



Cumann na mBunscol

Gaelic games and culture central to the ethos and success of Rathcormac

At the foot of the Benbulbin in Drumcliff, Sligo, stands Rathcormac NS – a place where Irish culture, community spirit and sporting tradition come alive each day.

Surrounded by the landscapes that inspired WB Yeats and enriched by the revolutionary legacy of Constance Markievicz, the school is more than just a centre of learning – it is a hub of heritage and ambition.

Its crowning achievement, winning the *Cumann na mBunscol Large School of the Year Award 2025*, is a symbol of how Rathcormac NS blends academic learning with cultural pride and sporting excellence.

A force to be reckoned with

Gaelic games are at the heart of life in Rathcormac. Every week, teachers and coaches bring their expertise, enthusiasm, and encouragement to the pupils. Their sessions spark joy and excitement while instilling the skills and discipline needed to succeed. Through countless hours of practice, the children have become not only well-trained players but also respectful and resilient teammates.

Rathcormac NS has become a force to be reckoned with in Cumann na mBunscol competitions, with both boys' and girls' teams enjoying success in recent years. Cumann na mBunscol Shligigh

Finals Day in Markievicz Park is considered the highlight of the school year when the entire community rallies together with pride and anticipation.

The school has also enjoyed success in the *INTO Mini 7s* Competition and have enjoyed the opportunity to represent Sligo in the Connacht GAA Centre of Excellence. Success demonstrates not just talent but also the resilience and preparation of the pupils, who have trained tirelessly to reach their goals. The honour of representing Rathcormac NS in such prestigious competitions creates memories that will last a lifetime.

Community care

Within the school, groups of friends grow together not only in friendship but also in skill and determination. A wonderful example of this is seen in the children who also play with our local GAA club Drumcliffe-Rosses Point GAA and LGFA Club (DRP).

DRP is an amazing example of how well the pupils of Rathcormac are trained. These children are shining tributes to the school's sporting success, carrying the values of teamwork, discipline, and pride from the schoolyard onto the club pitch. Their achievements at club level reflect the hard work put in at Rathcormac NS and show how school and community work hand in hand to nurture young athletes.

None of this would be possible without the teachers, whose passion for sport is inspiring. Cathal Kelly, Elaine Bambrick and Orla McLean lead the school's passion for Gaelic games and dedicate their time and energy to coaching, mentoring, and encouraging pupils. Their dedication shows the children that Gaelic games are not just school activities, but lifelong commitments that build character and community.

Éiteas sa scoil

Rathcormac NS is about more than just sport as Irish culture and language is promoted every day, with an emphasis on *Gaeilge neamhfhoirmiúil*, teanga ó bhéal agus spraoi.



We encourage and recognise children who make a special effort to use Irish naturally and proudly. Irish traditional music rings through the halls as pupils play the tin whistle, fiddle, harp and flute, while songs and poetry are performed at school events.

The influence of Yeats, whose poetry immortalises the beauty of nearby Drumcliff, and Countess Markievicz, who championed Gaelic culture and Irish identity, can be felt in the school's commitment to cultural pride.

Shining example

Winning the *Cumann na mBunscol School of the Year Award* reflects a whole-school effort to promote Gaelic games and culture. It honours the dedicated teachers and children whose enthusiasm drives everything forward. They bring a pride in their school, a love of their games and a deep connection to their Irish identity.

Whether through football, hurling, handball, language, music, or poetry, they



are the living heartbeat of Gaelic culture and tradition. Rathcormac NS is not just a school – it is a shining example of what

happens when a community unites around sport, culture, and tradition. *Ní neart go gur le chéile.*

Cumann na mBunscol INTO Mini 7s review

A review of the *Cumann na mBunscol INTO Mini 7s* was recently presented at the national general meeting in the Croke Park Hotel. Delegates from committees around the country were in attendance. Full details of the review and *Cumann na mBunscol INTO Mini 7s* rules are available on our website – www.cnmbnaisiunta.com

Each county can use their own criteria. This can be either a team-based or a skills-based competition. The normal rules of hurling and football apply, with the following adaptations:

- All kick outs/puck outs shall be taken from the goal-line.
- Rolling substitution, from a panel of 10, may be made during a break in play from the half-way line.
- Traditional scoring for goal and points apply (3/1)
- Hand pass scores shall not be allowed in hurling, camogie or football. A punched point in football is permissible.
- In football all kick outs, frees, side-lines and 45's shall be taken from the hand.

- In hurling/camogie all frees, side lines from placed ball. All puck outs from the hand.

Teams competition: Age limits

Counties organising a team/games competition please follow the age limits below.

Total enrolment of boys only or girls only (3rd to 6th classes inclusive) – children born on or after enrolment DOB:

- 200+ 1 January 2014
- 170 – 199 1 December 2013
- 140 – 169 1 November 2013
- 110 – 139 1 October 2013
- 80 – 109 1 September 2013
- 50 – 79 1 August 2013
- 30 – 49 1 July 2013
- 0 – 29 1 June 2013

Skills competition: Age limit

Counties that organise a skills-based competition please note that there is only one age limit.

Participants must be under 12 on or after 1 January of the year they are participating – i.e. born on or after 1 January 2014 for 2026.

Primary schools' sports quiz

Excitement is building across Ireland, as the countdown continues to the second-ever *Cumann na mBunscol All-Ireland Quiz Final*.

This year, hundreds of primary schools from every corner of Ireland will battle their way through intense county and provincial qualifiers to earn their spot in the national final, which will take place on Sunday, 22 March 2026 in the Tullamore Court Hotel.

With some county qualifiers already completed, schools like 2025 champions Niall Mór Killybegs, Donegal and third place runners up Ballinagar NS, Offaly have already qualified.

The remaining county and provincial quizzes will now take place in January and February 2026 as schools and counties continue in their quest to become *Cumann na mBunscol All-Ireland Quiz* champions.

More information about the *Cumann na mBunscol All-Ireland Quiz* can be found by visiting the *Cumann na mBunscol* website a www.cnmbnaisiunta.com/ or by emailing secretary.cnmb@gaa.ie.