



SCOIL BARRA NAOFA

Newsletter #2

17th Sep 2020

A Chairde,

Céad Míle Fáilte ar ais ar scoil chuig gach uile duine! Welcome back to school everyone! We are thrilled to be in a position to welcome all families back to school this September. Successful reopening of all schools has taken a considerable amount of time and planning as well as support and cooperation. The continued and sustained successful opening of SBN is now our priority. Thank you to all families for your understanding and support over recent weeks. We are aware that you are all making sacrifices in order to observe our protocols at SBN. We are very appreciative of all your efforts and wish to acknowledge that your efforts are helping us to keep safe and keep SBN open.

On reopening we focussed on settling children back to school and ensuring that children felt that school is a safe place and still a place of fun and friendships. It is lovely to hear the children playing and laughing together. This in itself is valuable “work”. We have also been revising work from last year’s curriculum, allowing us to plan ahead as appropriate. In the coming fortnight we will begin informal assessment of the children and identify any children that may be struggling.

We have welcomed 30 new pupils into Junior Infants this year. While their first days at school have been a little different to the traditional start to school I think it was probably harder for the mums and dads on this occasion. The children have settled in wonderfully. Children are incredibly resilient and see the good and the fun all around them. Ms Marshall is full of praise for our new infants. They are a great group of boys and girls.

With the exception of parents of infants we cannot invite parents onto school grounds and we cannot hold any face to face meetings. This can be challenging I’m sure, however, please know that your child’s teacher won’t hesitate to contact you if they have any concerns . We kept our class email accounts open for the initial three weeks to allow children settle back to school and allow parents communicate concerns directly, however, these email accounts will now be suspended and replaced by Seesaw. You can continue to contact your child’s class teacher via

info@scoilbarranaofa.ie It is very important to remain open and communicative in an effort to support all pupils and families. As always, the children's safety and happiness comes first and learning follows happiness.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the people that have helped us to reopen SBN this September. Thank you to our Board of Management members. The BOM consists of parent and community nominees, all of whom serve on a voluntary basis. Given the exceptional circumstances we found ourselves in this year BOM meetings were held during Summer Holidays. The time commitment required from the BOM was immense this past 6 months or so. A heartfelt thank you to our committed members.

Thank you to the school staff. The teaching, sna and ancillary staff. All of whom worked tirelessly since March and throughout the Summer Holidays to prepare the school and prepare their classes.

Thanks to Reliance Cork for their support and generosity in providing bathroom mountings, sanitiser dispensers and associated products as a special rate. Your support is truly appreciated.

Thank you to our Book Rental Committee of Carla James, Emma White, Susan Moynihan and Gail Sheil. Year after year these ladies provide an incredible service the pupils and parents of SBN and are always so obliging and giving of their time.

Thank you to Aoife Fleury for her work on the school grounds. Preparing for the reopening and organising the fantastic mural to welcome the children back.

Thank to you to all parents for your generosity, messages of support and kind offers of help in the lead up to reopening and thank you for you cooperation since reopening. We look forward to a fruitful and enjoyable year working together at SBN.

Mise le Meas,

Ger O' Brien agus Foireann na Scoile



WELCOME TO STAFF

Welcome to our new staff member Ms Cara Cremen. Ms Cremen will teach the children in Fifth Class while Ms Kelly is out on maternity leave.

Welcome back to Mrs O Boyle who returns to jobshare with Ms Dwyer this year.

Welcome back to Roger who returned to work this Summer.

IMPORTANT DATES AND SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020/21

Saturday September 19th First Holy Communion 10am&11.30am

Mon October 26th – Friday Oct 30th Mid Term Break.

Tuesday December 22nd School Closes at 12 for Christmas Holidays.

Wednesday January 6th School Reopens.

Thursday & Friday, February 18th & 19th Mid Term Break.

Wednesday March 17th School Closed St Patrick's Day.

Friday March 26th School Closes at 12 for Easter Holidays.

Monday April 15th School Reopens.

Mon May 3rd Bank Holiday Closure.

Mon & Tuesday June 7th & 8th Bank Holiday Closure.

Friday June 25th School Closes at 12 for Summer Holidays.

Dates for parent teacher meetings or school inservice to follow at a later time.



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FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

We are thrilled to say that our third class children received the Sacrament of First Confession yesterday and will receive their First Holy Communion on this coming Saturday. The children, their families, Ms Marshall and Fr Con and Fr Seán were all very disappointed last March and May when these sacraments were cancelled and they are understandably very excited to finally make their Communion this Saturday. We hope that the sun shines for you all and that you have a wonderful day boys and girls.

Due to restrictions on indoor gatherings we will have two Communion Ceremonies this Saturday. The first ceremony will commence at 10am and the second at 11.30am. Due to restrictions we are not in a position to invite the extended families or community to the ceremonies. We do encourage you to wish your friends and neighbours well by

waving banners or flags, decorating your gardens, beeping your horns and clapping them on their way.

Children may be joined by 4 family members and all children will sit with their families on the day. Pews will be assigned and individualised booklets will be placed on pews. Children will receive Communion with their family and I'm sure this will be a very special experience for each family. Children will sing on the day, however, if children are worried about forgetting the words of a song or prayer assure them they will be fine. A backing track will be played and Fr Con will happily help the children along as needed. As is the case with any mass or ceremony physical distancing is essential as are masks.

On Monday the children may arrive to school a little earlier if they wish.....and if they are ready in time (8.25 onwards). They can stand on our "catwalk" or senior infant pathway to wave to their friends and show their style. If you are not ready do not worry we will have a parade later that morning and all classes will see the Communion boys and girls. The Parent's Association have kindly organised treats and gift for every child. After the group photos wh are taken at the church all children may go home. Children should be collected from the church grounds at 10.30am

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the work of the teachers in preparing the children for First Confession and Communion. Particularly, Ms Marshall who is working hard settling the new infants in each morning and preparing the third class each afternoon alongside Mr O' Connell. I would also like to acknowledge the work of our SNAs, particularly Mary who is working on a display and art work for the church. I would like to acknowledge the incredible workload of Fr Con and Fr Seán right now. As well as overseeing their regular parish duties under difficult circumstances they are saying mass for both Communion and Confirmation children in Passage West, Monkstown, Shanbally and Ringaskiddy in a short number of weeks and yet Fr Con still makes time to practice with the children and visit the children in school.

Finally, a very warm and heartfelt thank you to the parents of the Communion Committee who have been working to ensure the children have a very special day despite the unique challenges posed this year. Thank you to Lisa Hanna, Yvonne Clarke, Barbara Coakley.

We look forward to seeing you all on Saturday morning for your special day.

RED DAY

September 16th marks the 30th anniversary of Cork GAA's historic double win. To mark this day children at SBN wore red. You can see photos of the children, including the gorgeous new infants, on our website www.scoilbarranaofa.ie



If you wish to donate to Marymount hospice for this special celebration you can do so by logging onto www.idonate.ie/goredforcork

STUDENT COUNCIL NEWS

The SBN Student Council is made up of representatives from classes 2nd to 6th. Each year the Student Council organises fun activities for the pupils as well as fundraisers for local charities. Although, for the moment, we are unable to have Student Council meetings, the Student Council will still be running three fun events in SBN in the lead up to Christmas. There will be GOAL Jersey Day on October 9th, Halloween fancy dress on Friday 23rd of October and a Christmas Jumper/Movie Day on Tuesday 22nd of December. In order to eliminate money-handling there will be a facility on Aladdin from tomorrow where you can donate €5 or an amount of your choice to cover these three events. The money raised will be split between GOAL, Breakthrough Cancer Research and ALONE. Further details to follow. Many thanks in advance for your support with these events.

COMMUNITY HOMEWORK

We are planning to connect with local community groups in the coming weeks and organise “homework” for children that involves giving back to their communities. This homework can take place after school or at weekends and can involve any type of community/volunteer group. We will be encouraging senior pupils to document their work and prepare presentations to be shared with their classmates closer to mid term break. If you are part of a local community group and would like to connect with SBN we would love to hear from you on info@scoilbarranaofa.ie

We have all learned valuable lessons in recent months about the importance of friendship, connection, community spirit and real life heroes. Now that we are lucky enough to be back at school and with our friends it would be nice to pay it forward and connect with those that may be lonely or struggling. We have written to a Cork based nursing home in order to set up pen pals with 5th and 6th class pupils and we hope to reach out and connect with other such groups in the community. If you or your family has a connection to a similar group or organisation or if your child has a grandparent in a nursing home or similar we would love to be in a position to help organise letters, artwork, songs etc. Please get in touch at info@scoilbarranaofa.ie

CULTURE NIGHT

This Friday, September 18th, marks Culture Night. Involvement in music, art and drama is essential for our wellbeing and is as enriching as it is educational. and I would encourage all families to engage in one of the many online activities or performances organised for this Friday. There are a number of events organised in this locality including a puppet show organised by the Haulbowline Theatre Group, art exhibition of local artists taking place in the old Ó Cruaíaoí butchers in Carrigaline and a concert with our friend John Spillane taking place in Cork Opera House but streamed online.

You will find further information on the extensive list of live and online events at www.culturenightcork.ie

SUMMER WORKS

This Summer saw the completion of a number of projects at SBN, some Covid related/health and safety works but mainly general school works.

In June our boiler and electrical works were replaced by a new state of the art double boiler system. Our new system can be set and operated remotely and has a number of safety features to ensure the mechanism is protected in times of extreme cold. The project was completed by local company Charles McCarthy Plumbing and while we hope the weather stays mild for the coming weeks and months we are looking forward to feeling the benefit of our new system.

In August work on the boundary wall was completed. As you may remember the wall was in a very dangerous state and much of the stone had become further displaced and damaged since March. Despite the unstable and dangerous state of the wall the original application for funding was refused last November/December. On appeal, on working

closely with the County Council and on canvassing local politicians our appeal for funding was successful. The tender process was stalled due to Covid closures but eventually work commenced in July. The project was completed by Pat O' Driscoll and we are very happy to say that the wall is fully safe and secure and will be still standing long after any of us! In time we hope to plant some shrubs to add some colour to the bank behind the wall.

Our caretaker, Vivian, has been particularly busy since March. Vivian oversaw the renovation of the sixth class classroom earlier this Summer. New furniture and fittings were installed. The room was painted and a new floor laid. We call this floor our "rainbow floor". The floor is made of different coloured off cuts and was donated and fitted free of charge by Michael Fox Flooring. Michael Fox has been involved in our other classroom renovation projects over the years and this year was happy to step in and help us. We are extremely grateful for this kind gesture and we are extremely happy with the finished result. The classroom is now brighter, cleaner and more comfortable for the children. Given that sixth is the children's final year with us at SBN we felt it was important to start the renovation project upstairs with sixth class.



As well as renovating sixth class we have renovated all bathrooms in the school. Money raised through our Summer fundraiser allowed us to install wall mountings for soap and paper towel dispensers in each bathroom. Vivian also renovated the bathroom in the original part of the school building. Previously we have had issues with damp and mould here and we have now fitted a pvc wall finish which will prevent this issue arising

again. The bathroom was painted and fitted with soap and paper towel dispensers and is now as fresh and clean as the other school bathrooms.

You may have heard your children talk about the outdoor sinks we are using at SBN. Again, created and built by Vivian and using funds raised through our Summer Fundraiser. These sinks were built and plumbed by Vivian using the old desks taken from sixth class and fitted with basins, taps and waste pipes. The children wash their hands here after each playtime/pe activity and are available to use during the day for whole class handwashing. This helps prevent overcrowding in classrooms and speeds up the handwashing process. We have truly embraced upcycling here at SBN this Summer!!



Although parents are not on school grounds and not able to view our school gardens fully I can assure you that the gardens have been well tended this Summer and the children are reaping the rewards as they are spending plenty of time outdoors each day. Vivian has been working on school grounds and gardens since March and we are fortunate to say that Aoife Fleury has also been very busy tending to the gardens since March. Aoife has been assisted by Holly Warren this Summer and on behalf of the school community I wish to thank Aoife and Holly for their time and interest. Gardening is hard work! If you would like to be involved or volunteer from time to time to help our Garden Committee please let us know.

You may have also noticed the fantastic new mural painted inside the small pedestrian gate. This was organised by Aoife Fleury and funded by a Creative Ireland Grant that Aoife successfully applied for through Cork County Council. The mural was painted by Kevin O' Brien. Kevin works with "Mad About Cork" and you can see more of his work around Cork City and on his website www.vivamediacork.com/about

The mural was a fantastic idea of Aoife's and certainly provided a warm and bright welcome back to school for the children. The freshly painted handrails also smarten up the entrance.



We plan to invite Kevin back in the coming months to complete a mural on one of the walls close to the school steps/yard. We hope to facilitate outdoor Q&A sessions with him, whereby, children can observe him working and ask him questions about his work. At SBN we are thinking outside the box and planning activities/visitors for the kids that comply with current guidelines while providing stimulating opportunities for learning and discussion.

If you have any ideas or are part of a arts/music/drama/sports group or similar and have ideas on how to expose children to creative and enriching experiences in a manner that observes current restrictions and guidelines we would love to hear from you. Likewise if you are part of a large organisation/business that would allocate grants for biodiversity/creative/educational purposes or you have information on such grants we would love to hear from you.

Our next building/school works project is in the planning. We are hoping to create a safe and fun crossing for children to use when crossing the road to enter/exit school. We have made contact with Cork County Council on this and will keep you informed of any developments.

HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKS

Over the Summer we were very busy preparing and working towards the reopening of school this September. Our Summer fundraiser in June raised just over 3,000 Euro. Thanks to your generosity and support we were able to renovate all bathrooms and install the wall mounting for soap and paper towels throughout. We installed no touch sensor sanitiser units in each classroom, reception and office area. The dispensers use a foam sanitiser which is kind to little hands and does not drip, therefore, kids do not slip! We teamed up with Reliance Cork for our purchases and received a considerable discount on our order. Thanks again to all at Reliance for their kind donation and support.

In addition to the above our Summer fundraiser covered the cost of our outdoor sink units as described above and the purchase of a fogger machine. This fogger machine is used regularly to sanitise classrooms, communal areas and toys and equipment. It uses a solution which doubles as a hand sanitiser and is completely safe for children/classrooms and ensures that we are doing the utmost to keep us all safe and healthy and keep SBN open. If you would like to learn more about this machine or the solution used please email the office on info@scoilbarranaofa.ie and we will be happy to share the information and product details with you.

Through DES grants and funding received in August we have invested in child friendly signage throughout the school as well as heavy duty outdoor stickers for queuing areas etc. We have invested in high quality pedal bins, smaller versions of those used in hospitals and medical settings. These bins are very sturdy and will stand the test of time. We have invested in cleaning products, sanitation products and PPE. We have invested in extra sanitiser units for communal areas and at the external doors of classes. We have also installed Perspex in the smaller SEN rooms. Finally, we have also invested in extra cleaning hours and manpower.



COVID 19 PROCEDURES AT SBN

On returning to school much information was shared with parents. Parents are busy and we often are overwhelmed with the amount of information we receive from school, sports and other after school activities. We have shared our SBN Covid Response Plan on our school website www.scoilbarranaofa.ie This is a living document and may be edited and updated in accordance with any changes in DES/HSE policy. If you have not had time or opportunity to read this plan I would encourage you to be very familiar with the sections covering children feeling unwell at school and dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19 in school. The HPSC checklist emailed to all families is also an extremely valuable checklist and I would suggest hanging this on your fridge at home should you need to refer to it. We will all, most likely, need to refer to this at some point in the future.

It is essential that parents are familiar with the symptoms of Covid 19; Temperature (38 or over), Cough, Breathlessness of Difficulty Breathing and Loss/Change of Sense of Taste/Smell. Please do not send your child to school if they are unwell. Please seek the advice of your GP if your child is experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned above. If your child suffers from a cough on a regular basis e.g. asthma or allergies then please seek advice of your GP before sending them to school. Please let school know via

email or text school mobile that you had sought your GP's advice and your child is well enough to attend school. We cannot assume a cough is related to asthma or similar and any child presenting with a new/unchecked cough will need to go home pending the advice of the GP and possible testing for Covid 19.

When dealing with a suspected case of Covid 19 in SBN we will follow DES guidelines. This means that a child will be required to wear a mask, will be isolated from the other pupils and will have their temperature checked. We acknowledge that this may be unsettling for children and indeed for parents, however, this is what is required of all schools in dealing with a suspected case during the school day.

Should we have a confirmed case of Covid 19 within the school the HSE will step in at this point and oversee contact tracing. The school will not be permitted to share details of those affected and as such we ask parents not to contact the school seeking this information. The school will be guided by the HSE and DES. If you or your child are considered a close contact then you will be contacted by the HSE and informed of this. The HSE will advise you of the next steps e.g. isolate or test. If you are not contacted by the HSE then your child should arrive to school as usual.

EARLY COLLECTION FOR APPOINTMENTS



Please remember that when collecting a child/children for an appointment during the school day there will be two allocated collection times; **10.30am and 12.** To minimise intercom announcements and disruption to class children should be collected at these times only but may return to school at any stage.

When collecting a child early for an appointment please enter the school via the pedestrian gate and proceed to the main reception door. Here you can press the bell and speak with the secretary. Please inform secretary whether child will be returning to school. Children will be called over the intercom system and will meet you at the reception door.

When returning your child to school please proceed to main reception door. Press the bell and inform the secretary of the name of the returning. All children should be walked back to the school by their parent. All children should return via the main reception door and should sanitise their hands on entering the school.

A record of collections will be kept by the secretary as the sign in and out book cannot be shared and parents may not enter the office/building at this point in time. Please help

us to minimise risks and maintain correct physical distancing by adhering to these collection times.

DROPPING FORGOTTEN LUNCHES/DRINKS ETC

Please remember that if your child has forgotten a lunch, drink or essential medical equipment you may drop these items into school. Children may not share lunches and staff may not share utensils/crockery. Disposable plastic cups and cutlery will be available if necessary and children may take a drink of water using a disposable plastic cup.

When dropping forgotten lunches and drinks please enter the school via the pedestrian gate and walk to the main reception door. Here you will find a covered plastic storage box. You may place the items in this box, ring the buzzer and inform the secretary that you have dropped the lunch/drink inside. Your child will be called over the intercom to collect their belongings.

Please help us to minimise announcements and interruptions by double checking that your child has their lunch and drink before leaving the car/house every morning.

Any other forgotten item should not be dropped to school unless absolutely essential. Books, copies, basketballs and such are not essential. Please help us to minimise interruptions and minimise risk by only dropping essential items to school.

HEALTHY LUNCHES

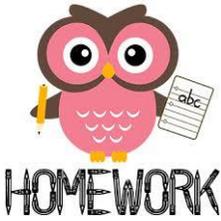


At SBN we have a healthy eating policy. Fizzy drinks and crisps are not permitted and treats are for Friday only. Chewing gum is never allowed. Children's lunchboxes, bottles and other equipment should be cleaned thoroughly daily.

Separate bins will be in place in classrooms. A large pedal bin will be used for tissues, paper towels etc and a recycling/paper bin will be used for recyclable waste.

Children and staff are required to dispose of their own lunch waste/compost at home by taking this home in their lunch box.

HOMEWORK



The DES guidelines recognise that a common sense approach is required in our schools. No direct guidelines have been furnished in relation to homework or transfer of books and materials. Homework is an important part of school life and your child's learning. Homework consolidates school learning, encourages independence and allows parents and teachers to assess and monitor a child's progress.

HSE protocols will dictate how we assign homework and correct homework. The Corona Virus can live on hard surfaces such as books and copies for up to 72 hours. To that end, every effort will be made to limit the number of books and copies going between home and school. Homework tasks will follow a blended approach, using the Seesaw platform and online books as well as physical books and copies. For now our focus remains on language, mathematics, SPHE and PE.

It is essential that parents check their child's work and sign journals nightly. Communicate any issues or concerns via a note in the journal. Copies can be placed in a quarantine box each Friday morning for a period of 72 hours. After this time a teacher may read and correct work. Any concerns you have in relation to your child should be communicated directly with the class teacher. Your child's class teacher is always best placed to address any concerns and answer any questions.

Parents/guardians are asked to ensure all books and copybooks are covered with plastic coverings and these are wiped clean nightly. Please ensure pencil cases are washed regularly also.

If your child is required to self isolate and is well or indeed if a class and their teacher is required to self isolate then teaching and learning will take place through regular distance learning methodologies. Gmail, Seesaw and school books will be used for this.

UNIFORMS/TRACKSUITS

From October 1st all children from First to Sixth Class should wear their full school uniform on Tuesdays and Thursdays and their full school tracksuit on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Only those children with a genuine medical/care need may wear tracksuit instead of uniform. In such cases the parent/guardian should apply for exemption through the school office by providing confirmation from your GP/Consultant.

This application should be made before September 24th and will be discussed/sanctioned by the BOM.

Wearing tracksuit and uniform on alternate days will provide ample opportunity to wash and dry clothes regularly. We request that school uniform and tracksuit are worn for school related activities only and that uniforms/tracksuits are taken off straight after your child/children arrive home from school.

We ask for your cooperation and understanding in this area. Uniforms, cleanliness relating to uniforms and following uniform/tracksuit days relies on the good will of all. The whole school community relies on all families taking personal responsibility for ensuring their children's uniforms and tracksuits are washed regularly, worn only for school activities and worn on the correct day. Please help us to instil confidence and reassurance in the school community by adhering to rules relating to uniforms and tracksuits.

DROP/COLLECT AND PARKING

Before school and home time can be a chaotic time with regards to cars and parking around the school. A few points for us all to remember:

- Please be aware that the both wheelchair accessible spots, inside and outside the gate, are in daily use.
- As much as we would like it, we **cannot all be parked in the spot nearest the school**. It is a good idea to have pre-arranged a 'Park & Stride' option, a little further from the school with your children. This will also help us maintain physical distancing as the children enter and exit the school grounds.
- **Dropping and turning outside school gates is not permitted**. This is a pedestrian entrance and exit for children and must be kept clear to allow for safe entry and exit at all times.
- The roads around the school are access roads for all of the local residents and we must be conscious of this and courteous to that.
- **We CANNOT at any stage BLOCK or OBSTRUCT the road on the hill** outside the school, even for a brief time. If a resident has parked outside their home, cars should not park across from them. If there was an emergency in any home in the locality, or indeed in the school, emergency services would not be able to come up



or go down the hill. While I appreciate the fact that the roads around the school are narrow to begin with, it is important that there is room for traffic to pass.

- **It is an 'unwritten' practice amongst parents, which can prove useful, to drive up the hill by the school and down the hill by the Sacred Heart Church.**
- I will be speaking with all pupils in the coming days about road safety and crossing the road safely, both before and after school. I would appreciate it if all parents could speak further about this at home, especially in the cases where your son or daughter has to walk home / to the car.
- I have made contact with Cork County Council in relation to providing safe crossing options for children. We will continue to work on this in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your co-operation with all of the above. The health and safety of every member of the Scoil Barra Naofa community is of vital importance to the school and the Board of Management.

Thank You for taking the time to read such a long newsletter.

Newsletters will not always be this long!

Newsletters will issue each month, mid month.

We hope to have lots of positive and exciting news to share with you in the months ahead.