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Dear Parents

**Issue: 05**

December 12<sup>th</sup> 2023

### **Condolences:**

- Sincere condolences to Mrs Maria McGrath on the sad passing of her dad, may his soul rest in peace. Our thoughts and prayers are with Maria & her family at this very sad time.

### **Congratulations:**

- **Best wishes to Miss Morris** and her finance Thomas on the announcement of their engagement to be married. The whole school community would like to wish them Health & Happiness in their future life together!

### **New Board of Management:**

Thank you sincerely to all parents who voted in the Board of Management election. All the representatives on the Board are volunteers and we thank them sincerely for giving their time to our school. Our first meeting of the new term of office took place yesterday.

The new Board of Management for 2023 – 2027 is as follows:

- Mr Bernie Ryan: Patron representative (Chairperson)
- Fr Benny McHale: Patron Representative
- Mr Fergal Naughton: Teacher Representative (Secretary)
- Mrs Cathriona Cronin: Teacher Representative
- Mrs Stefanie Moynihan: Community Representative
- Mr Fergal Melia: Community Representative (Treasurer)
- Mr Paul Fitzgerald: Parent Representative
- Ms Joanne Melia Costello: Parent Representative

We wish all the members a lovely Christmas and we thank them for their support. Our school could not function without our Board of Management.

### **Security:**

- To ensure greater security for all pupils and staff; all school & prefab doors (including the main school door) will be locked at 8:50am from now on.
- Our morning opening window is between 8:45am and 8:50am.
- No adults other than staff are to be in the school and / or prefabs unless they have an appointment or have a message for the school secretary.
- I trust you can appreciate where we are coming from.
- It is also hoped that this approach will help to address patterns of lateness that have been identified. We need our pupils in on time every day.

### Amalgamation Update:

- To date there have been 2 meetings of the amalgamation steering committee (made up of representatives from Board of Management, Staff and Parents of both schools and from the patron).
- A new name will be required for the newly amalgamated school – parents, pupils & the wider community will be surveyed about this.
- A new crest will be designed, once the new name for the school has been agreed
- The uniform will remain the same (apart from the crest) and the existing crested sweatshirts will be phased out, and replaced by a navy sweatshirt with the new crest.
- It was acknowledged that staff from the two schools are not really acquainted with one another nor are they familiar with either school building. Before any suggestions can be made about which classes might be in which location next year, the staff from both schools will meet to have some team-building sessions.
- It was agreed that the usual Open Night hosted by Scoil Chroí Naofa for incoming Junior Infant parents could go ahead as normal. Mr Connolly from Athenry Boys school will attend on the night. Date agreed for Open night is Jan 15<sup>th</sup> 2024.
- We have been given a draft plan of what the new school building might look like and where it will be located (i.e. the old Presentation Secondary school – the buildings currently occupied by the Gaelscoileanna across the green from SCN.)
- A number of consultants interested in designing our new school building visited the site at the end of October – they were provided with a list of points that we feel need to be considered / included in the design of the new building.
- Based on current numbers there will be approx. 500 pupils in the new school with a minimum of 20 mainstream classes.
- As soon as further information is at hand it will be shared.

### Band & Lighting of Christmas Tree:

- Heartfelt congratulations to all the girls who performed in the band on Friday December 1<sup>st</sup>, for the ceremony to turn on the Athenry Town Christmas lights!
- We were so proud of the girls – they performed & behaved so well!
- Sincere thanks also to all the staff who taught the girls their tunes and to everyone who helped to co-ordinate the logistics of getting 140 pupils to and from the market square safely on the night.

### Christmas:

- We'd appreciate it if the *magic of the season* could be preserved for all the children in the school. Staff will certainly play their part. It is a special time in particular for primary school children. We'd like to ensure it remains that way. We thank you for playing your part
- Thursday December 14<sup>th</sup> will be the last night that the pupils will get *homework* for this term.
- Pupils in Junior infants up to 2<sup>nd</sup> class will be hosting a *Carol Service* on Friday December 15<sup>th</sup>.
  - All children are to wear a Christmas jumper and / or a Christmas hat, if they have one, on the day
  - All family members are invited to attend (*Note: siblings in the school will not be released from class to watch the performance as they will get to view the video of the whole show with their class later in the week*).
  - The carol services will take place in the hall:
    - 9:15am–9:40am: Ms Tyrrell's &, Mrs Duffy's Jun Infs and Miss Dolan's Jun/Sen Infs
    - 9:50am–10:20am: Mr McDonalds's Sen Infs and Mrs Stewart's Sen Infs
    - 11:15am-11.40am: Mr Hanley's 1<sup>st</sup> class and Ms McSpadden's 1<sup>st</sup> class
    - 11:50am–12:20pm: Mrs Callanan's 2<sup>nd</sup> class
  - Parents who are coming to watch their child's performance should enter the hall at the appropriate time using the Purple door at the front of the school.

- Once the performance is over, parents should exit the hall into the yard using the Blue door
- We would kindly ask that you observe these arrangements as best you can, so that all the performances can run smoothly and all parents get the opportunity to see their child's class



Class	Entry Time (Purple Door)	Performance Time	Exit Time (Blue Door)
Ms Tyrrell Mrs Duffy Miss Dolan	9:10am	9:15am – 9:40am	9:45am
Mr McDonald Mrs Stewart	9:45am	9:50am – 10:20am	10:25am
	<b>SMALL BREAK</b>	<b>SMALL BREAK</b>	<b>SMALL BREAK</b>
Mr Hanley Ms McSpadden	11:10am	11:15am – 11:40am	11:45am
Mrs Callanan	11:45am	11:50am – 12:20pm	12:25pm
	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>

- All the performances will be recorded and collated into a Christmas iMovie. All classes in the school will get to view this iMovie and the link will also be sent to all parents.
- **Christmas Table Quiz** for pupils from 4<sup>th</sup> up to 6<sup>th</sup> class via Zoom. Thanks to Mr Hanley & Mr Kelly for organising this quiz for the girls. It is a “taster” for those girls who have never taken part in a table quiz before!!
- We are expecting a visit from **Santa** on Wednesday December 20<sup>th</sup>
- All the children have received a **Christmas annual** courtesy of the Parents Council this year. These are fun & educational Christmas-themed activity books.
- The school will hold a **Christmas Jumper** fundraiser on Thursday December 21<sup>st</sup> in aid of the Athenry Christmas lights committee. This will be a non-uniform day. The children may come to school wearing a Christmas jumper, hat etc., if they wish. We ask for a donation of €2 for this privilege, which will be given to the Athenry Christmas Lights committee.
- The school will close at 11.45am on Friday December 22<sup>nd</sup> for the **Christmas holidays** and will re-open on Monday January 8<sup>th</sup> at 8.45am (with class starting @ 8.50am sharp)

### **Best Attendance:**

- Congratulations to Miss Morris' 4<sup>th</sup> class on having the Best Attendance for the month of November.

### **Gaeilgeoir na Míosa:**

Congratulations to the following pupils who made an extra special effort to speak Irish during the month of November; Mia Madden, Áine Dunworth, Orlaith Conlon, Naomi Momoh, TJ Moloney, Artur Raczynski, Sam Rooney, Aoibh Byrne, Amy Mooney, Alisha Canavan, Zofia Pawlik, Amelia Doherty, Keelin Murtagh and Michaela Molloy

### **Infections & Illness:**

- There has been a large increase in general viral infections among children & young people this winter.
- The HSE are currently seeing a significant increase in the RSV virus (a common winter viral infection)
- Typical symptoms of viral infections, including RSV are:
  - Runny or blocked nose
  - Mild fever
  - Cough
  - Lethargy (tiredness)
- Please, if your child is unwell, keep them at home.
- Many children might have a runny nose or a slight cough in the winter season. However, if a child is feeling unwell they should be at home. Children who are unwell with one infection are more likely to get another infection, and may become more significantly unwell. Therefore staying at home will protect your child while they are unwell from other viruses which may also be circulating.
- Children with symptoms are more likely to spread infections. Staying home when unwell will help prevent the spread to other children, families and staff.

### **Smartphones:**

- A survey on Smartphones was sent to all parents last month
- 95% of parents are in favour of action
- We have added the following statement to the Enrolment Form for incoming pupils:

***“I commit to postpone the purchase of a smartphone for my child until they finish in primary school”***

Parents will be asked to say “Yes” or “No” to this on the enrolment form.

### **Accelerated Reading Programme:**

- All pupils in classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> up to 6<sup>th</sup> class are participating in the accelerated reading programme.
- The AR library is located in the school foyer & there is a constant flow of pupils exchanging their books
- Statistics for the month of December are as follows:



### **Educational Trips to Galway for 5<sup>th</sup> class:**

- Mrs Monson’s 5<sup>th</sup> class are taking the train to Galway on Wed Dec 13<sup>th</sup>
- Miss Murray’s 5<sup>th</sup> class are taking the train to Galway on Wed Jan 17<sup>th</sup>

### **Enrolments for September 2024:**

- John Connolly (Principal of Athenry Boys school) and I will be hosting an Open Night for incoming Junior Infants on Monday January 15<sup>th</sup> at 8pm here in the school hall.
- Enrolment forms for pupils due to start school in September 2024 will be handed out on the night and will be available from the office after that date. The closing date for receipt of completed forms is Monday February 19<sup>th</sup> 2024.
- Due to the high interest for places, please ensure any siblings who are due to start in September 2024 have their information in on time. Thank you!

### Dates for Diary:

- Wednesday January 24<sup>th</sup>: *Grandparents day*
- **Thursday Jan 25<sup>th</sup>: Staff meeting Term 2 – all the children will go home at 1.15pm**
- Monday February 5<sup>th</sup>: *St Brigid's day bank holiday*
- Thursday February 15<sup>th</sup> & Friday February 16<sup>th</sup>: *February Mid-term break*
- **Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup>: Staff Training – all children will go home at 1.15pm**
- Monday March 18<sup>th</sup>: *St Patrick's day bank holiday*
- Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup>: *School Photographer*
- Monday March 25<sup>th</sup> to Friday April 5<sup>th</sup>: *Easter Holidays (school closes at 11.45am on Fri Mar 22<sup>nd</sup>)*
- **Thursday April 18<sup>th</sup>: Staff meeting Term 3 – all the children will go home at 1.15pm**
- Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup>: *Confirmation* for 6<sup>th</sup> class girls
- Monday May 6<sup>th</sup> to Friday May 10<sup>th</sup>: *May Mid-term break*
- Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup>: *First Communion* for 2<sup>nd</sup> class girls at 2.30pm

### Appreciation:

The staff and Board of Management wish to thank our parent body for all their support always. 2023 has been another eventful year! It's been a pleasure working with you and your children.

Nollaig shona agus bliain nua mhaith!

*Fergal Naughton*  
Príomhoide