

For immediate release

Avondale Community College Chosen as MSD in Rathdrum's 'Neighbour of Choice'

- Rathdrum school to receive funding of €12,000 to set up Science Research Centre

19th February 2015: Avondale Community College has been chosen to receive funding as part of MSD in Rathdrum's Neighbour of Choice initiative, part of the company's dedicated corporate responsibility programme. The local school will receive €12,000 to establish a dedicated Science Research Centre where students and teachers can expand their knowledge and interest in science and technology and improve their research skills.

MSD's Neighbour of Choice programme is a global initiative that provides support to projects that address the needs of local communities. A core part of MSD's employee volunteer programme, Neighbour of Choice demonstrates MSD's ongoing commitment to the communities in which it operates.

Over 550 students at Avondale Community College will benefit from the development of a dedicated Science Research Centre located in the school's Science Department. This Science Research Centre will house a range of facilities to encourage students to foster their interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths) subjects and develop their research and analytical skills. Resources will include a dedicated scientific library, a digital research area, statistical software, a demonstration area for practical experiments, and a presentation area where students can turn their research into visual displays.

Speaking at the presentation of the grant, principal teacher of Avondale Community College Rosaleen O' Neill said, "We endeavour to nurture our students' interest in Science and assist them in developing the research, analytical and presentation skills which will be invaluable to them in the future. This Centre will prove a wonderful facility for our students and teachers, as well as the wider community. We would like to express our appreciation to MSD for their continued support and encouragement.

Stephen Rush, Site Lead of MSD's facility in Rathdrum said: "We are delighted to support Avondale Community College and assist in the establishment of such a valuable community resource. We hope that the Centre will encourage greater uptake of science subjects at Senior Cycle, as well as at third level and beyond. At MSD, we are committed to helping improve health and wellbeing in our communities, and together with our employees and local partners are privileged to support projects that will make a real difference now and into the future."

As a global leader in healthcare with a strong presence in Ireland, MSD is committed to leading in the implementation of best practice by addressing critical social, environmental and economic challenges both nationally and internationally. In recent years, MSD has become a leader in corporate responsibility in Ireland through a focus on four priority areas - Access to Health; Environmental Sustainability; Employees; and Ethics & Transparency. Over the past two years alone MSD has contributed over €4 million to support worthwhile and sustainable causes in these areas.



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About MSD

MSD, known as Merck in the United States and Canada, has operations in more than 140 countries. In Ireland, MSD employs over 2,000 people across its five sites in Dublin, Carlow, Cork, Tipperary and Wicklow. Its extensive Irish operations encompass manufacturing, commercial and marketing facilities.

MSD is a leader in healthcare, dedicated to helping the world be well through a wide range of innovative health solutions. This includes the development, production and distribution of prescription medicines, vaccines and biologic therapies as well as animal health products.

MSD's commitment to research and to increasing access to healthcare across the world is demonstrated by clearly focused policies, far-reaching programmes and life-enhancing partnerships.

About Avondale Community College

Avondale Community College, established in 1933, currently caters for a broad catchment area encompassing ten primary schools. The school, which caters for 550 students, has a long and proud academic tradition, complimented by a comprehensive programme of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, where the sciences play a significant role. Avondale Community College works tirelessly to live out its mission statement 'Learning to Grow through Respect and Trust'. The school aims to enable every student to achieve at a level appropriate to his or her ability. It also promotes the social, personal and spiritual development of students, who are encouraged to reach their personal best in all areas of school life. Avondale Community College is home to committed young environmentalists, budding young writers, orators, quiz enthusiasts, and dedicated sports men and women. It is home to young scientists - prize-winners since 2010 in the BT Young Scientist, Sentinus Young Innovators, and all-Ireland Scifest competitions. Our students are encouraged by committed and highly supportive staff, parents, Board of Management, and Kildare and Wicklow Education Training Board. We are proud to enjoy a strong link with our neighbours MSD.