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September EverGreen

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE SULLIVAN COMMUNITY

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And lots more.....

September

And so it begins

WELCOME FROM THE PRINCIPAL

As the academic year starts, it has been lovely to welcome pupils who are new to the school. I hope both they and their parents quickly feel part of our community. Even though it is only September, there has been much to celebrate already this academic year. In the summer we saw superb A Level and GCSE results for our pupils, and we wish these groups well with the next phase of their educational journeys.

Our sports teams have already been busy with training and competitive fixtures, and a highlight of the term will be the performances of Beauty and the Beast at Stranmillis Theatre; rehearsals are well underway. As the year has begun we have once again reminded our pupils that whilst their academic studies and their extra-curricular activities are important, what will define them is their character as summed up in our school motto: Lamh Foisdineach An Uachtar (the gentle hand foremost).

Mr Craig Mairs
Principal

OUR NEW HEAD BOY & HEAD GIRL

Oliver Crowe & Holly Scott

What do you think makes our school community special?

"Our school is special as it is not solely an academic school, but has so many opportunities for all pupils to explore their interests. Sullivan has a many extracurriculars, ranging from rugby all the way to jazz group. There is also such a sense of community around school, this feeling is strengthened by the range of house competitions such as house music or house hockey. Everyone supports each other, whether this be at school matches or the upcoming beauty and the beast production, what makes Sullivan special the community that delves within it."

Holly



What does being head boy and head girl mean to you?

"Being selected as head girl means so much to me. As a younger pupil in the school I always looked up to the head girl. To be given that opportunity to guide and help younger years in the same way I was helped, is such a privilege."

Holly

"To me, Head Boy is a privilege which I am so grateful for and such a great opportunity to represent the school in a positive way."

Oliver

*It was **gentle hearts foremost** as over 100 Sullivan runners joined together for a wonderful cause.*

The run for Kirsty

FUNDRAISER FOR CANCER FOCUS NI

In my 18 years behind the camera at school events, few days have moved me quite as deeply as this year's *Run for Kirsty*.

On Saturday, 26th September, over 100 of our staff and pupils laced up their running shoes to raise money for Cancer Focus NI, running in loving memory of our dear friend and teacher, Kirsty Merriman.

The mix of emotions in the air was palpable as everyone put their hearts—and soles—into the race, showcasing the true compassion and community spirit that

Sullivan is made of. It was a day of profound care, pride, and togetherness.

As one spectator beautifully remarked on the sidelines, "I've seen the blue shirts for years, and while I didn't know who Kirsty was, she must have been a very special lady."

To which anyone in the Sullivan community who knew her would simply answer: oh, she certainly was.

Mrs L Davidson



pupil *content team*



THE *REEL* SULLIVAN UPPER

In September this Year we held the first ever meeting of the Sullivan Pupil Content Team. Formed this year to help capture the incredible daily buzz around school, this dedicated group of Year 12 to 14 pupils meets every Thursday after school with Mrs Davidson to put their journalism skills into action. The energy in the room is truly electric!

Whether they are setting up and recording our upcoming school podcast, editing newsletter articles, or snapping photos and filming reels of school events, these talented pupils can turn their creative hands to anything.

Make sure you keep up with all their fantastic work by following us on Instagram and Facebook [@sullivan_upper](#)

inside the *classroom*

GCSE GEOGRAPHY

GCSE geographers spent time out on fieldwork in September, collecting data for their Unit 3 Fieldwork paper. Despite some very unfavourable weather, the pupils worked in groups to collect data on the width, depth, velocity, bedload and completed a field sketch. Many thanks to Mr Uprichard, Miss Murray and Mr Kirk for helping the Geography Department carry out these important activities. This event was fuelled by chocolate and caffeine!



GCSE GEOGRAPHY FIELD TRIP



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HISTORIANS EXPLORE HOLYWOOD

This September, the History Department jumped straight into an exciting academic year! Year 8 students stepped into the shoes of real-world historians by analysing historical evidence and delivering persuasive speeches to curate the ultimate year group time capsule. Meanwhile, Year 9 explorers took their learning beyond the classroom to uncover the rich stories hidden on our own doorstep with immersive walking tours of Hollywood.



YEAR 8 SCIENCE

Our lovely new Year 8 scientists have been testing out their new Bunsen Burner skills while making observations during flame tests.

GEOGRAPHERS VISIT PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICE

Our A level geographers were able to benefit from a short trip to the Public Records Office in Titanic Quarter towards the end of September. The group were informed about the types of data and records that are gathered from local to social history, including maps and migration data. They then got a tour of the Search Room and saw how to use microfilm to look up Church Records and they also got to use the Reading Room, where old maps, school records and tourist information was on show for them to read. An excellent look into the public records of Northern Ireland.



INSPIRING COURTAULD WORKSHOP FOR THE ARTISTS

Our Year 11 and 13 Art & Design students recently had the incredible privilege of welcoming Tessa Carr, Outreach Officer from The Courtauld Gallery and Institute—voted the world's leading institution for art history.

Based in London's historic Somerset House, The Courtauld delivered immersive workshops designed to transform how our students interact with visual culture: Mastering Visual Literacy: Students moved beyond surface impressions, learning to decode complex compositions by analyzing formal elements (line, tone, color, texture) alongside the historical context of each piece.

X-Ray Insights (Year 13): Senior students gained an exclusive, behind-the-scenes look at art conservation by examining X-ray scans of Édouard Manet's famous Impressionist paintings. Seeing Manet's hidden underdrawings and mid-creation changes offered a rare glimpse into the master's evolving process.

This unforgettable visit not only strengthened our students' analytical coursework, but also brilliantly showcased how science, history, and fine art intersect.



SIXTH FORM PASTORAL

Sixth Form Pastoral began with class quizzes and team-building games - allowing our Year 13 pupils to get to know each other and letting our Year 14 pupils have time to reconnect. Year 13 were also introduced to the GO MAD project and were inspired by their work in Tanzania; while Year 14 were visited by the PSNI Road Safety Team.

outside the *classroom*



SCHOOL SHOW IN FULL FLOW

September has been an incredibly busy month of rehearsals for the cast, orchestra, and crew as they prepare for our whole-school production of *Beauty and the Beast* at Stranmillis Theatre next month.

This promises to be our most spectacular musical yet—and a true team effort across every year group. Behind the scenes, the Art Club and stage crew have been working tirelessly on props and set pieces to bring the fairytale to life. Limited tickets are still available! Don't miss out—secure your seats now for an unforgettable night of music and drama.



DEBATING SOCIETY BEGINS WITH A GLOBAL TOUR!

Our first club meeting took place on Wednesday 16th September where a lively group of students from years 8 to 14 chose suitable celebrity partners to help them on a race across the globe. A great fun way to get to know each other, and learn a little bit more about distant places.

On the 23rd September we will consider whether our society needs billionaires. Later this term, we look forward to friendly debates with other schools, beginning with a visit to Glenlola Collegiate in November. Keep an eye out for poster advertising debates around school and look forward to seeing new faces at our next meeting.

Ms Patterson & Ms Loma

**RACE
ACROSS THE
WORLD**



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AUTHOR VISIT

On Friday 18th September, award-winning Derry/Londonderry author Sue Divin visited Year 11 to discuss her background, writing career, and latest novel, *Runaway Road*—reading an excerpt following siblings Ezra and Evie fleeing across the Irish border. She also explored her settings, characterisation, and themes before taking questions and signing books.

After lunch, Sue hosted a creative writing workshop for 20 pupils across year groups, who impressed with their talent and composure under pressure while working on emotion, voice, and language.

The Creative Writing Club meets next month (time and date TBC)—everyone is welcome!



CODE CLUB

Our new Code Club is off to a brilliant start, bringing together pupils in Years 8–10 every Wednesday after school to sharpen their programming skills. Members are already building interactive physical computing projects using Micro:bits and earning industry-recognized digital badges through the iDEA (Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award) scheme. We look forward to seeing the creative projects our coders develop throughout the year!



YEAR 8 AT THE PALACE BARRACKS

year eight

TEAM BUILDING AT THE PALACE BARRACKS

Year 8 had a wonderful day at Palace Barracks, where they took part in a series of team-building activities designed to encourage cooperation, resilience and communication. The experience allowed students to build new friendships, work together to overcome challenges, and exercise both their bodies and minds. Judging by the smiles in the photographs, it was a highly successful and enjoyable day.



MRS R CAMPBELL
Head of Year 8



“It feels like I have been here for ages, everybody has been so welcoming and I have made loads of new friends and it is definitely better than I thought school would be.”

YEAR 8 PUPIL
September 2026

pupil success



*WANT TO TELL US ABOUT YOUR SON/DAUGHTER'S
SUCCESS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?
CONTACT: INFO@SULLIVANUPPER.CO.UK

GOLF SUCCESS

Congratulations to Henry Campbell (1.0) on his outstanding achievement in being selected for the Golf Ireland U16 National Squad for a second consecutive year.

GAELIC SUCCESS

Congratulations to our 3 Gaelic stars (Cameron, Issac & Cian 2.0) who won the U14 Football Championship playing for their home club St.Pauls.

Well done, boys!

RUGBY SUCCESS

Cora Hayes and Erin Playfair (3.0) received their Ulster jerseys on Friday night after representing Ulster U18s in the August Interpro series. The girls trained and played with the squad 3 times a week over the summer, playing at numbers 15 and 1 respectively.

SINGING SENSATION

Congratulations to Ava Suitor (Year 11), who was selected as one of just 14 young performers to appear in the sold-out production of Carmen at the Grand Opera House, Belfast, from 12-19 September. Chosen for both her exceptional singing ability and fluency in French, Ava balanced rehearsals and performances alongside her commitments to Sullivan Upper's own school production. Ava was the only Sullivan Upper pupil involved in the production, and we are incredibly proud of her outstanding achievement.



TUMBLING STARS

Nora Sugar and Erin Farrell were selected to represent Northern Ireland in the Inter-Regional Tumbling Final 2026 which was on 4-5 July in Birmingham.



prep & alumni

SULLIVAN PREP WELCOME NEW PRINCIPAL



We are delighted to introduce Mrs Emma Ross as the new Head of Sullivan Upper Preparatory Department.

Mrs Ross joins us after 17 successful years of teaching; as Deputy Head of a leading English preparatory school and as former Director of Sport she brings extensive experience in senior leadership, pastoral care and school development.

Mrs Ross also has an exceptional sporting background as a former Ireland Women's Hockey International, earning an incredible 131 caps for her country. She continues to compete through Masters Hockey, adding further international honours to an already distinguished career.

Her commitment to inclusion and lifelong learning shines through in her recent achievement of a Level 2 qualification in British Sign Language. Reflecting on her arrival at

Sullivan Prep, Mrs Ross has shared, "From the moment I arrived, I was struck by how warm and kind the school community is. There was an immediate sense of belonging; it truly felt like coming home."

Since joining us, her enthusiasm, energy and passion for education have already made a wonderful impact on pupils, staff and parents. We are excited for the journey ahead and look forward to Mrs Ross leading Sullivan Prep into its next chapter. The future is bright and incredibly exciting.



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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

As Chairperson of the Sullivan Alumni Association since 2025, and as someone with a long personal connection to the school — my wife is a proud Sullivan alumna, and two of our children are currently at the school, with our eldest having left recently — it is a privilege to support a community that has shaped so many lives, including my own.

The Alumni Association continues to play an active role in enriching the experience of current pupils and strengthening connections among former students. This year, we made a significant contribution to the Leavers' Yearbook, ensuring every pupil receives a lasting record of their time at Sullivan. Our annual Christmas Leavers' Reunion remains a highlight, offering former pupils the chance to reconnect with friends and teachers during their first term beyond school. We are proud to support the annual Careers Fair, bringing together employers, professionals, and alumni to help pupils explore future pathways. This year, we invested £5,000 to purchase Google Chromebooks for Alevel pupils,

enhancing digital learning and classroom engagement.

Alongside this, we run the Sullivan Alumni Portal, develop new professional networking processes, and maintain an active social media presence to keep our community informed and connected.

The strength of Sullivan's alumni community continues to grow, and we are grateful for the ongoing support of parents, pupils, and former students.



house update

POINTS, EVENTS & NEW HOUSE CAPTAINS

The 2026/2027 house competition got underway with last year's Sports Day. At the end of the last academic year, the four houses battled it out for one of the most notable house competitions, fighting for the top spot going into the new school year.

With current Year 14's manning the tuck shop, an air of community and competitive spirit was built up as the events began to kick off. There were many impressive performances and several records were broken. In the track events, Catherine McBrinn set a new Year 9 record in the 800 metres and Isla Wiltshire set a record in the Year 11 200 metres. In field events, Year 9 students Jonah Polley and Joel Benyon set new school records in

the Javelin and shot put, respectively. A special mention must go to Max Reid, Skye Eggleton, Abigail Lockington, Jean Robinson and Connie Fulton who all won three events each. Speers finished as the overall winners with 862 points. Grant secured second place with 731 points, ensuring a strong start to the new season of house competition.

As we settle into a new school year the House Music Competition will be held on Wednesday, September 30th, 2026. Each house has been busy rehearsing during most breaks and lunchtimes for the various categories, including Choir, Ensemble, Musical Theatre, Vocal Solo, Instrumental Solo and Piano Solo.

Each house will perform in front of a Year 8 audience and guest judge Miss Pitt (a former music teacher). Houses will be awarded points based on their placing in each category, with the overall winners receiving 400 house points. Speers have claimed the title for the past two years, but with all houses working hard in rehearsals, it remains to be seen who will be crowned champions.

Several other competitions have been planned and for the overall competition, the heads of house have updated the points structure meaning that this year's race should *be much closer*.

May the best house win!



McALESTER

HEAD OF HOUSE
MR D GREEVES

CAPTAINS

Emily Ridout
Daniel Shine

DEPUTY CAPTAINS

Paddy Browne
Jemima Robertson

MUSIC CAPTAINS

Victoria Ifonlaja,
Olivia McLean,
Laim Thompson

SPORTS CAPTAINS

Lucy Andrews,
Henry Calvert,
Katie Soper

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GRANT

HEAD OF HOUSE
MRS L MAYNE

CAPTAINS

Chloe Charlton
Joel Drain

DEPUTY CAPTAINS

Effie Lappin,
Owen Montgomery

MUSIC CAPTAINS:

Anna Crawford,
Nevin Harding,
Kate Reavy

SPORTS CAPTAINS-

Lilly Menary,
Matthew Kennedy
Joshua Patty

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PRAEGER

HEAD OF HOUSE
MRS P RICHARDSON

CAPTAINS

Nathan Dowie
Beth Harper

DEPUTY CAPTAINS

Ethan McKinstry
Anna Moran

MUSIC CAPTAINS

Joshua Lee,
Ruby Marshall,
Cathy Robinson

SPORTS CAPTAINS

Holly Blease,
Cassidy Ogle,
Philippa Wilson

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SPEERS

HEAD OF HOUSE:
MR N UPRICHARD

CAPTAINS

Lewis Robinson
Grace Yates

DEPUTY CAPTAINS

Roger McMullan,
Lucy Howe

MUSIC CAPTAINS

James Atkinson,
Amelia Hennigan,
Lucy Boyd

SPORTS CAPTAINS:

Ross Alderdice,
Ruby Craig,
Matthew Lunn

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house music



Catch a glimpse of the electric atmosphere and phenomenal talent from this year's House Music competition, captured brilliantly by Jack Lavercombe (Year 14) from our pupil content team! From breathtaking soloists to powerhouse choirs, the energy on stage was off the charts.

Huge congratulations to **GRANT**, who stole the show, took home the House cup, and were crowned this year's undisputed champions! What an unforgettable day!

pupil voice

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTS NEW COMMITTEE



The School Council plays a vital role in representing the views of pupils, promoting positive change within the school community, and helping to lead a range of student initiatives throughout the year.

Following a vote by members of the School Council, a new team of student leaders has been appointed for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The election process demonstrated the enthusiasm and commitment of our students to making a positive contribution to school life.

We are pleased to congratulate the following pupils on their appointment:

CHAIR: AHMED GAMAL

VICE-CHAIR: ANIELA SEMENIUK

SECRETARY: MEGAN DUDDY

PUBLICITY OFFICER: REBECCA HORNER

Congratulations to all those elected, We look forward to working with our newly elected representatives and are confident they will carry out their responsibilities with dedication, leadership, and enthusiasm.



GETTING CONNECTED AT SULLIVAN

As part of Sullivan Upper School's ongoing commitment to wellbeing, this month's focus is "Connect"—one of the five Take 5 pillars.

We are encouraging every pupil to participate in at least one extracurricular activity, volunteering, or leadership opportunity this year. From Art and LEGO Clubs to Choir and Young Enterprise, our extensive programme helps pupils build positive relationships, develop new skills, and strengthen their sense of belonging.

We ask parents and carers to support this initiative by encouraging their children to get involved.

By trying something new, pupils build confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of community, ensuring every student feels valued, supported, and able to thrive.

achievements *assembly*





until next month

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REGULAR UPDATES.

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