

# SCOIL BARRA NAOFA

**Newsletter #13**

**9th June 2020**

A Chairde,

It would be easy to end the year on a low given the Covid 19 school closures and associated challenges. I think it is important not to let the school year 2019/20 be overshadowed by events of recent months. Much has happened in recent months and much disappointment experienced by our pupils, however, before closures in March we had so many wonderful and positive experiences and I would like to remind you all of these as we finish out this school year.

When I arrived at Scoil Barra Naofa last September I was welcomed enthusiastically by staff, pupils and parents alike. I feel very fortunate to have found myself as part of your school community. This year Ms Ní Bheara was also promoted to the position of Deputy Principal and immediately before closures Ms Mulrooney was successful in appointment as Assistant Principal 2. Ms Mulrooney takes over the position previously held by Ms Ní Bheara and will take responsibility for the arts at Scoil Barra Naofa. I know she has many wonderful ideas and events she wants to share with you all when we find ourselves back at school. Ms Flannery remains in situ as our other Assistant Principal 2 and hold responsibility for Stem and Green Schools. She and the Green Schools Committee can be very proud of all they have achieved this year.

Early on in the school year we found ourselves at Páirc Uí Rinn taking part in Sciath na Scol. We faced Educate Together in the final. The game was exciting and the play was back and forth. The commitment and tenacity of the players led to their eventual success. The supporters on the day were in flying form and the celebrations continued back at school. The team's parade up the hill was a memorable moment and the only time I've been grateful for the roadworks and road closures in Monkstown! The parade was followed by speeches and celebrations in the halla which made up for the years of disappointment. Mr Walsh and Mr Murphy invested much of their personal time in training and I'm sure I speak for the wider community when I acknowledge them and thank them.

Later in term 1 we enjoyed the Christmas Carol Celebration. This beautiful service was organised by Ms Ní Bheara but it was the children who shone on the day. SBN is

blessed with an abundance of talent when it comes to singing and performing. The service was solemn and poignant and I remember well seeing many a teary eye in the church on the day.

The PA organised another highly successful Santa Sunday. The halla was packed with stalls of all kinds and delicious treats provided in the kitchen. The Big Little Choir entertained the crowd and Santa was highly rated by all! This family occasion, organised by the PA but leaning on their husbands, friends, local businesses and others, is testament to the community spirit that is alive and well in Monkstown.

On our return to school on January 6<sup>th</sup> we were treated to mass with the effervescent Fr Con. He spoke so clearly and affectionately to the children on the need to be kind to each other and be kind to ourselves. He connected with each one of us that day and the children were enthralled and captivated by him as always. How blessed we are to have Fr Con and Fr Seán as our priests in Monkstown.

January was a very busy month for us at SBN. The magnetic John Spillane visited the children of Fourth Class and provided weekly workshops on singing and songwriting. The children produced the wonderful *Monkstown Song* which was enjoyed by all at *An Evening with John Spillane, the Children of SBN and The Big Little Choir*. It was my pleasure to share the talent of the children of SBN and The Big Little Choir with the wider community and I know John himself was immensely impressed by the exceptional talent of the children. The night proved to be a valuable fundraiser for our school as well as a wonderful social occasion for the community. Many local and not so local businesses came on board and donated prizes. There was a great buzz on the night and was certainly a highlight of the year.

As term 2 progressed we enjoyed many more special events. Sports events such as soccer and tennis competitions. Engineers Week and the visits of Tony Baloney and Designer Minds/Lego, Grandparent's Day and the beautiful ceremony in the halla with Fr Seán and the parents and grandparents of the children of Fourth Class. This event was again supported by our wonderful team of parents that arrived with home baked treats, china crockery and flowers and tablecloths. The halla was transformed into a beautiful space to relax and regal.

Thank you to the many parents and grandparents that visited classes this year to teach their children about their lives and work. Thanks to the local workers such as the postman who visited infants during Aistear and the engineers from O Connor Utilities who visited classes during Engineers Week. Thank you to Lily's Mum who visited Fourth prior to closures to teach children all about correct handwashing and good

hygiene practises. Thank you to Passage GAA for providing GAA coaching for all children throughout the year. SBN is truly a school of the community.

In retrospect, how appropriate it was that we celebrated Friendship Week immediately before school closures and Sixth Class launched Inspiration Nation as part of the Junior Entrepreneur Project. Friendships and play have changed hugely in recent months. Thankfully, we are now at a stage where children can go to the playground and play with friends again. Now more than ever we need to remember the importance of play as a learning tool. No matter what the child's age play and social interaction are essential for their development as well as happiness. I hope the lessons learned and topics covered during friendship week activities and the daily inspirational quotes read by the Sixth Class Pupils over the intercom have stuck with the children during their time in isolation.

Good times will come again. The children will be back in school before we know it, playing with their friends, learning new skills and sharing their stories. While they may have missed aspects of the curriculum during school closures I have no doubt they have learned many new skills too! I look forward to hearing about the fun activities they engaged in, the stories they read, the cakes they baked and dens they built.

While the past few months have been challenging for all of us and for many different reasons I want to sincerely thank you all for the manner in which you have engaged with the teachers and the school during the closures. We have worked together to provide continuity, education and I hope some fun too!

I would also like to acknowledge the work done by the school staff throughout closures. All schools found themselves thrust into the world on distance learning last March with zero warning and training. The staff at SBN have worked tirelessly since March, upskilling, collaborating, supporting the children, the parents and each other. And like most of you, trying to home school their own children and look after their own families at the same time.

I hope that you all enjoy a slower pace of education over the month of June. Enjoy the hands on nature of the homework and enjoy getting outside. Acknowledge all you have done since March and don't think about the times when you could not complete the work or spend the time you would have liked with the kids. There have been peaks and troughs for everyone throughout this experience.

We now look forward to September and the return to school in whatever form that may take.

*Mise le meas,*

## *Ger O Brien & Foireann na Scoile*

### **UPCOMING DATES**

**Friday June 12<sup>th</sup>** Final Date for payment of book rental monies

**Tuesday June 16<sup>th</sup>** @ 7.30pm Webex Live for parents of Junior Infants Sep 2020

**Tuesday June 16<sup>th</sup>** 10 – 12.30pm Return of Book Rental Books; Juniors to Second

**Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup>** 10 – 12.30pm Return of Book Rental Books Third to Fifth

**Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup>** 10 – 12.30pm Return of Sixth Class Book Rental Books

**Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup>** Release of Sixth Class Graduation Videos and Messages

**Friday June 26<sup>th</sup>** 12pm School Closes for Summer Holidays.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020/21**

The following school calendar for the 2020/21 school year has been agreed by the staff and Board of Management of Scoil Barra Naofa, however, this calendar is subject to change as a result of any further government restrictions on the opening of schools in Ireland. You will be notified of any changes in advance.

**Tuesday Sep 1<sup>st</sup>** Children return to school

**Monday Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – Friday Oct 30<sup>th</sup>** School Closed. Mid Term Break

**Tuesday December 22<sup>nd</sup>** School closes at 12pm for Christmas Break

**Wednesday Jan 6<sup>th</sup>** School reopens after Christmas

**Thurs Feb 18<sup>th</sup> and Fri Feb 19<sup>th</sup>** School Closed. Mid Term Break

**Wednesday March 17<sup>th</sup>** School Closed. St Patrick's Day

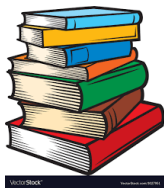
**Friday March 26<sup>th</sup>** School Closes at 12pm for Easter Break

**Monday April 12<sup>th</sup>** School reopens after Easter

**Monday May 3<sup>rd</sup>** School Closed. May Bank Holiday

**Monday June 7<sup>th</sup> and Tues June 8<sup>th</sup>** School Closed. June Bank Holiday

**Friday June 25<sup>th</sup>** School closes at 12pm for Summer Holidays



## **BOOK RETURNS AND BOOK RENTAL 2020/21**

This Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, is the deadline for payment of book rental monies for the 2020/21 school year. The Book Rental Committee will commence working on the order for September in the coming week. To facilitate their work and effort please ensure that all monies are paid on time. A link has been sent to all via Aladdin Connect. If you have any issues with the link please contact the office to request another link. You can contact the office on all book rental matters on [info@scoilbarranaofa.ie](mailto:info@scoilbarranaofa.ie)

All parents are requested to return book rental books to your child's current class teacher during the week commencing June 15<sup>th</sup>. Parents of children in Juniors to Second Class are invited to return books between 10 and 12.30 on Tuesday June 16<sup>th</sup> and parents of children in Third to Fifth Class are invited to return books on Wednesday June 17<sup>th</sup> from 10 to 12.30. Parents of children in both the junior and senior sections of the school are welcome to attend on their preferred day.

Sixth Class pupils are invited to return their own books from 10 to 12.30 on Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup>. On the day they will have the opportunity to say goodbye to their teacher and will receive their goodie bags, graduation certs etc. Any parent who prefers their child not attend school may return the books and collect goodie bags on behalf of their child.

Any parent that cannot attend next week is kindly asked to nominate a friend or family member to return the book rental books on their behalf. Please inform the office in advance if you cannot nominate anyone to act on your behalf.

In the interests of health and safety we ask that all books are wiped down before return and that books are taken out of any packaging/plastic bag and left on your child's table. Parents are asked to follow the one way system in operation, using lower door (by Juniors) to enter the school and the upper door (by Reception) to exit school. Sanitizer stations will be in place at entry and exit points. While we would normally love to chat to you all we must ask that you drop books and move efficiently through the school to avoid large numbers of people congregating around the school. We thank you for your understanding and continued cooperation.



## **SIXTH CLASS “GRADUATION”**

This year we are not in a position to facilitate a graduation ceremony as would have taken place in the past. We will ensure that once restrictions on social distancing and social gatherings are lifted we will provide the Sixth Class pupils with the ceremony and send off they deserve. For now we have plans for an alternative celebration. Sixth Class pupils are invited to return their own book rental books next Thursday. The pupils may attend as individuals, in pairs or groups of no more than 4. We must insist that no more than 4 people arrive together as we aim to work within government and NPHET guidelines on social gatherings. (arrangements on time slots will follow in a class email) Children will have the opportunity to say goodbye to their teacher as well as other staff members. The children will receive a graduation cert and goodie bag. The goodie bag contains a voucher for Napoli which has been bought using funds from the Junior Entrepreneur Project and generously rounded up by Napoli themselves. We are truly grateful for this kind gesture. We encourage the children to use this voucher over the Summer. To gather, appropriately and safely, and meet with friends from their class. We encourage them to wear their Class of 2020 hoodies!!

On the evening of Thursday June 18<sup>th</sup> we will release some photostories and messages that Mrs Donnelly has organised for the children. Much time and effort has been put into organising these videos and I have no doubt you will be both impressed and touched.

These photostories and messages will be forwarded via email at a prearranged time. We encourage families to watch these very special videos together and suggest that it might be nice to eat a special meal or have a nice take away to mark the occasion with the children.

I would like to wish the Class of 2020 all the very best of wishes from myself and the staff of SBN. It has been my pleasure to get to know them and work with them over the past year. They are a very well behaved, polite and welcoming group of children. They have impressed me on many an occasion this year. From the kindness and nurturing they have shown to their buddies in Junior Infants to the determination and strength shown on the playing field. They have stunned me at times displaying the presentation skills and the articulation of those beyond their years and the beauty and fragility of their singing at the Christmas Carol Service. The Class of 2020 would be within their rights to feel hard done by given the abrupt end to their final year in Primary School, however, I know that their abundance of enthusiasm and joie de vivre will ensure they don't allow themselves to be held back in any way. Exciting adventures await them and we wait to hear wonderful tales of challenge, adventure and achievement when they return to visit us in the future.

## **REPORTS AND PASSPORTS TO EDUCATION**

End of year school reports will be forwarded via Aladdin Connect on Friday June 12<sup>th</sup>. If you experience any issues accessing your child's report please contact the school office on [info@scoilbarranaofa.ie](mailto:info@scoilbarranaofa.ie)

A special reminder to the parents of children in Sixth Class. Your child's report forms part of the Passport to Education along with the Pupil Profile Form and Parent Profile Form. This passport may be requested by your child's Secondary School in September. The pupil and parent forms can be accessed on [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) These can be emailed to the school or printed and posted. If you do not have access to the forms please inform the school office and we will be happy to print a hardcopy for you. This can be given to the children when they are returning their school books next week. All completed Pupil and Parent Reflection Forms should be returned to the school office no later than June 26<sup>th</sup>.



## **SCHOOL RENOVATION WORKS**

Although teaching and learning is taking place outside of the school building since March much building and renovation work has continued. SBN applied to the Department of Education for funding to replace our boiler and repair/rebuild a large section of the boundary wall earlier this year. While the funding for the boiler works was granted the funding for the boundary wall was not. Much cooperation and consultation took place between the school, local counsellors and the Cork County Council Office in Carrigaline. On appeal we secured the funds to repair and rebuild the boundary wall.

Currently the boiler installation and associated electrical works are well underway. The work should be completed in the coming fortnight and we look forward to experiencing the extra comfort on our return to school.

A consultant has been appointed to oversee the boundary wall project and the tender process to appoint a building contractor is currently underway. Works are planned to commence in early July and be completed by mid August. The completion of this project will ensure the safety of the children and road users while maintaining the integrity and beauty of the original wall.

As well as large building works on school grounds much work is also underway inside the school. Vivian has been busy painting corridors and classrooms. We await the laying of a new floor in Sixth Class and the arrival of new furniture for Sixth Class. The previous floor was in such poor condition and was a trip hazard. It is essential that the floor is replaced. We are not currently in a position to invest in floor similar to those installed during the renovations downstairs, however, we have been kindly gifted a new floor by Michael Fox Flooring. We are extremely grateful for this kind offer and look forward to working further with Fox Flooring when we are in a position to proceed with further classroom renovation.

## **FUNDRAISING NEWS**

Over the course of September 19 to March 2020 over 5,000 Euro was raised through Santa Sunday, Calendar Sales, John Spillane Concert, Raffles and Private Donations.



Indeed, in the days before school closure a cheque for 650 Euro was received from O Connor Utilities. We are very grateful to all parents and friends that helped organise events and contributed in any way this past year. You have given your time and your money for the good of the school and we are truly grateful. Funds raised have and will continue to go back into the children and the enhancement of their learning experiences.

We have used much of these funds of to purchase new furniture for the children in Sixth Class, freshly paint rooms and corridors in school, purchase new toys and equipment for Aistear, purchase books on wellbeing and mindfulness for every class and provide training for teachers in the areas of mindfulness and building positive relationships. We hope to purchase a typing program and a set of laptops to commence typing groups and widen access and use of ICT amongst the children and purchase a sensory wall and sensory path which will provide movement and stimulation to all children as they meander through the school.

Upcoming fundraising via the annual Sports Night and Summer Event organised by the Parent's Association has been cancelled for this year. Social distancing and restrictions on gatherings will mean that any potential fundraising events are cancelled for the foreseeable future. Fundraising is vital to our school. Government grants are not sufficient to meet the needs and expense encountered when maintaining a building such as ours. It is the fundraising of parents and the community that allows us to invest in resources for children that enhance the teaching and learning experience and offer them treats such as the pizza party they enjoyed at Halloween and the visit of the ice cream van which they would usually enjoy during June.

As our Summer fundraiser has been cancelled we are asking parents that may have attended and contributed to this event and may be in a position to make a donation to the school to please do so. No amount is too small! We are very aware that people's circumstances may have changed greatly in recent months but now more than ever we need your support.

We find ourselves in very strange and challenging times. On returning to school in Septmber the health and safety of the children and staff will be our top priority. In an effort to protect the children's health and safety we are currently researching and pricing the installation of soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers as well as sanitizer dispensers. Ideally, we would like to install soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers in every individual bathroom, sanitizer dispensers in each individual classroom and around the school building at entrance/exit points, the library, computer room and SEN area. This is quite a large project and Minister for Education, Joe McHugh, announced

last week that the DES will not allocate any extra funding to schools this year despite the associated costs arising out of Covid 19. As well as installing this equipment in the school we will need to invest in extra cleaning materials and input from specialised companies. Again, none of this will be funded by the DES.

If you would normally have attended the Summer Sports Night and Fundraising Event and you are in a position to make a donation we would appreciate your help. We will send a link via Aladdin Connect in the coming week. This link must have a minimum amount attached, however, it is up to each individual to input and donate a sum of their choosing. **All money donated via this link will be used for upgrading bathrooms and installation of associated equipment, keeping the school clean and other hygiene costs associated with Covid 19.**

As always if you are aware of larger companies and businesses investing in charities or community groups please keep us in mind. Your help and cooperation is greatly needed and greatly appreciated.



## **POSTER COMPETITION**

We would like to invite all pupils to take part in a poster competition we are running at SBN. Posters should promote good handwashing and hygiene practises. Posters should be no bigger than A4 size and should have children's names and class written on the back. Posters can be delivered to the class teacher when dropping off book rental returns or left on top of the child's bundle on their desk. The winning posters will be colour copied, laminated and hung around the school to teach others about correct handwashing and hygiene practises in September. The winners will also receive a prize in the post!!! I know there are some very creative children at home that would love to see their work turned into a school poster. Good Luck and Have Fun!!

## **SPHE REVIEW AND SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION**

This year staff at SBN undertook a review of the SPHE Curriculum, with a particular focus on the area of wellbeing. The review was comprised of a parental survey, student discussion and response, teacher questionnaires and consultation. While school closures set back the planned publication of the results of the review the review has now been completed and will be presented to the Board of Management on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The review and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) will then be published and emailed to all parents for your information. Thank you for your responses and your input. Your involvement in the review gives the process meaning and substance and ensures we are working together to provide the best learning opportunities for the children at SBN.

## **BOM ANNUAL REVIEW**

The final Board of Management meeting of this school year will take place on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020. The Annual Review will be published following this meeting and will be emailed to all families. Thank you to our Board of Management members, all of whom are volunteers and have found themselves much busier than expected this year! Thank You to our Chairperson Frank O' Connell, Patron's Nominee Fr Con Cronin, Community Nominees; Nora Fitzgerald (Treasurer) and John Cunningham, Parent's Nominees; Aiden Lee and Paula Flannery and Staff Nominee Áine O' Connell.

## **REOPENING OF SCHOOLS**

Reopening of schools this September and arrangements to facilitate the safe return to school will be announced by the Minister for Education, Joe McHugh, as part of his Roadmap to Reopening Schools. This document is due for release in the coming week. Further details on health and safety and the practicalities of reopening are expected before the end June. The reopening of Scoil Barra Naofa will take place in line with and under the guidance of the DES and NPHET. Parents will be informed of arrangements once these have been announced by the DES and discussed by the Board of Management. Uncertainty can be stressful. Many aspects of schooling cannot be planned or finalised at the moment. We will keep you informed throughout the Summer.