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Dear Parents

Issue: 07

February 14th 2024

Mid-term Break:

- Reminder: school is closed Thursday and Friday of this week (Feb 15th & 16th) for the mid-term break.

REMINDER:

- The school will **close at 1.15pm** on Thursday February 22nd.
- ALL children from ALL classes will go home at 1.15pm on these days.

NB: The school must **close on Tuesday February 27th** for a staff training day. This is to facilitate training for all staff on the new Primary Maths Curriculum.

Amalgamation Update:

- The staff from both Scoil Chróí Naofa and Athenry Boys school have had a number of workshops together over the last few weeks and they have been very positive.
- Collaboration is continuing between all the stakeholders
- Next Amalgamation Steering committee meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday Feb 29th.

Grandparents Day:

- Thanks to all the grandparents and relatives who visited the school on Grandparents day.
- We were so delighted to be able to welcome so many guests on the day.

Best Attendance:

- Congratulations to Mr McDonald's Senior Infants on having the Best Attendance for January.

Enrolments for September 2024:

- Enrolment forms for pupils due to start school in September 2023 are available from the office. The closing date for receipt of completed forms is this coming Monday (February 19th.)
- 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!

Chess:

- Mr Kelly has entered a team of 8 girls into the Ficheall chess tournament which is taking place on Thursday February 22nd in the Ard Rí hotel in Tuam.

Smart Device Voluntary Code:

The Parents Council of Scoil Chroí Naofa and the Parents Associations of the other local schools are planning to introduce a “Smart Device Voluntary Code” that parents will be asked to consider signing up to.

Why is it being introduced?

- Over the past few years, concern around young children having unsupervised access to the internet and social media has grown considerably
- Recent results from our Smartphone survey showed that the majority of parents were in favour of signing up to a Smartphone Voluntary agreement
- There is an increasing body of evidence which has shown the detrimental effects of this excessive use of smartphones on the developing brain, especially on children under the age of 14 – socially, emotionally and educationally

The Voluntary Code:

This voluntary code will give parents and guardians who are concerned about their child having personal access to a smartphone, a tool to help address the issue.

- Collective agreement among parents to hold off on smart devices will reduce peer pressure and provide parents with information to respond to possible pressure from their children e.g. *85% of 4th class parents have opted into the “Smart Device Voluntary Code” or there are 23 other children in the class whose parents have agreed not to buy a smartphone while their child is in Primary school.*

Key Points:

1. As part of the Voluntary agreement parents agree to postpone the purchase of a smartphone for their child while in Primary school
2. The Voluntary Code does **not** include regular mobile phones with no internet access
3. All information provided will be confidential and results will be assimilated by class group e.g. 20 out of 25 have signed up (names of those who sign up / don’t sign up will not be shared)
4. It recognises that every family has different priorities and opinions in relation to internet access and smartphone use.
5. If a parent / guardian alters their view subsequently and wants to purchase a personal smartphone device for their child(ren) they can do so at any stage.
6. A parent / guardian can remove their name from the voluntary agreement at any time by contacting the school office
7. It is not a solution in itself to the growing problem but it is potentially **one tool** which may be helpful to those who wish to avail of it
8. Neither the school nor the Parent’s Council will police who has and who hasn’t a phone because phones are not permitted in school. We are **promoting the contract** in partnership with parents and hope that a **community of good practice** will help to delay the start of smart phone usage until post primary school.

Presentation College Athenry:

Information for 6th class girls who have been accepted to Presentation College Athenry for September 2023:

- The **CAT4 assessment** will be held on Friday Feb 23rd
- **Subject Taster Day** for incoming 1st years will be held on Thursday Feb 29th from 9am to 4pm

Presentation College Athenry Musical:

- Pupils in 5th & 6th classes will be attending the matinee performance of “Back to the 80’s” on Wednesday February 28th.
- The matinee is taking place in the Brothers of Charity Kilcornan, Clarinbridge, so the girls will have to travel their by bus.
- The cost to attend the event is €10 per pupil and can be paid online via Aladdin. (The parents council are subsidising part of the cost of the bus).

Band:

- Band practice is continuing as we prepare for the St. Patrick's day parade (Sunday March 17th)
- Please remind the girls to practice their tunes as part of their homework!
- Line formations and marching practice are soon taking place. We trust that you can understand why attendance on St Patrick's day itself is mandatory for all the participating 2nd to 6th pupils. We are a marching band team and without ALL of our team players on the day we would be unable to perform as we would like and celebrate our school on the day itself.
- Thanking you in advance for your continuing support and co-operation.

Soccer:

- Mr Kelly will be co-ordinating an in-house soccer competition for the girls in 5th & 6th classes over the coming weeks.
- There will be a challenge match against Gael Scoil Riada on Monday February 19th.
- The panel of soccer players will then represent the school at a fun soccer competition with Lisheenkyle National school on Tuesday March 5th.
- The girls will also be competing in the FAI 5's soccer competition to be held on Friday March 15th in Mervue.

Camogie:

- Camogie training for Senior classes will resume after St Patricks day
- Cian Ryan (the local GAA coach) is providing coaching to pupils in both 1st classes, along with both 3rd classes.
- There will be a parish blitz for 1st and 2nd class pupils to be held in Carnaun in early May
- There will also be a parish blitz for the senior girls to be held in Carnaun on May 17th.
- We have also signed up for the Cumann na mBunscoil events which will be taking place in term 3

Cycling Workshop:

- Each year the Parents Council part-fund a cycling workshop for the 6th class girls. This workshop is provided over a number of sessions and is delivered by "Cycle Right".
- The workshops are scheduled to commence after the Easter holidays (Thurs Apr 11th), when the weather will hopefully be good. Obviously the workshops mainly take place outdoors.
- The girls are encouraged to use their own bicycles and helmets, where possible.

Gymnastics:

- All classes from Senior Infants up to 6th class will receive 2-3 gymnastics sessions in the Senshin sports centre after Easter.
- This wonderful opportunity for all the pupils has been made possible by the incredible success of the Sponsored Walk which raised approx. €6,500 in June last year.
- Teacher will let you know closer to the time when your child's class will be having their session.
- The children will be walked to the Senshin centre for their session & walked back to school afterwards

Annual Book Fair:

- Our annual book fair in partnership with Tara Book company will take place on-line again this year.
- The book fair will take place after the Easter holidays.
- You will be sent the link and password closer to the time.

School Tours:

- Below is a summary of when & where each class will be going on this year's school tours.

Date	Class Teacher	Venue
Tuesday May 28 th	Mr McDonald (Senior Infants) Mrs Stewart (Senior Infants) Miss Dolan (Senior Infants)	Turoe Pet Farm, Bullaun, Co. Galway
Wednesday May 29 th	Miss Murray (5 th class) Mrs Monson (5 th class)	Emerald Park Ashbourne, Co. Meath
Thursday May 30 th	Mrs Callanan (2 nd class)	Wildlands Moycullen, Co. Galway
Wednesday June 5 th	Ms Tyrrell (Junior Infants) Mrs Duffy (Junior Infants) Miss Dolan (Junior Infants)	Turoe Pet Farm, Bullaun, Co. Galway
Thursday June 6 th	Ms Alani (3 rd class) Mrs Greally (3 rd & 4 th class) Miss Morris (4 th class)	Adventure World University of Limerick Limerick
Thursday June 13 th	Mr Kelly (6 th class)	Emerald Park Ashbourne, Co. Meath
Friday June 14 th	Mr Hanley (1 st class) Ms McSpadden (1 st class)	Let's Go! Kingfisher, NUIG, Galway

Dates for Diary:

- Thursday February 22nd: Amalgamation Workshop – all children will go home at 1.15pm**
- School Closure for Primary Maths Curriculum training: Tuesday February 27th 2024.**
- Monday March 18th: *St Patrick's day* bank holiday
- Wednesday March 20th: *School Photographer*
- Monday March 25th to Friday April 5th: *Easter Holidays* (school closes at 11.45am on Fri Mar 22nd)
- Thursday April 18th: Staff meeting Term 3 – all the children will go home at 1.15pm**
- Saturday April 27th: *Confirmation* for 6th class girls at 2.30pm
- Monday May 6th to Friday May 10th: *May Mid-term break*
- Saturday May 18th: *First Communion* for 2nd class girls at 2.30pm

Fergal Naughton
Príomhoide