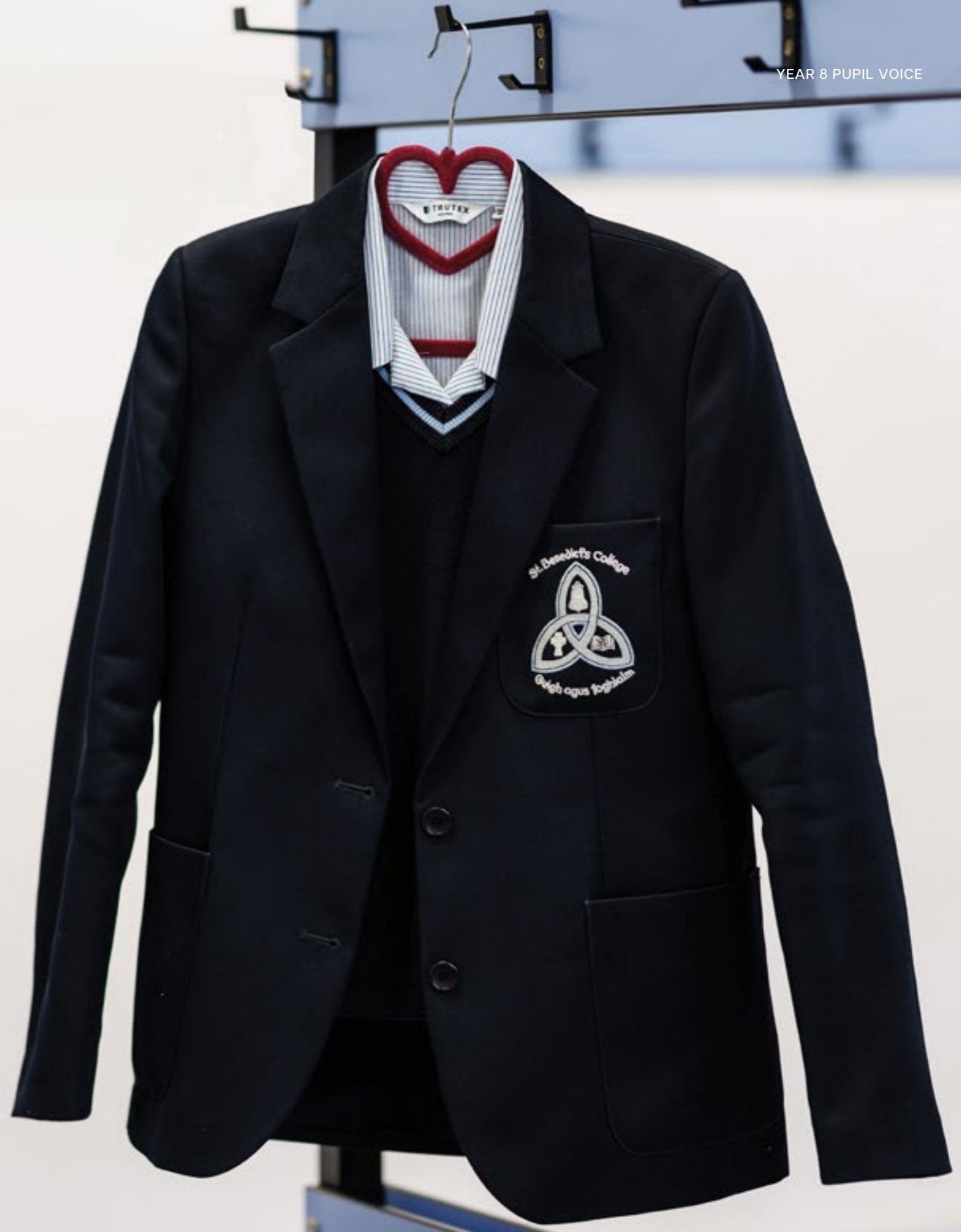
“ I have enjoyed my time in school so far. Everyone is so nice and everyone has made me feel very welcome.



## Olivia Sturekova

*Past Pupil of St. Joseph's Primary School*

“ I enjoy St. Benedict's because my teachers are nice. I especially like Miss Woods, Ms Mc Elhone, Mrs McCann and Miss McClinton. My favourite subjects are Home Economics, PE, Art, LLW and Irish. Lots of my primary school friends also came to St. Benedict's College which made things easier at the start. I love learning new things especially how to cook! I am part of the school choir and I really enjoy it. We are practicing for the "Peace Proms" in the SSE Arena and I can't wait for it.



# Community Partners

## PARENTS

We believe that parents are the prime educators of their children, so we work hard to develop and sustain positive and respectful partnerships between school and home. We are always accessible to parents and operate an open-door policy. We communicate with them on an ongoing basis through the ParentApp, phone calls, texts, and letters. Parents are kept up to date with school news through the ParentApp, our school website, Facebook and Twitter pages. We invite parents into school on lots of occasions, to attend Induction Meetings, Parents' Meetings, SEN and Careers Information Evenings, Parent Workshops and a variety of celebratory events.

We have an energetic PTA (Parent Teacher Association) who actively support us in our fundraising endeavours; things like our monthly Half the Pot draw and annual events such as our Christmas Fayre and Christmas Raffle.

## COMMUNITY LINKS

We pride ourselves on being a school at the heart of its community.

We are an active member of the **Moving Forward Together Partnership** within the Antrim/Newtownabbey Borough Council. It sees 21 nursery, primary and post primary schools working collaboratively to meet the varied needs of all their students.

We are members of two Area Learning Communities **Antrim Area Learning Community** and **Ballymena Area Learning Community**. Our membership allows us to

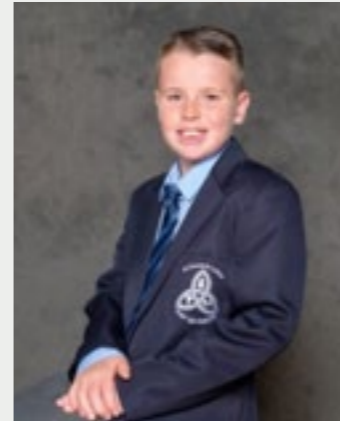
develop meaningful links with all the post primary schools in both localities which greatly supports students transition to post 16 study in a variety of partner schools.

We have been actively involved in the **Shared Education Project** since its inception. Our Shared Education Partnership sees our Year 8s work together with students from Antrim Grammar School and Parkhall Integrated College.

We are honoured to be **Tidy Randalstown's** Educational Partner and are grateful to them for all the fantastic opportunities they have created for the members of our School Eco Club. Not every school gets to work with such a vibrant, committed and talented team of volunteers, a team who have, with the help of our young gardeners, created the Elevation Garden at the Viaduct and secured both Ulster and Britain in Bloom titles for Randalstown.

## CHARITY

**Charity is at the heart of the ethos of the College, and we support both Trocaire, and St Vincent de Paul's annual campaigns. Other charities are also close to our hearts: Autism NI, Cash for Kids, Children's Cancer Centre, Concern and Mc Millan.**



## Corey Carroll

*Past Pupil of Roundtower Primary School*

“ My name is Corey Carroll and I'm in 8F. I moved to St. Benedict's in September. I have settled in very well and have made lots of new friends. My favourite subject is PE and I also play for the school Gaelic team. I have had full attendance for three months in a row and I received an end of term prize for this. I enjoyed taking part in our Shared Education project as I've been able to meet new people from different schools.





# Year 8 Admissions Criteria

The Board of Governors of St. Benedict's College has determined that the following criteria shall be applied, in the event of the number of children applying for places in Year 8 in September being greater than the Admission Number, in the order set below. Within each criterion priority will firstly be given to children normally resident in Northern Ireland and then to those children regarded by the Board of Governors based on supporting evidence provided by Parents and/or Statutory Agencies, as having special circumstances e.g. medical, social or security factors.

**In the event of over-subscription children will be selected based on application of the following criteria which will be applied in the order set out until the final place has been allocated.**

1. Applicants who are entitled to Free School Meals\* (FSME)
  - Priority to be given so that the proportion of such children admitted is not less than the proportion of first preference FSME applications received within the total number of first preference applications received.\*\*
  - \* "entitled to Free School Meals" will mean applicants who are listed on the Education Authority register as entitled to Free School Meals at the date on which their parent or guardian has submitted their post-primary Transfer Application, or at any date up to and including the final date for parents to communicate FSME to the Education Authority as specified in the separate annual Circular – Open Enrolment in Nursery, Primary and Post Primary Schools – Timetables.”
  - \*\* The calculation of this proportion will be based on first preference applications received by the post-primary school on or before [insert final date for post-primary schools to advise the Education Authority of pupils selected and those not selected at first preference stage -as specified in the separate annual Circular – Open Enrolment in Nursery, Primary and Post Primary Schools – Timetables.



## Oisín Neeson

*Past Pupil of Gaelscoil an tSeanchaí*

“ My name is Oisín Neeson. This school is very different from my Primary School in lots of good ways as we get to do PE every week and there are lots of new subjects. I have met lots of friendly teachers. As part of our Shared Education Project, my class organised a cake sale for Autism NI and we raised £150.

2. Applicants living in the parishes of Antrim, Duneane and Randalstown, not listed in any order of preference.
3. Applicants who have a sibling currently attending the school. This information must be clearly stated on the application form.
4. Applicants attending Creggan, Millquarter, Moneynick, Mount St. Michael's, St. Comgall's, St. Joseph's and St. Oliver Plunkett Primary Schools, not listed in any order of preference.

## ADMISSIONS TO YEAR 8 THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

Parents who wish to have their child considered for Admission in the event of a place arising after 1 September 2024 should write to the principal clearly stating this. The above criteria will be applied to these applications only in the event of such a vacancy arising.

Applicants should note that they may be required to produce documents verifying information pertinent to the Schools Admission Criteria.



# Voice of a Parent

## Getting placed in St. Benedict's – a disaster that turned out to be a blessing!

Making assumptions, being judgemental and listening to second-hand information and gossip were all things I was guilty of last year. My child was, and is, an 'A' student. She had done fantastically well in Transfer Test practice tests however she did not get the result she expected on the day, and we were shocked. We knew though that she had worked hard and was a capable child, so we weren't too bothered. We also knew she had siblings at a grammar school and hoped that sense would prevail, and she would be accepted into that same school. We were wrong.

The transfer letter arrived at the start of June 2022, and it gave us a second shock in relation to transferring to a secondary school, because she was placed in St. Benedict's College. We were distraught and our child was heartbroken. She was going to be the only one not able to be with her siblings and she had been placed in a school we felt wasn't good enough. I made a promise to her that day that I would do everything I could to help her get placed in the school she wanted to be in. We pleaded with the grammar school, went through the EA appeal's process, and even hired a solicitor to help us take our case to the ECB; Exceptional Circumstances Body but our efforts all failed.

We have all heard the expression "things happen for a reason", well I can say for sure that was the case for us, on this occasion.

The first day went unexpectedly well and every day since has been a positive and happy experience for our daughter in St. Benedict's. She has made lots of friends, stayed friends with girls from her old primary school who transferred to St. Benedict's and has also made the "best friend ever!"

I have other children who all attended/attend a wonderful grammar school. They have all done/are doing well and are known within the school community but sometimes I feel they are just a small fish in a big sea. At St. Benedict's my child is someone. She's a big fish and there are all sorts of opportunities to shine as a big fish in the school. Students are recognised for good behaviour, academic success and there are great opportunities in performing arts and sport.

The College is an extremely close-knit community. Everyone gets along: teachers, students and support staff. Conroy is "the best!". They are a family and that is obvious for all to see.

There is no reason why my child's attendance at St. Benedict's will hold her back from realising her dreams. All the things I judged St. Benedict's for, all happen in grammar schools and all the good things that happen in grammar schools happen in St. Benedict's too, but I really think they care even more!

Our life path is determined by us and the people around us. In my child's first year in St. Benedict's, I have discovered that the staff are all invested in their pupils and want to help them. It's not all about league tables and statistics for them, it's all about the child.

As fate would have it, we were offered the opportunity to move our child to her original school of choice, but the offer was graciously declined. She chose to stay in St. Benedict's where she is happy and thriving. My child is so happy when she walks out the door to school in the morning, and that is the single most important thing to me.

That 'disaster' of a school placement last year turned out to be a blessing and I am so grateful for that. I am grateful too to the team in St. Benedict's for opening my eyes to all the positives there are in the school. I know I had subconsciously chosen not to see them, because of the school's name or reputation. I am now so proud to be connected to the school.

I want to finish by thanking you, Mrs McAteer and all the teachers and staff for all that you do for your pupils.

**Extract from an email sent to Mrs McAteer on 1 July 2023 by Mrs Rachel Neeson, mother of Erin Neeson, past pupil of Millquarter Primary School.**

St. Benedict's College



**Gúigh Agus Foghlaim**

**St. Benedict's College**

5 Craigstown Rd, Randalstown, Antrim, BT41 2AF  
028 9447 2411 / [info@stbenedicts.randalstown.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@stbenedicts.randalstown.ni.sch.uk)  
[www.stbenedictscollege.co.uk](http://www.stbenedictscollege.co.uk)