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Dear Parents

Issue: 02

September 14<sup>th</sup> 2023

### **Important Dates to note:**

- **Thursday Oct 5<sup>th</sup> Staff Meeting Term 1 – all the children will go home at 1.15pm**
- Monday October 30<sup>th</sup> to Friday November 3<sup>rd</sup>: Halloween Break
- Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>: Band performing at Athenry Christmas Lights ceremony
- Friday December 22<sup>nd</sup>: school closes at 11.45am for Christmas holidays.
- Monday January 8<sup>th</sup>: school re-opens
- Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup>: Grandparents Day

### **For 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils:**

- Open Night **Coláiste an Eachreidh**: Thursday Sept 28<sup>th</sup>
- Open Night **Presentation College**: Wednesday Oct 4<sup>th</sup> 16:30 to 19:00
- Open Night **Clarín College**: Wednesday Oct 4<sup>th</sup> 18:00 to 20:00

### **Drop Off & Pick Up routines:**



Children can be dropped off from 8:45am & are to make their way directly to their classrooms / prefabs via the appropriate doors. Class starts at 8.50am. (*Colour-coded key to Entrances & Exits attached*)

**Parents of all children are requested to say goodbye to their children in the yard and let them enter the building / prefab by themselves. This is to foster your child's independence.**

Any pupil who gets anxious for whatever reason after leaving the school is asked to return to the school via Door 1 (beside secretary's office) and sit outside Principal's office where they will be supervised until contact is made with their parents.

### **School Uniform:**



Thank you to everyone for your compliance with the new school uniform which comprises of navy joggers, a light blue polo shirt and a navy crested sweatshirt. Leggings are not permitted. Navy shorts are also acceptable, but should be plain navy shorts with no logos. Cycling shorts are not permitted. The old school uniform may still be worn.

Your co-operation to ensure that your child wears the full school uniform every day is most appreciated. Staff will be carrying out uniform spot-checks to ensure compliance.

### **Raincoats:**



**Please ensure your child brings their raincoat to school every day. Pupils will be going outside for break every day (when at all possible) so they need to have a coat with them.**

## **Aladdin:**



Please make sure you have downloaded the Aladdin app on your phone and have notifications turned on, as teachers may be using it to correspond with parents during the school year.

If your child has been absent from school please record the reason for the absence on the Aladdin app.

If you choose; you may share your own contact details with other parents of children in the same class as your children, but please be reassured that this information will not be shared unless you choose to share it. This can be done via the “Class List” option on Aladdin

## **School Costs:**



Staff request all outstanding monies for school costs be paid as soon as possible. Please do this via the Aladdin app, if at all possible. (*Any issues please contact the office*).

## **Health & Safety:**



No adults, other than staff members should enter the building. Messages for teachers can be sent by email or phoning the school office.

If an adult has to collect a child during the school day, the following arrangement will apply:

- When adult arrives at the school, they should go straight to the secretary’s office via the front door of the school (red sticker on door)
- The child will be brought from their class by a member of staff
- The adult who is collecting the child will be asked to sign the child out
- No adult should enter the school building, unless invited to do so.



No cars are allowed onto school grounds except in exceptional circumstances agreed with principal. All cars should be parked outside the school grounds in car parks outside the school gates or at the Church. The barrier at the entrance to the school grounds is not operational at the moment. Works will be carried out shortly to repair the barrier. Once repaired the barrier will be closed to prevent unauthorised access to the school grounds during school hours.



As a Green School we are very happy to encourage our pupils to cycle to school. However, from a road safety point of view; it is very important that parents are aware that “Children under 12 years should not cycle on their own in or near traffic. It is too dangerous. They do not have the skills and experience required to be safe in traffic on their own. They must be accompanied by an adult or responsible person”. See link:

<https://www2.hse.ie/babies-children/child-safety/transport/cycling-scooting-walking/>

### Attendance & Punctuality:

- The **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)** has contacted the school in relation to attendance and timeliness. We have started the year very well in this regard. I've very happy about this.
- Cases where children missed over 20 days last year without genuine reasons (e.g. sickness, bereavement etc.) are being closely monitored by the EWO this year.
- Please ensure that if your child is physically able to be in school that they are at school and that they are on-time in the morning and are here for the full school day i.e. not collected early, unless there is a very genuine reason.
- Note:
  - 20 days missed on average each year over the 8 years of primary school equates to almost a year of primary school education!
  - This is not to mention all the face to face time that was missed due to Covid-19!

**EVERY DAY COUNTS!!**

***DID YOU KNOW YOUR CHILD'S BEST LEARNING TIME IS THE START OF THE SCHOOL DAY?***

He/She is only missing just ...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 mins per day	50 mins per week	Nearly 1.5 weeks per year	Nearly Half a year
20 mins per day	1 hour 40 mins per week	Over 2.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 mins per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years

### Catholic School:

- **Presentation Day:** Tuesday November 21<sup>st</sup> – pupils will be attending mass in the church at 10am. (*If you do not wish your child to attend, please email the school. Arrangements will be made to accommodate your request.*)
- **Confirmation:** Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> 2024.
- **First Communion:** we are waiting for Fr Charlie to confirm the date.

### GAA Training:

- GAA training for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class girls is continuing every Friday. The girls who wish to take part are asked to bring their gear with them each Friday for the next few weeks.
- We will be entering a Ladies football team in the Mikey Vaughan Cup & Kate Moran Shield which is being hosted by Monivea-Abbey Ladies Football Club on September 25<sup>th</sup> at Monivea pitch.
- We will also be taking part in the Mini Sevens Ladies Football and Camogie competitions.

### Athletics:

- On Thursday September 7<sup>th</sup> we held a non-uniform day in aid of Athenry Playground committee. We raised €560! So thank you to everyone for your donation.
- On the day we hosted our annual Athletics / Cross-country event which doubled up as our school trials for the upcoming Galway Cross Country Athletics event.
- We were so lucky to be able to use the fabulous running track at Moanbaun, so our sincere thanks to Athenry Athletics club for their permission to do this.
- Ten girls qualified from 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> class and they will go forward to compete in the 1000m
- Ten girls qualified from 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class and they will go forward to compete in the 1200m
- The events will take place in Nolan Park, Renmore on Tues Sept 26<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am
- Mr McDonald will be holding some training sessions with the girls over the coming two weeks to get them ready for the event.

### **Tag Rugby:**

- In honour of Ireland's participation in the Rugby World cup this year, the senior girls will be playing Tag Rugby over the coming weeks.
- We will be entering a team to compete in the Nations Rugby Series blitz which will take place in Monivea Rugby club on Thursday September 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Buses:**

- The school has to hire bus transport to take the pupils to events such as the blitzes and athletics events mentioned above.
- In the past the school has covered these costs through parent council fundraising.
- Unfortunately due to recent increases in transport costs, we are asking pupils participating in the events to please contribute €5 each towards to cost of hiring each bus. It will be possible to make this payment via Aladdin.

### **Parents Council:**

- The school has signed up with [www.designacard.ie](http://www.designacard.ie) again this year. Each child will be given the opportunity to design their own ***Christmas Card***. A sample of their designs will be sent home in November, giving you the option to purchase a pack of Christmas cards designed by your child. A portion of the sales price will come back to the school and be used by the Parents' Council to fund different things for the children

### **Band:**

- Band practice will commence in the next week or two
- Children in 2<sup>nd</sup> class will be learning the tin whistle
- Children from 3<sup>rd</sup> up to 6<sup>th</sup> will be selected for either tin whistle, melodica, accordion, bell lyre or percussion.
- The children will bring home their instruments, so that they can practice their tunes every night as part of their homework.
- Please remind the children that the instruments are on loan to them from the school and they should take very good care of them, so that they can give them back to the school in the condition they received them.
- The band usually performs at the following 2 events annually:
  - Turning on the Christmas lights: Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>
  - St Patrick's day parade: Sunday March 17<sup>th</sup>

### **Centre for Talented Youth Ireland:**

- The Centre for Talented Youth Ireland (CTYI) at Dublin City University provides specialised courses for young people with exceptional academic ability in verbal, numerical or abstract reasoning. They are looking for pupils aged between 6 and 12 years old who are performing in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile or above in standardised school tests.
- Parents apply to the programme directly by completing an online application form at: <https://www.dcu.ie/ctyi/centre-talented-youth-ireland-student-assessment>

### **Halloween Camp:**

- Ms Alani & Ms McSpadden have circulated flyers to all pupils from Jun Infs up to 4<sup>th</sup> class.
- They will be holding a Halloween camp in the school from Tues Oct 31<sup>st</sup> to Fri Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> running from 10am to 2pm at a cost of €80 per person (€75 per sibling).
- Places are on a first come, first served basis.

### Smartphones:

- All primary schools are awaiting a communication from the government in relation to children's use of smart phones in the coming weeks. You may already have seen and read the many references to this online and on social media. **It is expected that a ban will now be introduced for all primary school children very soon.**
- As you know smart phones are already banned in SCN. As we start a new academic year I'd strongly encourage parents to take away any smartphone their primary school child may have until they go to secondary school.
- Any parent who may be considering a smart phone as a gift is now asked to reconsider. We see the damage smart phone use at home causes for our primary school pupils every year here in SCN e.g. anxiety, inattention, tiredness, friendship challenges, emotional hurt, mental illness, criminality etc. etc. It's very difficult to witness and has the effect of stifling learning and wholesome exposure to typical happy childhood experiences.
- Schools are powerless to address this without the support of parents. I realise some parents feel their child may need a phone for one reason or another and that their child isn't affected by what I've said, I'd urge these parents to consider the wider societal implications of taking such a position i.e. the pressure this puts on other families to not be the odd one out by not having a phone.
- There's strength in unity and from experience even the most resilient children have had their precious childhood time and positivity needlessly dented with smart phone technology at one stage or another.
- I am not saying smart devices are a bad thing but let's wait until our children are in first year where they will be more mature to deal with the challenges these devices can present. Every child deserves a childhood. Let's all ensure that

### After School Activities:

- Ms Belinda Murphy (a teacher in Scoil Chroí Noafa this year) is available to provide *extra tuition* to pupils who would like some extra help after school. Please phone her on: (087) 1134589 for further details, if you are interested.
- **Junior Infant Skills Club:** Mrs Duffy will be running a 6 week "Skills Club" for Junior Infant pupils on Mondays from 2.30-3.30pm (starting on Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>).
- **Chess Club** for Senior Girls: Mr Kelly will be running a 5 week "Chess Club" for any senior girls who are interested, on Wednesdays from 2.30-3.30pm (starting on Sept 20<sup>th</sup>).

### Community Links:

- **Athenry MAD festival** is taking place this weekend (Sat Sept 16<sup>th</sup> & Sun Sept 17<sup>th</sup>). Lots of events happening at Athenry Heritage centre. Check out social media for the full schedule of events!
- **Culture night** is happening around the town on Friday Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>. "Take a walk with Crom" is presented by MACNAS through Burkes Lane, The Square, Bridge St and Court Lane. Then there will be a **FIREWORKS DISPLAY** sponsored by Londis!! Not to be missed!!!!
- **Athenry Christmas Lights committee** will host the following fundraising events over the coming weeks:
  - Bake Sale in the Pastoral centre on Saturday Oct 28<sup>th</sup>
  - Church Gate collection on Saturday & Sunday Nov 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>
  - Table Quiz in Dans on Friday Nov 10<sup>th</sup>
  - Christmas Craft Fair in Athenry Community hall on Saturday Nov 25<sup>th</sup>

With every good wish for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

*Fergal Naughton*

Principal