



SCOIL BARRA NAOFA

Newsletter #4

17th November 2020

A Chairde,

Fáilte ar ais ar scoil. Welcome back after mid-term break. It gives us great pleasure to see the boys and girls back at school and running into school each morning! Last week we marked Science Week at SBN and it was wonderful to hear fun and laughter echoing out of classrooms again. Third Class made brownies as part of their Gaeilge lesson and the delicious smell cheered us all up on a wet Friday. Thanks to all the mums and dads for measuring and preparing everything at home. We have made some adjustments to our school days and are working to incorporate fun activities such as baking and library time in a safe manner. We are planning fun and festive activities for the month of December including the traditional Christmas panto. Ms Mulrooney is working with the West Midlands Theatre Company to organise an online version of Cinderella for all classes to enjoy. We are also planning for parent teacher meetings. We will keep you up to date on all events via email, school website and facebook. As always, thank you to the wider school community for your understanding and cooperation on all school matters. Ní neart go cur le chéile – There is no strength without unity.

Mise le meas,

Ger O' Brien agus Foireann na Scoile



Upcoming Dates

Wednesday	Nov 18 th	Closing date for acceptance of first round Offers of enrolment.
Wednesday	Dec 2 nd	Early finish to facilitate staff training.

Tuesday Dec 22nd
Wednesday Jan 6th

School closes for Christmas at 12 midday
School reopens after Christmas break.

SEESAW TRAINING FOR PARENTS

On November 25th Le Chéile Online Seesaw for Parents webinar has unfortunately been cancelled. We will forward new details on the webinar when they are available on the Scoil Barra Naofa Facebook page or you can find details on the Le Chéile Online Learning page .

EARLY CLOSURE FOR STAFF TRAINING

On December 2nd all classes will finish early to facilitate staff training. Junior and Senior Infants will finish at 12.55 and can be collected from their usual collection point. First and second will finish at 1.10pm and should be collected from their usual collection point at the school gate. Classes 3rd to 6th will finish at 1.20. Lunch times will be adjusted accordingly on the day. In order to ensure safety and physical distancing measures can be adhered to we appreciate your prompt collection and exit on the day.

SCIENCE WEEK AT SBN

The week of November 9th to 13th marked Science Week at SBN. All classes engaged in science related activities and workshops and photos are available on our website and class Seesaw. Juniors learned about their senses. They had fun tasting different flavours as part of homework. They learned about fingerprints and made their own hand and thumb prints. Seniors had fun with “dinosaur eggs”. First enjoyed an online workshop with Prof Tony Baloney. Second worked on the lemon acid test. Third turned eggs into bouncing balls and explored the effects of fizzy drinks on our teeth. Fourth “grew gummybears” although I’m not sure if I’d like to taste their gummybears! They also experimented with food dye and celery to learn about osmosis. Fifth built spaghetti and marshmallow structures as well as tin foil towers. Sixth learned about aerodynamics by using paper planes to explore how thrust, lift and drag affects flight patterns. They also made periscopes and learned how these were used during WW2. Fifth and Sixth enjoyed a socially distant quiz on Friday. Well done to all involved! Despite restrictions we are all finding ways to incorporate team work and active learning in the classroom.

COMMUNITY HOMEWORK AT SBN

Much thanks to Niamh Moynihan for coming on board and helping to set up our community homework initiative.

5th and 6th classes will commence their penpal project with residents of St Finbarrs Nursing Home this week. We hope that the children will be enriched and fulfilled by participating in such a worthwhile activity. It will certainly brighten the days of many nursing home residents.

2nd class will soon begin working on cards for the local meals on wheels recipients. Thank you again to Niamh Moynihan for organising this with us. I've no doubt that the bright and cheery cards from the children will be cherished by their recipients. Community homework such as this is as valuable and worthy as "normal" homework. The sentiments and values taught by participating in such activities will enhance the lives of the children forever. No act of kindness, no matter how small, goes unnoticed.

LIBRARY

This week the children have begun to use our beautiful library again. The library is such an asset to our school. This beautiful room inspires a love of reading and I think we have all come to appreciate the escape a good book can provide. For now, we are trialing a system whereby classes 1st to 4th are using the library on rotational basis. SNAs are bringing pods from one class bubble each afternoon. Returned books are placed in quarantine boxes and the children chose a new book. The library is cleaned and sanitised with the fogger machine daily to ensure the highest standard of cleaning and safety.

We hope to roll out use of the library to all classes in the coming weeks. Use will be limited to one class per day. If your child is a voracious reader then he/she may find they are running out of books. Children are always welcome to bring their own library book to school. We ask that books are regularly wiped clean and not shared with others in class.

We have recently applied for and sucessfully been awarded a book grant of 500 Euro. This grant, from Post Primary Languages Ireland, is awarded to spend on foreign language and bi lingual books. These books will be available in the coming weeks.

PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS

The DES has recently issued advice to schools to facilitate parent teacher meetings and communication this year. Unfortunately, this year schools will not be in a position to offer face to face meetings. Furthermore, due to poor broadband strength and unreliable connectivity we at SBN are not in a position to offer zoom or similar. We have

tried this method for use but without success. The following arrangements for parent teacher communication and “meetings” have been put in place for this school year;

1. Special Education Teachers (SETs) have made phone contact with all relevant parents between September and Oct Mid Term. Support plans are up and running.
2. Teachers of Juniors and Seniors will make contact with parents to arrange phone call meetings before Christmas.
3. Teachers of children in First to Sixth Class will arrange “meetings” with parents early in term 2 (after Christmas). These “meetings” will most likely follow the following format; a written report for all pupils with the option of a follow on phonecall where requested.
4. SETs will make phone contact with all relevant parents again in February/March to organise review of support plans.
5. All teachers will complete the end of year reports as normal in June.

We ask for your understanding and patience in relation to parent teacher meetings. The school phone/mobile will be used to facilitate calls and this will be used on a rotational basis. Parents are welcome to email info@scoilbarranaofa.ie at any stage to communicate queries or concerns with your child’s class teacher. We ask that parents use email whenever possible to communicate with class teacher. Be assured that your child’s teacher will communicate any concerns they may have. Despite the fact we cannot arrange face to face meetings teachers will always be proactive in communicating with parents whenever they have a concern.

PARENT’S ASSOCIATION

Parent’s Associations provide a crucial home school link and offer parents an opportunity to get involved in their child’s school and school events. All parents are actually members of the PA but if you would like to be involved in PA meetings and events please do get in touch. Maybe you have a skill or interest that would benefit the PA and the children and would be willing to help out on an adhoc basis. All parents are very welcome!

Membership of the PA provides a great opportunity for parents to get to know one another and get to know your child’s school and teachers. If you can help from time to time you are very welcome as a member of the PA. If you are interested in joining the PA or wish to learn more about the PA please email pa@scoilbarranaofa.ie

The SBN Parent’s Association held their first online meeting recently. They are working with Santa and his Elves to organise a special visitor and some special Christmas treats for the children this year. A sincere thank you to all involved.

Furthermore, monies raised by the PA and donated by all parents over the last year will play an important role in ensuring children can continue to enjoy activities such as games, sports, baking and science in a safe manner this year. You can read further in the following section.

INVESTMENT IN THE CHILDREN

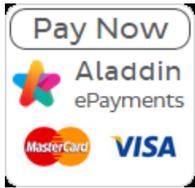
Unfortunately, this year we will not be in a position to hold Santa Sunday. This has traditionally been a very successful event both in terms of fundraising and fun! Thanks to your generosity at last year's Santa Sunday and John Spillane concert we have used fundraising monies to invest in the children this year. Recently we have ordered extra PE equipment. As you know traditionally SBN has welcomed a wide variety of sports coaches to the school. This year we cannot welcome such outside visitors. Teachers are aiming to cover all strands of the PE curriculum over the course of the year but in order to safely share equipment we have needed to invest in equipment. Strands such as orienteering and athletics require more specialised equipment and this too has been ordered. Keep an eye on the school website and Facebook page to see pictures of the children having fun at PE.

Here at SBN baking and cooking has always been an important part of the children's school life. Not only can we teach basic baking and cooking skills but such activities enhance the children's maths, language and social skills. In order to continue to engage in such worthwhile and fun activities we have ordered some slow cookers and smoothie makers. These small appliances can be used in class and shared between classes meaning that the children can continue to create and taste their own dishes. Keep an eye on the website and Facebook page for pictures.

Since reopening we are providing extra movement breaks and fresh air breaks to all pupils everyday. It is essential that children have fresh air, exercise and time to socialise with their friends. Movement breaks are targeted breaks involving specific activities and using specific equipment. Movement breaks promote concentration and focus as well as burning off energy. Staff engaged in sensory circuits training with an Occupational Therapist last week and subsequently we have ordered some supplementary sensory equipment. If you hear your child talking about the trampoline or scooter board they are not exaggerating!! Junior classes have also been enjoying water play activities as part of their movement breaks. A big thank you to our staff for their great work and enthusiasm.

We are currently in the process of ordering some Christmas lighting and decorations. As mentioned above we are not in a position to organise Santa Sunday this year but we are planning something special for the children.....more to follow!

FUNDRIASING AND PAYMENTS



You should by now have received a list of class expenses from the office. For convenience and ease these can be paid through Aladdin. Link for this was emailed in recent weeks. Monies can be paid in full or in installments. If you require the link to be resent please contact the office on info@scoilbarranaofa.ie Thank you as always for your support.

Our fundraising capacity will be greatly reduced this year. We will run a number of smaller events during the year such as calendar sales and raffles and we greatly appreciate your support. If you run a business and wish to donate or know of a business that may wish to donate please do let us know via phone or email. We understand this year has been difficult and we do not wish for any family to feel under pressure in this regard.

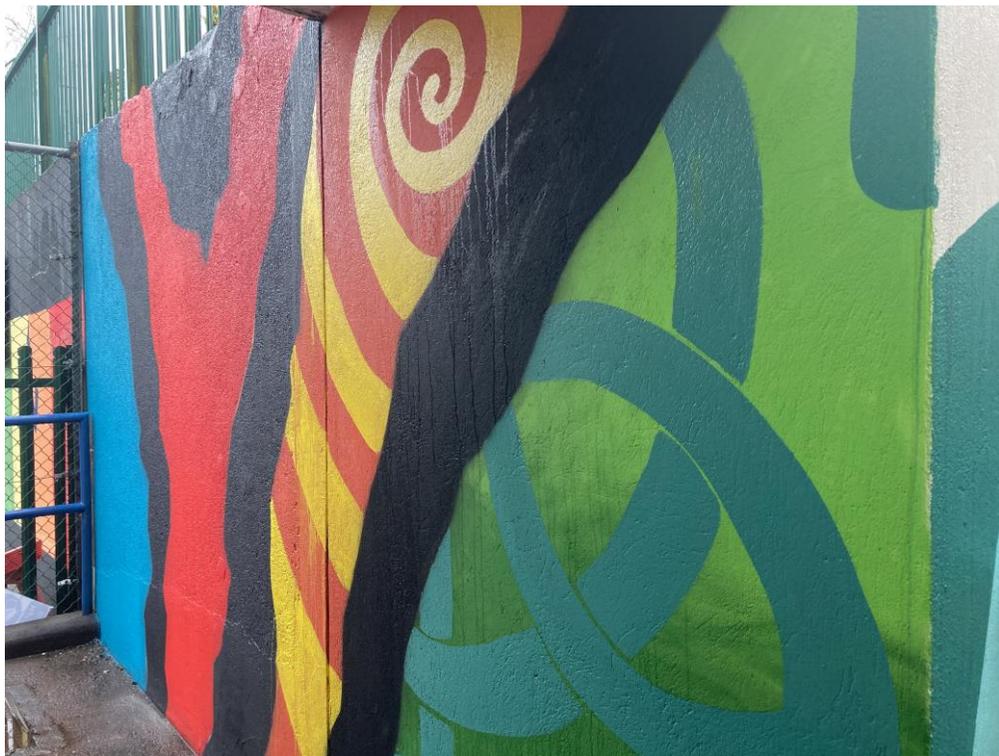
Thank to Reliance Cork for their continued support in providing superior hygiene products at a very generous rate. Your support is greatly appreciated and gives us peace of mind knowing that we are using such high quality and fully approved products at SBN.

You may be aware that Thermo Fisher are giving 45,000 Euro in funding to local groups as part of their anniversary celebrations. Funding is awarded for projects in the local area that make their area cleaner, safer and healthier. SBN has applied for funding to create an outdoor classroom on one of our school yards. An outdoor classroom is a covered area large enough to host a class and provide ample space to learn, read, sing, dance etc outside while also staying dry in the Irish weather! An outdoor classroom would ensure that children can get outside and have fresh air breaks everyday regardless of the weather. It would mean we could invite visitors to school to work with the children, for example an author, artist, fitness or dance instructor. An outdoor classroom would allow us to ventilate our classrooms fully while the children are outside. An outdoor classroom would contribute greatly not only to everyone's physical health but mental health too. We will learn if our application has been successful in December. Light candles, say prayers, cross fingers and toes or whatever you do to bring luck. This would be an amazing facility for the children both this year and for years to come. Covid 19 will hopefully be controlled in time but our Irish weather is not going to change.

MURAL

Artist Kevin O'Brien returned to work at Scoil Barra Naofa again this past week. Kevin has completed a fantastic Cúchulainn mural on the wall outside the stairwell, the exit point/yard exit for senior classes. The children in Mr O'Connell's 3rd class brainstormed their ideas and chose their favourite Irish legend as the mural content. The children created their own Celtic designs which Kevin has incorporated into the mural. Kevin will return on a dry day and host a question and answer session outdoors with the 3rd class children. This mural brightens up a dark spot and can be enjoyed by all classes. It gives plenty to talk about! Thank you again to Aoife Fleury who applied for this grant through Creative Schools and liaised with Kevin on this project.





CALENDARS

Last week local photographer Audrey Hastings visited school and took pictures of the classes for their class calendars. This year class photos were taken outdoors in order to allow the children to stand together and be natural in their photos. These photos will be used for school calendars similar to those we organised last year. We will offer two different options for each class; a formal class photo and a fun class photo. For the year that is in it we thought it would be nice to offer the children the opportunity to have some fun. Once restrictions are lifted in early December and businesses are fully open we will organise samples and share these with you via video. You will be able to order and pay for calendars via Aladdin.

CHILDREN LOOKING GREAT IN UNIFORM!

Míle Buíochas to all for working with us on our uniform policy. On visiting the classes last week it was great to see children in their uniforms on Tuesday and Thursday. I have promised the children that if they can keep up this tremendous collaborative effort then we will have a no uniform day at the end of the month as a reward.

We understand that from time to time there will be occasions when children are not in uniform. Please do send a short note to your child's teacher to ensure there are no misunderstandings.

As the weather turns colder your children may wish to wear an extra layer under their uniform, a body warmer, thermal vest or similar. The girls may wear trousers or pinafore. Should your girls prefer to wear a pinafore they may plain navy leggings rather than tights in order to keep warm.

We will need to keep rooms well ventilated and windows open during the Winter months. Furthermore, children will continue to partake in fresh air and movement breaks regularly throughout the day. This will be necessary throughout the Winter months in order to ventilate rooms and look after the health of everybody in the room.

Please ensure that your child has their coat in school with them everyday.

Míle Buíochas.

ABSENCE AND RETURN TO SCHOOL PROCEDURES

If your child will be arriving to school late or leaving early due to a medical appointment you can alert the school and class teacher to this in advance by making a note on the Attendance Notes feature on Aladdin Connect. This will ensure children are marked present as appropriate.

If your child is absent from school please complete the absence section on Aladdin Connect. Schools are obliged to report absences of over 20 days to Túsla. Knowing the reason for an absence, particularly in the case of illness or self isolation, can greatly assist and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

If your child is required to self isolate while awaiting testing/results of a Covid test you should inform the school office on info@scoilbarranaofa.ie We will organise school work and if possible further materials/books for your child. In such circumstances we understand that children or their family members may be unwell and unable to engage in school work. Teachers will work with families on a case by case basis.

As part of our Covid Response Plan we have designated 10.30 and 12 as collection times for children attending appointments during the day. Parents are asked to come to the main school reception door and inform the secretary/principal of your child's details.

Your child can be called via the intercom system and will meet you at the office.

The secretary/principal will ensure the children are "signed in and out". Children may return to school at any stage during the day. We ask that parents accompany their child

to the reception door and wait with the child until the secretary/principal has opened the door for your child.



HOMWORK

HOMWORK

You may notice the volume of your child's homework increasing in the coming weeks. We have operated a policy of minimum transfer of books and copies thusfar and this has worked effectively. We acknowledge that homework is a very important tool in monitoring your child's learning and their progress. With this in mind we will begin to increase the volume of homework in line with "normal" homework over the coming weeks. We will continue to use our chosen digital platform, Seesaw, for the remainder of the school year. Please do make contact with your child's class teacher if you have any questions or queries regarding homework. A note in the journal is always welcome.

SHAMROCK BOY'S ACADAMEY 2020/21

Shamrock Boy's Academy for boys born 2010-2016 continues with non contact training on Saturday mornings at 10.30am. Training takes places outdoors until the end of November and Scoil Barra Naofa pupils are most welcome. Any queries can be addressed to Pa on 0861914926.