

Dear Parents,

I hope everyone has settled back into routine after the holidays. It's wonderful that we continue to enjoy pleasant weather and sunshine. Hopefully we will get lots more good weather.

In particular I want to welcome our 15 new Junior Infants to our school and hope they and their families will be very happy with us. It is a huge step for them as they begin this 8 year journey. The photographs taken during their first days in school will bring back so many memories when you are preparing them for secondary school and you will wonder how the years have passed so quickly. We are also delighted to welcome Ella into 1st class and hope she makes lots of new friends. Parents are always welcome in the school. If you have any concerns about your child/children please make an appointment to speak to the class teacher. I can also be contacted by phone or by making an appointment to talk to me. It is always advisable to make contact with the school as soon as concerns arise rather than allowing issues to develop. Of course, we are also very happy to welcome Ms Cawley, who teaches 5th and 6th class and our new SNA, Ms Kehoe. We hope they, too, will be very happy as members of our staff.

Ready for Work!

As we begin a new school year, it is really important that children are ready for work in class each day. They need to be well rested and go to bed early on school nights. They also need to eat a healthy breakfast and bring healthy lunches to school. Physical exercise is essential – please limit the time spent watching TV and playing on computers. Homework needs to be done to the best of your child's ability. If your child is struggling with homework or spending too long doing it, please speak to the class teacher. Our homework policy gives recommended times for homework at the various class levels. Please supervise your child's work and sign diaries and shared reading cards each night.

Early Intervention.

We are continuing with our Early Intervention Programme. Pupils from Junior Infants to 3rd class will be included this year. We will concentrate on Literacy until the end of January and on Numeracy for the remainder of the year. During Early Intervention classes the children work in small groups with their Class Teacher, the Learning Support teacher and the Resource teacher. As our Resource Teaching hours have been reduced this year, I will work with Ms. O' Brien's class for Early Intervention. As we want to priorities the teaching and learning in maths, there will be in-class support for maths from 1st – 6th class. Either the Learning Support or Resource teacher will work with the class teacher during Maths at least one day each week. Problem solving will be the topic during this time. There will also be in- class support in English for pupils in Mrs. Sheppard's room, Ms O' Meara's room and Mrs Warren's room. Our standardized test results show that Early Intervention and in-class support is very effective.

Music Generation and Summer Memories Competition.

We have engaged Music Generation Carlow to work with all classes again this year. Our fund raising concert in June brought in €1,505. However, this leaves a very

substantial shortfall of €1510 for the year. The funds have to be raised and we are very fortunate that a family has again agreed to organize the “Summer Memories” Competition. You received notice of this prior to the holidays and a reminder on our 1st day back so hopefully you remembered to take lots of photographs during the Summer. Closing date for entries is 28th September. There are 3 amazing prizes-

1st prize. Family entrance to Wells House, Ballyedmond, Gorey worth €20. Wells House have kindly sponsored this portion of the prize. The family who organised the competition are sponsoring a €50 voucher towards lunch in Wells House. (Approx cost of lunch for 2 adults and 2 children is €36). This will be a wonderful day out for the winning family – it is a full day of fun and excitement with House, Gardens, Playground, Nature trails and Craft Shop.

2nd Prize: €50 Voucher for IMC Cinema in Fairgreen Carlow – sponsored by the family.

3rd Prize: €20 cash prize – again sponsored by the family.

The family are also sponsoring 3 additional prizes of €10 each. Please support this competition and the very generous efforts of this family. You may enter as many photos as you wish. Entry fee is €5 per photo. Please do support this wonderful fund raising initiative – if we have difficulty in raising sufficient funds for Music Generation classes this year they will be discontinued next year.

Summer Reading Challenge.

Congratulations to the pupils who completed the Summer Reading Challenge in the local Libraries. Please encourage your children to read as it is really important for their education, enjoyment and general living. The pupils were Caolán & Ohran Breslin, Amber and Emma Cleary, Cian & Lia Dunne, Joshua Armitage-Ennis, Darragh Plunkett, Nathan Redmond, Chloe and Craig Roberts, Ava, Ben and Tom Tracey, David, Isabel and Thomas Whitty, Donnacha and Aideen Cosgrave and Lisa Byrne. Those who completed it through Bunclody Library received their certs and medals in the school on Tuesday 20th September. Well done to all.

Tullow Show Winners.

Congratulations to the following children who received Awards for their entries in the schools section of the Tullow Show. The entries were in handwriting, art, essay writing and poetry. Well done to the teachers involved who helped and encouraged the children. The winners were – Amber Cleary, Donnacha Cosgrave, Conor Slye, Abbie Gray, Chloe Roberts, Isabel Whitty and John Gilchrist. There were 2,500 entries in the competition and 60 prizes were awarded so well done everyone involved.

Camogie Champions.

We were honoured and delighted to welcome some of the Carlow All-Ireland Camogie Champions to the school on Friday 16th September. They brought the Kay Mills Cup with them and the excitement was fantastic. Hopefully it will inspire some of our camogie players to persevere and help bring the Cup to Carlow in future years. Grainne Nolan spoke to the children about the commitment and dedication needed to be successful. She also spoke to them of the fun and friendships enjoyed through involvement with team sports.

Swimming

Swimming lessons in Graiguecullen Pool began on Tuesday 6th September for pupils from 2nd – 6th class and all pupils in ASD class. As our numbers have increased we have

to organise lessons for 1st class in Mount Wolseley pool in Tullow. We expect to commence shortly. Lessons will be at 1pm on Fridays for 10 weeks. Swimming is an important strand of the PE curriculum and therefore all pupils are expected to attend unless there is a medical reason for non-attendance. If there is a medical reason for abstention from swimming lessons for the 10 weeks it is essential that a medical cert is supplied to the school. Any child who is occasionally unable to go swimming due to illness will be supervised in the school and given work to do. However, it is hoped that it will not be necessary for any pupil to miss swimming on a regular basis. As usual we need 2 parents to help the children in the dressing rooms each week – both in Graiguecullen and Tullow. Only parents who have Garda Vetting may assist the children. Forms are available in the office and the vetting is now being completed in a week. We depend on your generosity to volunteer to assist with the swimming each week. Please play your part and don't depend on someone else to do it. If it is more convenient for you to travel by car and meet the children at the pool, this is very acceptable and even welcome as places on the buses are limited.

Sacraments:

Pupils from 2nd class will receive the Sacraments of Penance on Tuesday 14th March and First Holy Communion on Saturday 13th May. Fr. O' Byrne has arranged a meeting for parents of this class in St. Brigid's Hall, Clonegal on Wednesday 28th September at 8.15pm.

Extra Curricular Activities.

Training will be provided by the teachers during lunch break as follows –

Football Training: Ms Hourigan

Camogie/ Hurling: Mrs Sheppard

Basketball : Ms O' Brien

Soccer: Mrs Warren

In addition to this training, Ita O' Donoghue will provide 6 weeks Basketball training and the GAA coaches will provide training in either football or hurling during the year. Children will participate in all the Cumann na mBunscoil Football, Hurling and Camogie leagues. They will also participate in the Basketball and Soccer league. St. Laurence O'Toole Athletic Club is organizing the **Primary Schools Cross Country Event** and it will take place in Carlow Hurling Club on Wednesday 28th September, commencing at 11am sharp. Pupils from 4th, 5th and 6th class can participate. Entry fee is €2 per child and must be paid to the school before the date. If there are sufficient numbers interested in participating, a teacher will accompany the children and a bus will be provided. Otherwise parents may take the children who are interested to the event.

School Committees

We have elected our School Committees and we look forward to great ideas from all the committee members.

| | Green Schools Committee | Active Schools Committee | Digital School Committee | Students Council Members |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 st Class | Ellie Byrne-Roberts.& Shaun Doyle | Olivia Austin & Cian Du.nne | Donnacha Cosgrave & Niall McGrath | Ava Byrne & Louis Stone. |
| 2 nd Class | Dylan Austin & Craig Roberts | Carley Brownrigg & Ohran Breslin | Conor Slye & Nathan Redmond. | Rebecca Hilliard& Megan Doyle. |
| 3 rd Class | Cillian Jeffers & Gavin Kinsella. | Caolán Breslin & Cathal Redmond. | Laura Burgess & Evan Collier. | Ava Mai Moynihan & David Whitty |
| 4 th Class | Lia Dunne & Isobel Cronin. | Lorcan Kinsella & Cillian Murphy. | Ava Tracey & Darragh Roberts. | Nicole Roberts & Áine Sharry. |
| 5 th Class | Lisa Byrne & Travis Hayes-Walsh | Róisín Carroll & Daniel Cronin | Isabel Whitty & Ellen Maguire | Lynsey Kilbride & Ryan Austin. |
| 6 th Class | Sarah Sheppard & Josh Byrne | Fionn Doyle & Sean O' Brien | Shauna Doyle & Clark Burgess. | Carrie Shine & Josh Byrne. |
| Mrs Nolan's Class | Liam Doran. | | | |

Committees will usually meet once per month. One teacher will also work with each committee. I will attend meetings with all committees when possible.

Green Schools – Mrs Sheppard

Active school – Ms O' Brien

Digital School – Mrs O' Meara

Student's Council – Mrs. Warren.

Walk on Wednesday.

This will continue this year and we hope you will again use Park and Stride when dropping your children off and collecting them. For new Parents this involves parking at the Graveyard on the Tullow Road and walking down to the school as there is a footpath there. Please do the same in the evening when collecting your children.

Gardening Club.

You have probably noticed the new shrubs planted at the front of the school during the Summer. It was necessary to plant this area for safety as there is a steep incline here and the ground is very close to the top of the boundary wall. Thank you to Fergal O' Connor, Gary Sinnott and Liam Cosgrave who assisted me with the planting. Our Sensory garden and herb garden were both destroyed during the building project last year. We have been granted funding from Carlow County Council, which will be used to re organize this area. Much of the work will be carried out by the children, especially in the after school Gardening Club which I will organize shortly with assistance from Mrs Sheppard and the SNAS. We will probably need some adult helpers – so I hope some people will be available when I put out the call! You have never let me down yet so I'm hopeful!

Weekly Assembly:

We will continue with our weekly assembly this year – on Mondays. Pupil of the week will be announced from each class. It would be helpful if you make “a big fuss” of your child if he/she receives the award. It has to be worked for – it doesn’t just come in turn!

Newsletters

All newsletters and letters from the Principal can be sent to you by e-mail. This is our preferred option. If you haven’t already sent in your e-mail address, please do so now. As we are now working towards a Digital School Award, this is even more important this year. There has been a great increase in the number of families accepting e-mails and we are very appreciative of this. Just over one third still haven’t given us an e-mail address. If you are still in this minority and have an e-mail address, please contact the office as soon as possible to furnish your details. If you still wish to receive a hard copy of Newsletters please note they will be on yellow paper in your child’s bag. We use text-a-parent to notify you of various events and activities during the year. If you change your mobile number during the year please notify the office immediately so we can update our records.

The Parents Council

Thank you to those of you who are involved with the Parents Council and particularly the 3 officers – Catherine O’ Brien, Teresa Devlin and Siobhan Breslin. The Parents Council do tremendous work for the school and for your children. They have presented the school with 3 additional laptops since the school reopened. A sincere thank you for this. If you are already involved with the Parents Council, your involvement is greatly appreciated. If you are not involved, perhaps you would become involved this year. In particular, I would like to encourage parents from the Junior end of the school to become involved. Without new members it is very difficult to organize events and everything done by the Parents Council is for the benefit of your children. It also provides an opportunity for you to become involved in the school community. As you are aware the AGM will be held on Thursday 29th September at 7.00pm. As the Officers have been in place for a number of years, they intend stepping down at this meeting. Please be willing to do your part and ensure the Parents Council continues working for your children.

As we begin another school year, I want to thank you very sincerely for your support of my work as principal and your support of the teachers in the school. This support is very important for the smooth running of the school and it is genuinely appreciated. I look forward to working with you and your children during the coming year. Please feel welcome in the school at all times and make an appointment to discuss any concerns at a mutually convenient time. If you wish to contact me by phone, the best time would be between 9.00 and 10.00 each morning. If I’m not available at other times, I will return your call as soon as possible.

Le gach dea-ghuí

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Anna Cosgrave.