

ST. COLMCILLE'S N.S.



St. Colmcille's National School,

Ballinahown, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

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September 2017 Newsletter

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to a new school year. A special welcome to the new children & their parents who have joined our school community.

As we embark on another school year I would be grateful if you would give your attention to the following:

Board of Management: The current Board of Management is Mr. Denis Rohan,(Chairperson), Fr. Aidan Ryan, Mr. Eugene Boland, Mrs. Mary Daly & Mr. Thomas Keena. The Board is commencing the process to elect two Parent Nominees to join the Board. This will be until a new Board is elected in 2019.

If you **do not wish** your name to be included in the list of Parents to be considered as Nominees please contact the school by email on principalballinahownns@gmail.com with the subject line 'Parent Nominees' and we will not include you in the list which will be circulated among parents. This list will contain your name, address and phone number so that Parents wishing to nominate you can contact you prior to Nomination to seek your permission. Please contact the school **before Friday** as the list will be circulated early next week.

If you have previously contacted the school please **do so** again to confirm your wishes.

First Communion / Confirmation Meeting: Fr. Aidan will host a meeting for Parents of children receiving First Communion and Confirmation in 2018. The meeting will take place on Monday 18th September in St. Colmcille's Church at 7.30 p.m.

Absenteeism/Attendance: In the event of your child being absent please inform the class teacher in writing. The Education Welfare Act 2000 became law on 5th July 2002. This act is about promoting school attendance & places obligations on parents & schools to ensure regular attendance. Schools are obliged to monitor school attendance & to report, to the National Welfare Board, the name of any pupil who is absent for an aggregate of 20 days or more in a school year. This is a legal requirement on schools & one where there is no discretion. Please use absent notes at the back of the homework journals.

Collecting your child: When it is necessary for a pupil to leave the school early, the teacher must be informed in advance. Parents/Guardians are asked to call personally to the classroom to collect the child & to accompany the child to the classroom on his/her return. Any person collecting a child on behalf of a parent will be permitted to take the child only if the parent contacts the school beforehand & indicates that he/she has expressly authorized the person to collect the child on his/her behalf.

Uniform: Children should wear the complete school uniform at all times. Sportswear should be worn for Football/Swimming etc. Swimming is scheduled for Tuesday for 1st to 6th Class. P.E. is scheduled for Infants on Fridays, so they should wear tracksuit bottoms on this day. We would appreciate if tracksuits were plain navy (Dunnes, Pennies, M&S etc) rather than branded tracksuits bearing Logo's.

Appointments: If you wish to meet any staff member please phone in advance for an appointment.

Identification: All uniform, tracksuit, footwear, coats, books etc. should bear the owner's name so that it can be identified if mislaid.

Homework: Please check your child's homework nightly & sign the homework journal.

Book Rental: Thank you to all the Parents who have subscribed to the Book Rental & a gentle reminder to those who may have forgotten it.

Telephone: Mobile phones may not be brought to or used in school. This also includes expensive items such as Ipods, I pads, Nintendos etc.

Communication: The school uses the "text-a-parent" facility to communicate important messages to parents. Accordingly, it is very important that we have an up-to-date mobile number for you. Please inform the school if your contact number has changed over the summer. An emergency contact number should also be supplied to the school. If you would like to receive the school newsletter and other notices via email, please send an email to ballinahownnnationalschool@gmail.com

Draft Communication Policy: The Board have also been working on a Draft Communication Policy which is enclosed with this Newsletter. If you would like to make suggestions please email the school with them.

Finance: The Board also hopes to be able to disseminate the 'End of Year' Accounts after the next Board Meeting.

Clothes Collection: Some Parents have enquired about the Clothes recycling & 'Thank You' to the Parents who have already dropped some bags in. If at any time you have clothes, shoes, bags etc. which you would like to recycle you can leave them into the school.

Healthy Eating: Healthy Eating & a Healthy diet are always on the agenda in schools. The school is continuing with its Healthy Lunch Policy. Sweet items are discouraged & chewing gum is strictly forbidden. All the children are aware of the importance of having a Healthy Diet. We would encourage Parents to have a look at the Healthy Lunch Policy which is on the school Website & to encourage children to make Healthy food choices. A summary of the Policy is

"The 4 C's are not allowed – Candy, Crisps, Chocolate & Chewing Gum"

The exception to this of course are the days of the Holidays when children bring treats eg: "Trick or Treating" party on the day of the Halloween break. The children themselves are making a very big effort to bring Healthy Lunches to school & the support & encouragement of Parents is much appreciated.

Holidays: Enclosed is a copy of the holiday schedule for the school year. It will also be posted on the school website.

Music Generation Offaly Westmeath: Once again we will be engaging in the Music Generation Offaly Westmeath programme. This is co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, The Department of Education and Skills and Local Music Education Partnerships. Lessons are offered at a significantly reduced rate of €1.50 per lesson per child or €45 for the year. We here in St. Colmcille's are fortunate to be offered a place again on this scheme for the coming school year. This year 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th Classes will be included in the classes. The tutor available again this year is Mr. Niall Mannion. Instruments will be supplied again by Music Generation Offaly Westmeath.

We were delighted to host our second Music evening in June & everyone present agreed that the children were superb & their performances were outstanding. Great credit is due to the children & their teacher Mr. Niall Mannion for a thoroughly enjoyable evening. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Mrs. Giselle Foley who accompanied the musicians & the singers on the night also.

Complaints Procedure: Included with the Newsletter is a Complaints Procedure which has been agreed between the CPSMA (Catholic Primary School Managers Association) and the INTO (Irish National Teachers Association). We would encourage Parents to follow this procedure as laid out in this document.

Libraries: We must convey our sincere thanks to the Parents Association for funding the class Libraries. The Libraries were fitted during the Summer break and are a very welcome addition to each classroom. We must also thank Mr. Michael Concannon who designed, built and fitted the Libraries, on his superb workmanship. Staff and children are delighted with the new additions and we are currently updating the book stock.

Insurance: If you are interested in availing of the Pupil Personal Insurance, the closing date is Friday 20th October. Under this policy, pupils are covered 24/7, in the event of an accident during or outside of school hours at a cost of €9 per child. The insurance will cover the period Sept 2017 to Sept 2018 and must be renewed each year. If you have not received an application form & would like one, please collect one from the Office.

Goal Jersey Day: This year Goal Jersey Day is on Friday 13th October. Children may wear their favourite Jersey / non uniform on that day for a donation of €2 per child. This is then forwarded to Goal on behalf of the school. It is usually a very colourful enjoyable day.

Maths Week: Maths Week Ireland is also just around the corner. This year it runs from October 14th to 22nd & we hope to participate in some of the Math's Activities being organized for it. Further details can be found at <http://www.mathsweek.ie>

Recycling: Also enclosed is a recycling box which you can use to recycle old batteries. As part of our Green Schools & SESE programme we encourage everyone to recycle as much as possible. All small boxes will be emptied into one big box here in the school where representatives of WEEE Ireland will collect the batteries. All small boxes raise €1 for the LauraLynn Children's Hospice. We also recycle ink cartridges & they may also be left into the school.

Trick or Treat: Once again we will be participating in the Trick or Treat Party Fundraiser for Temple Street Hospital, on the day of the Halloween Holidays which is Friday 28th October. Children may bring treats to school on that day & they usually dress up as well in whichever character / Halloween costume they would like. A small donation of €2 per child is forwarded to Temple Street on behalf of the school.

Scare Crow Festival: Due to the outstanding success of the Scarecrow festival last year we are hoping to run it again this year. We are of course, dependant on the Families, Parents Association and community for participation in making the Scarecrows. Hopefully it will be an enjoyable event again this year.

Congratulations: A huge congratulations is extended to Ms Jennifer Byrne, Past Pupil, on her amazing achievement in winning the International 'Rose of Tralee' Title. We would like to thank Jennifer, who took time-out last week, for visiting the school and speaking to the children. Jennifer is an outstanding Ambassador for her family, her profession and her community and we wish Jennifer well in her year ahead.

Thank you: We would like to thank the Parents who maintained the grounds over the Summer period, and indeed we would like to thank the Parents who are always available to help us in all the events and activities which we have over the year. Without the help of Parents such events like the Scarecrow Festival' or hospitality at various events, would not be possible and we would like to acknowledge their invaluable contribution to our school.



Twitter: Parents may also follow us & see some of the very many busy events happening in our school. Follow us on Twitter @BallinahownNS

Dates to note:

- Friday 15th September - Return email not to be included on Parents Nomination List
- 1st Communion / Confirmation Meeting – Monday 18th September @7.30 in St. Colmcille’s Church, Ballinahown
- Goal Jersey Day – Friday 13th October
- Maths Week 14th – 22nd October
- Trick or Treat for Temple Street / Scare Crow Festival – Friday 28th October
- Halloween Break – School closed Monday 30th October to Friday 3rd November.

Is mise le meas,

Mary Daly, Príomh Oide