



# Cloonakilla N.S. Bealnamulla | Athlone | Co. Roscommon

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## NEWSLETTER, NOVEMBER 2023

Dear Parents,

Please find below details of forthcoming events in our school and events we took part in:

### **Carpark**

Thank you for your co-operation with regard to the implementation of carpark rules. It is imperative that you continue to observe the rules **ALL** of the time in order to ensure the safety of all. Please do not walk through staff carpark when picking up children as this area must be kept free for school buses. Pedestrians are requested to use the pedestrian gate at the front of the school and the ramp from the carpark. Pedestrians should not use the main school entrance under any circumstances. I appreciate that unfinished roadworks outside the school means that picking up your children can be a longer process than usual. I would ask for your patience in this regard. It is unacceptable to pick up your child in the outside lane of the drive-through area. You must be stationary in the set down area. Parents have a responsibility to ensure these rules are observed. As we approach the winter season it is important to be mindful of the carpark/front entrance yard and paths on frosty mornings. The path will be salted but extreme care should be exercised.

### **Dates for your Diary**

#### **Parent-Teacher Meetings**

Parent – Teacher meetings will be held on the following dates:

Monday & Tuesday Nov 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> for 4<sup>th</sup> class - Ms Haran

Monday & Tuesday Nov 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> - Junior Infants - 2<sup>nd</sup> class

Wednesday & Thursday Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> class

Class teachers will be in contact with you via Aladdin Connect.

Should you wish to speak with me at any time please ring the school office and Maria will arrange a suitable time.

### **First Communion/Confirmation**

**Sacrament of Confirmation:** Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 @11am

**First Holy Communion:** Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ 11am

Enrolment forms for both sacraments have been submitted to the parish office.

### **Maths Week**

At Cloonakilla NS we aim to instill a love of Maths and we encourage our pupils to use Maths with confidence in their daily lives. Our annual Maths Week took place from Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup> - Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. Class teachers planned additional and varied maths activities and Special Education Teachers and myself conducted maths lessons in all classes. 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> classes created maths games for the junior classes and the middle/senior classes were encouraged to solve a word problem of the day. During the week children were encouraged to use their “Maths Eyes” at home and in school. The introduction of the new Primary Maths Curriculum commences this school year. There will be a 1 day school closure for staff training at a date to be confirmed.

### **Science Week**

This week we are taking part in Science Week. The children have been exploring, experimenting and investigating the infinite possibilities science can offer. Teachers focus this week on developing scientific skills and as per Maths week SET teachers will conduct additional experiments in all classes. The children also have the opportunity to experiment at home and they are encouraged to bring their experiments into school for display.

A science display will be held in the hall on Friday where all classes will have an opportunity to display their experiments and to view the experiments conducted by other classes.

As part of Science week Michael Bell (Heritage in Schools Programme) will conduct workshops on local biodiversity with 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> classes.

### **STEAM Education** (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics)

STEAM Education's Introduction to Engineering is a hands-on teacher led programme designed to introduce the children to engineering in a fun, relatable way and to inspire them to think about engineering in their lives, as well as future careers. This initiative has been running in the school for the last few years. 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes will participate in the programme this year in Term 2.

### **Internet Safety**

As an extension of the workshops on Internet Safety by ZEEKO last year with 2<sup>nd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> classes, teachers are covering the topic of cyber bullying as part of the SPHE Curriculum this month. Our aim is to equip children with the knowledge to ensure their online behaviours protect them from the negative impacts of technology while allowing them to benefit from the advantages. All parents have been issued with our Acceptable User Policy and Forms of Undertaking have been returned which will be retained in your child's file for the duration of their time in school.

### **Student Council**

A new Student Council has been set up in our school comprising of elected representatives from the 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. They meet to discuss ideas to improve school life and to give a voice to the student body. Meetings are held monthly with Ms Kelly and myself. So far the Student Council have organised a Halloween Bake Sale which was a huge success and raised €1700. This money will go some of the way towards purchasing new ipads for the Junior classes. They have also distributed suggestion boxes in all classes and are currently assessing some of the more viable suggestions made. I look forward to working with the Student Council throughout the year.

Student Council Members: Ava Cooney, Aeron Moran, Eric Walsh, Aoibhinn Rushe, Zelal Nayman, Conor Farrell & Yahya Sadique.

### **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

The SEN team are working with class teachers and pupils to support literacy and numeracy throughout the school through a number of initiatives. Guided Reading is supported from 1<sup>st</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class. Literacy Lift Off is being delivered to 1st Class in Term 1. It will move to Senior Infants in Terms 2 and 3. The Reading Recovery Programme is also offered to children with emergent literacy needs. Mrs McCabe is our Reading Recovery Teacher. The SEN Team also respond to and support children with social, emotional and behavioural needs with transient to long term interventions. We appreciate the ongoing support of parents which adds to the success of all these initiatives. Under The National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) Dr Cathal Duffy continues to work with us to support teaching and learning in our school.

### **School Self Evaluation**

As part of School Self Evaluation we are continuing to focus on Spelling. Spellings for Me Programme is being implemented in 2<sup>nd</sup>- 6<sup>th</sup> classes and the Heggerty Phonic Awareness Programme has been introduced in the Infant classes which aims to develop phonological and phonemic awareness skills. We are also focussing on a whole school

approach to the development of Music. Our 3 year School Improvement Plan (2023-2026) will be available on our school website shortly. Year 1 of this plan will focus on developing musical literacy in all classes.

### **Local History**

3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> classes have been studying the history of our local area as part of the History Curriculum with heritage expert Martin Curley. Martin led them on historical trails of the local area which included fieldtrips to significant historical features such as Meehambee Dolmen, Cloonakilla Graveyard and St Ruth's Castle.

1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> class completed a nature trail within their immediate school environment. Study of local history enables pupils to investigate and learn about the past and to form connections between past and present.

### **Buddy Programme**

Cloonakilla operates a Buddy Programme for the first term each year. A rota is formed so that 6<sup>th</sup> class children can assist our new junior infants in managing the playground. They ensure that the younger children learn to play with their classmates and join in games. Each 6<sup>th</sup> class volunteer follows the Buddy Guidelines which are outlined clearly at the start of the term.

### **Green Schools**

Our Green Schools focus this year is Marine Environment. We will discover how our work as a school on the Green Schools Programme, has positively influenced environments worldwide. We will focus our work on oceans and seas, plastic pollution and marine life. Well done to 2nd Class who helped create our new Green Schools noticeboard for marine environment!



In October all classes viewed an introductory video about marine environment. 2nd class took part in a survey before commencing their project "The Sea Keepers Project". This will run from October to May and each month both classes will take part in a marine environment lesson. We are also revisiting our previous themes this year. Litter picking has commenced in 2nd class and they are doing a wonderful job keeping our yard litter free. Our bee garden has been cut back and cleared away for the winter months. There are "power savers" in every classroom in an effort to save energy in our school by turning off appliances and lights when leaving the classroom. 5th and 6th classes had a visit from the local community Garda in October to talk about road safety. Well done to 3rd class who took part in the Roscommon County Council Sticker Art Competition "Stop Littering Our Roads" in October!



### **Green Schools Committee from 5th Classes for 2023-2024**

### **Art Exhibition**

Images Art Exhibition will take place in the school hall on Wednesday 29th November from 1.30pm – 2.30pm for Junior & Senior Infant parents and 5pm – 7pm for all parents and on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 8.30am – 9.30am. This is a framed exhibition of the children's artwork and pictures can be purchased for €15 each using cash or card. The additional proceeds from the exhibition will be used to purchase ipads. We hope you will support this fundraiser.

## **Christmas**

### **Christmas Show for Senior Infants**

Senior Infants will attend a Christmas Show “Elfie Saves Christmas” in Dean Crowe Theatre on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. Class teachers will furnish you with exact details. There will be no Christmas concerts this year as they are held on alternate years. However a programme of events will be held in the school.

### **Army Band**

The Army Band will treat us to a special Christmas performance on Dec 8<sup>th</sup>. This will compliment our music curriculum.

### **Musical for 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> classes**

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class are invited to attend a musical production of “Star Warz” A Panto Menance in Colaiste Chiarain on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November. We look forward to seeing our past pupils starring in this show.

### **Hoodies**

In keeping with Cloonakilla N.S tradition, our 6<sup>th</sup> class students will receive their new personalised school hoodies in the next few weeks which they can wear in lieu of their school uniform jumpers.

### **Active Schools News**

A new Active Schools Committee was formed in September and the committee members have been busy working behind the scenes to ensure Cloonakilla can attain their second Active Flag by June 2024.

European Sports Day was held on Friday September 29<sup>th</sup>. The whole school participated in a new sport- table tennis. This sport proved to be a huge success with all of the classes! Hourly challenges were set throughout the day and the whole school met in the afternoon for a “Take on the Teachers Challenge.” Needless to say the pupils were victorious in the end. Their victory resulted in the whole school being awarded a night off homework.

Active Homework has now commenced for the whole school. The children have no written homework on a Thursday night and must do their best to complete one of the active challenges set for them.

### **Gaelic**

Gaelic coaching with Clann na Gael has commenced on Wednesdays for the senior and middle classes. 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes enjoyed perfecting their football skills before Mid Term and now 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes are participating until Christmas.

### **Rugby**

Rugby training has commenced with Darin from Buccaneers RFC for 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

### **Cross-Country**

Students from 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> Class have been very busy training for cross-country competitions over the past few weeks.

Our school competed in two separate competitions – a local derby hosted by Summerhill NS and the Roscommon Primary Schools Cross Country competition held in Roscommon Racecourse. Cloonakilla NS was very successful in both competitions and all competitors should be very proud of themselves. A special congratulations to Emma Kelly 4<sup>th</sup> Class and Kiersten Keegan 5<sup>th</sup> Class who qualified for the Connacht Cross Country Final in Tuam, Co. Galway. It was a very difficult course but the girls performed very well and did their school proud. We have wonderful athletes in our school and we encourage all pupils to be active and to move as much as possible.



### **Amber Flag 2023**

The Amber Flag Committee has had a busy first term. The new committee was elected in October. The committee comprises of Chairperson Maisie-Belle Mullally, Vice-chairperson Sarah Brennan, Secretary Jack Sherlock, Vice-secretary Matthew Brydon, PROs Julia Kuszaj, Ava Cooney and Mollie Rafferty, Treasurers Conor Kilmartin and Addison Kiernan and Amber Buddies Mary-Kate Kinneavy and Ellen Curley. Mrs. Cronolly is the Amber Flag liaison teacher. So far, we have updated the Amber Flag Noticeboard, and submitted our application for this year's Amber Flag. We have held fortnightly meetings and have decided on the aims for the coming year. These include our annual Easter Raffle, which will take place in term 2, a Wellbeing Activity Calendar which all classes have received, a Halloween Joke Day and Christmas Joke Day over the intercom and a new Buddy Bench poster for all junior classes. The Amber Flag Committee have visited the junior classes to explain the Buddy Benches to them and we are delighted with the new homework policy, which means pupils will have no written homework on Thursdays and will instead have wellbeing and oral activities. The new 'Mind Me, Mind You' Wellbeing Programme will be used in the middle and senior classes during this term and next and we hope it will be useful for developing resilience and promoting wellbeing.

### **Annual Review**

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement were completed at the Board of Management meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

### **Parents' Association**

Following this year's AGM the PA committee is:

**Chairperson** – Lisa Byrne, **Vice Chair** – Jenny Sherlock

**Secretary** – Christina Melican, **Assistant Secretary** – Mary Lynam

**Treasurer** – Becky Garman, **Assistant Treasurer** – Catherine Hogan

I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all the wonderful work throughout the year.

### **Board of Management**

The term of the existing Board of Management ends on November 30<sup>th</sup>. I would like to thank the existing Parent Representatives Kelly Marie Neary and John Noone for their service and expertise. I would like to welcome Leonora Hanley and Les Browne to the new board.

Yours sincerely,

Mary O'Rourke, Principal

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