



Scoil Naomh Aindriú



ST. ANDREW'S N.S.
Newcourt Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Telephone (01) 286 7161 Fax (01) 286 9602
Email info@standrewsbray.ie
Uimhir Rolla - 13597M

Newsletter

April 2017

Dear Parent / Guardians, Staff and Pupils: Please take the time to read the important information contained in this newsletter.

Staff News

We welcome Claire Dornan as a shared Support Teacher to our school. Claire will be with us for about six hours per week with the rest of her time spent working in her base school, St Cronin's B.N.S. in Bray. We are lucky to have a teacher of Claire's experience working with us.

As many of you already know, there is a critical shortage of substitute teachers throughout the country. There are frequently no subs available to cover when teachers are on sick leave. Only for Ms. Carol Revington and Ms. Vicky Serle we would be in dire straits as Support Teachers would be left to cover for Class Teachers resulting in no support teaching taking place on that day.

On occasions, however, our Support Teachers do step into the breach and we thank them for their flexibility and adaptability.

Vicky Serle also volunteers and works with us on Mondays as a Support Teacher. Vicky is a great find and fits easily into our school ethos and routine. Thanks to Sarah Doyle for introducing us to Vicky.

Support Teaching

In previous newsletters, which you have all read!! I mentioned that the DES has proposed a "New" model for allocating support teaching hours to schools. The Minister has assured us that we will not lose teaching hours as a result of this model **for the next two years**. The communication from the DES (Circular 0013/2017 and Circular 0017/2017) sets out the structure of the new model. While we have five permanent support teaching posts in St. Andrew's, we are however short 2.55 hrs per week for the fifth post. To ensure that we retain the fifth post I have clustered with St Patrick's National School, Greystones to make up the full 25 hrs. Thus one colleague will travel to Greystones to work for 2.25 hrs each week. This is far preferable to our current model where we send a colleague to school A for ten hours per week and take a teacher from School B for 7 hours per week. This old arrangement wastes circa 3 hours teaching per week due to travel.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Assessment

Back in September 2016 we as a staff targeted a number of areas which we wanted to review with a view to enhancing our own teaching and our pupils' learning. One particular area was pupil assessment and the tracking of individual pupil progress. To this end our teaching team engaged in professional conversations through sharing ideas and also through staff workshops.

Last month Ms. Daphne Wood facilitated a workshop on assessment with an emphasis on pupil self assessment which is an area of assessment that is very effective and can have very positive outcomes for the more senior classes in particular. There is no better source of information for teachers than the child her/himself.

Staff have reviewed the new draft Assessment Policy which is now being considered by our BOM. Thanks to colleagues led by Ms. Daphne Wood for their input into the revised policy.

Maths Workshop

We welcome back Ms. Joanie Clarke from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (a statutory body of the Department of Education and Skills). Joanie will be working with us on further fostering independent learning in maths among our pupils.

Spelling Workshop

Caoilinn Casey from the PDST also worked briefly with us on Tuesday 28th February in the area of the teaching of spellings.

Individual CPD

All staff engage in their own individual CPD accredited courses in areas directly related to teaching and learning. Areas covered include chess, coding and the promotion of emotional health throughout the school.

Coding/Scratch

We have engaged a facilitator/trainer to work with staff members in this area. An initial two hour session will be followed by workshops for 5th and 6th classes. The latter will be funded by our PTA.

Thanks to our very courageous colleague, Ms Caroline Aragane who took the plunge and is now exploring the joys of coding with Third Class. Also many thanks to Stephen Dixon for his encouragement and advice.

Blinds

The blinds have been replaced in 1st to 4th classes and one resource room. Thanks to Jayne Balmer for sourcing these and to our BOM for providing the funding of circa. €2k.

Child Protection Audit

One of the most crucial roles of our BOM is that of Child Protection and Welfare. At our recent meeting of the BOM we reviewed our practices and procedures in regard to child protection through conducting our mandatory annual audit. Our practice and procedures mirror best practice.

Finance

During each meeting of the BOM we review the school's finances under the leadership of our Hon. Treasurer Jayne Balmer. On top of this Jayne also does the payroll for the school and prepares our accounts for audit.

The good news for this year is that, despite rising costs, the budget for SASH is identical to that of last year. This year we are required to pay SASH (the management company for the school buildings and grounds) a total of €63K. When we realise that the cleaning costs for both schools is now over €50K with energy costs exceeding €30K and insurance at €13K, this figure can be understood. We thank Mr John Foster who meticulously keeps the SASH accounts and has done so for the last 20 years (plus VAT). As with all other members of SASH, John completes this mandatory work on a purely voluntary basis.

Other News from SASH (no longer SASH Ltd.)

Through prudent financial management last year SASH was able to set aside a sum of €11K to fund the retarmacing of the crescented area at the school entrance. This area was last resurfaced twenty years ago when the first extension to our school was completed in 1997. As many of you will have noticed, this area has become worn and shabby as a result of the volume of traffic using the school. This work will be completed during the Easter Holidays. Thanks to Mr. David Reid, Company Secretary to SASH and a Community Representative on our BOM, who organised this and negotiated a very competitive price for this work.

Signage

During every meeting of our School Staff, BOM and PTA Committee, we discuss matters of Health and Safety in the school agus go mór mór (especially) the car park. Led by Gavin Doyle (Parent Nominee on the BOM), Caroline Aragane (our Safety Representative and Daphne Wood (our Deputy Principal), we have organised enhanced signage for the car park reiterating our car park rules as displayed on the windows of the senior classrooms. Thanks to Gavin and the team for their patience and perseverance.

By the time you read this newsletter the sign displaying our car park rules will be erected on the wall outside my office.

Pedestrian Crossing on the Newcourt Road

Thanks to Sarah Wray, from our BOM, and Cllr John Ryan (FG) we have school crossing lights and hopefully at some stage soon proper road markings. Sarah also drafts the minutes from each monthly meeting of the BOM.

Our PTA Committee is also advocating with SASH for the laying down of markings for a pedestrian walkway at our entrance. Thanks to Ruth Doyle for this.

Temple Carrig School

Our school and “parish” advocacy group for enhanced access to TCS has been working hard behind the scenes. Our team now consists of Linda O’Brien, Louise Wilson, Cathy English, Nola Mc Adam and myself from the school. We also have Michelle Mc Nerney and Alan Mulligan from Christ Church Bray, Rev. Alan Wardlow and Daphne Wood from Bray Methodist Church plus Rev. Chris Kennedy from St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Bray.

As many of you know **St Andrew’s N.S. Bray is not a feeder school for any local school.** While our children attend many local Post Primary schools, they are not guaranteed places, many only receive offers late in June.

School Admissions Policy

I have sent a submission to the Minister of Education seriously questioning the wisdom of restricting the ability of faith schools to allocating places in schools in a manner to protect their school’s ethos. The Minister’s proposals will not in any way ease the matter of oversubscription which exists in many faith schools particularly in urban areas. These proposals will not create one single school place; they will just shuffle the deckchairs on the deck. The solution is to establish more Community National Schools and Educate Together schools. The Minister and other “liberals” fail to realise that many people in our country still choose faith schools. Maybe this is because those in the faith schools do not let their voice be heard.

Curriculum Evaluation in Maths (CEM)

The full text of our recent curriculum evaluation in Maths has been published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills. This includes the response of our BOM to the findings.

The final report was identical to the summary as set out by Daphne in our pre Christmas Newsletter.

Cycling Initiative

We hope to provide cycle training for Third and Fourth Classes later this year. This will be part funded by Cycle Right and supported by our PTA. Fifth and Sixth already received the training a few years ago. Grant funding will cover only one class.

Baseball

Thanks to Chris Kane who has organised “tasters” for our pupils in 5th and 6th classes. The feedback from pupils and teachers was nothing but positive with all requesting extra sessions with Chris.

School Website

Our school website is well on its way for relaunch. Thanks to Sharon Bolger, Mike Doyle, Wendy Costello plus our small school website group led by Cormac Cahillane for their efforts over the last few months.

Multi Disciplinary Pilot Project

St Andrew's National School, Bray

January 2018-May 2018

In St Andrew's our teaching team uses "early intervention" as a key component to support the learning of all of our pupils from the time they join us in Junior Infants. Through our experience we have found that the measures which we put in place for our pupils have positive outcomes for their learning. On occasions as children move up the school, with parental approval, we seek support from other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Educational Psychologists. In some cases the desired Utopia for children, parents and teachers is that we have access to all three disciplines as a team to give us a more holistic picture of where the particular child is at. This is with a view to targeting our teaching to where the child's needs are most evident.

Currently we endeavour to access this outside support from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and the Health Service Executive (HSE). When we are successful in gaining access, these services are top quality but regrettably access can take many months and with some services, years. We very rarely, if ever, have ready access to multi-disciplinary teams of therapists and psychologists.

In our school we have been offered the possibility of participating in a pilot project which would guarantee us ready access to an Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist and an Educational Psychologist. These colleagues would work with our teachers and parents, in a particular class, to collaborate in planning activities and teaching methodologies to ensure positive outcomes for all of our children in that class and most especially those with particular additional needs.

This project will, hopefully, commence in January 2018 and run until May of that year. Prior to this a great deal of collaborative planning and paperwork will be done on the part of the school teaching team and our colleagues from the Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT). Information sessions for parents will be facilitated by the MDT and the class and support teacher of the particular class in our school. Apart from outlining the pilot programme, such crucial matters as parental consent, data protection and ongoing supports for some children will be addressed. It is envisaged that the pilot will be funded through Crowd Funding and, if successful, it will be presented to the Department of Education and Skills for subsequent roll out to other schools.

We will provide you with further updates when these are to hand.

PTA and ECA

As a school we are very fortunate to have a wonderfully dedicated committee of parents and staff on our PTA. The PTA run many events throughout the school year both fundraisers and social events. They raise much needed funds for particular projects each year, including iPads, laptops and the refurbishment of our school library. Many thanks to Laura Naughton, the chair of the PTA, for her and her team's sterling work.

We also appreciate the work that the ECA team do every term in organising the fantastic extra curricular programme that so many of the children in St. Andrew's enjoy. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes to ensure that all the activities run smoothly. This is due to the diligence of Annemarie McCleane and the ECA team.

All members of the PTA and the ECA team are volunteers and give of their time and talents so generously. As a school community we appreciate all the parents who volunteer to help in our school in many other ways, whether as reading helpers, helping with class libraries, school trips, with P.E., or swimming. All of these busy people deserve our thanks and RESPECT.

If you would like to volunteer in any of the above areas of school life please let Wendy in the office know.

Easter Holidays

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Easter and an enjoyable break.

Yours sincerely,

Peter McCrodden
School Principal



PTA

The Annual Table Quiz night on 9th February raised over €950 for the school and was as always a fantastic night. Congrats to 3rd class who won the cup!

Pancake Tuesday was a great success - all the children in the school enjoyed delicious pancakes compliments of the Martello and we raised over €250 for Purple House Cancer Support.

The NCBI clothing collection on 2nd March, not only provided everyone the opportunity for a spring clean but also raised over €180!

Our 6th class collectors raised €263.06 for the Irish Cancer Society on Daffodil Day. Well done!

On World Down's Syndrome day we wore odd socks to celebrate our differences and we raised €180 for the Down's Syndrome Society.

Some of the funds already raised this year have gone towards painting of the corridors in the school last weekend. Have a look and admire the new paintwork!

Our next fundraiser is the eagerly anticipated Easter egg raffle. The cards went out in the schoolbags last week and the raffle will take place in assembly on Friday 7th April.

Thanks, PTA

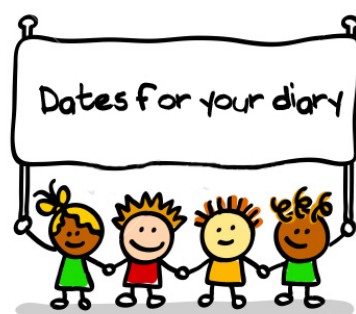
Dates for your diary:

Craft Beer Night - Harbour Bar - Thurs 18th May

Ladies Lunch - Martello - Sat 17th June

Dates for your diary:

Fri 7 th April	Easter Egg Raffle
Fri 7 th April	School finishes at normal times for the Easter Holidays
Sun 9 th April	Classic Delights at Tinakilly at 3pm Tinakilly House Hotel organised by Christ Church, Bray. Tickets €25 from the Travel Boutique or the Parish office
Mon 24 th April	School reopens
Wed 26 th April	1 st class swimming commences
16 th & 17 th May	Junior Infant Induction 2.30pm
Wed 17 th May	New Junior Infant parents evening 7.30pm
Thur 25 th May	6 th class trip to Fighting Words
Wed 31 st May	Junior and Senoir Infants trip to the Mermaid Theatre
12 th & 13 th June	6 th class trip to Carlingford
Friday 16 th June	Sports Day 1pm (weather permitting)



Holiday List 2017-2018

Please keep this in a safe place

New school year commences, 8:30am Wednesday 30th August 2017	
SCHOOL CLOSURE DAYS:	REASON FOR CLOSURE:
Monday 30th October – Friday 3rd November 2017(incl.)	Hallowe’en Mid-term: School will reopen on Monday, 6 th November 2017.
Monday 25th December 2017 – Friday 5th January 2018 (incl.)	Christmas Vacation: School will reopen for Term 2 on Monday 8 th January 2018
Thursday 15th February - Friday 16th February 2018 (incl.)	February Mid-term: School will reopen on Monday, 19 th February 2018
Monday 19th March 2018	St. Patrick’s Day
Monday 26th March – Friday, 6th April 2018 (incl.)	Easter Vacation: School will reopen on Monday, 9 th April 2018
Monday, 7th May to Wednesday 9th May 2018 (We could use two of our banked three snow days to include Thursday 10th May & Friday 11th May)	May Bank Holiday and midterm.
Monday, 4th June 2018	June Bank Holiday
Last day of term Friday June 29th (or Thursday 28th if no snow). Here we could use the third of our three snow days.	
The 2018-2019 school year will commence on 29th August or thereafter.	

There are three floating days available for use as snow days. These can only be allocated after the Easter Break. Please see above.

There are no early closings envisaged at this stage of the year as all staff planning, parental liaison and other meetings take place outside school hours.

With every good wish,
Peter McCrodden
(Priomhoide Scoile)