



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

Phone: 090 6492569, email: cloonakillaschool@gmail.com, website: www.cloonakillans.com

NEWSLETTER, NOVEMBER 2024

Dear Parents,

Please find below details of forth coming 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 or park in staff carpark when picking up children as this area must be kept free for school buses. It has come to my attention that some parents persist in parking in the staff carpark. This cannot continue for health & safety purposes. 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. It is unacceptable to pick up your child in the outside lane of the drive-through area. You must be stationery 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 18th & 19th for Junior Infants – 2nd class

Wednesday & Thursday Nov 20th & 21st for 3rd - 6th class

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: Tuesday, 25th March 2025 @11am

First Holy Communion: Saturday, 17th May 2025 @ 11am

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

WSE – Whole School Evaluation

I am delighted to inform you of the successful completion of our recent Whole School Evaluation- Management, Leadership and Learning which highlighted both our school's strengths and areas for future growth. This evaluation process involved an indepth examination of the following 5 areas:

- Quality of Teaching
- Quality of Learning
- Wellbeing
- School Leadership & Management
- School Self Evaluation

The inspectorate highly commended our dedicated teachers, supportive school community and the positive atmosphere that fosters learning and growth for all our students. We are very proud of this achievement and the report will be forwarded to all parents when it is published by the Dept of Education.

Maths Week

At Cloonakilla NS we aim to instil 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 14th - Friday, October 18th. Class teachers planned additional and varied maths activities and Special Education Teachers and myself conducted maths lessons in all classes. Middle and 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.

Implementation of the new Primary Maths Curriculum commences this school year. The aim of the new curriculum is that children see maths as important and useful to their everyday lives. It does not change much of ‘what’ children learn, but it improves ‘how’ children learn maths. This includes more learning through play and problem solving. It also provides more opportunities for children to be creative, take risks and be challenged. As a school, we will focus on the pedagogical practice “Encouraging Playfulness” for this term. If you want to read more about this change, and find supports for parents, see

1. gov.ie/primarycurriculum
2. ncca.ie/en/primary/resourcesforparents/

Science Week

Science Week 2024 was held week November 11th to 17th. This annual event is a fantastic opportunity for students to dive into the world of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) through engaging activities, workshops, and experiments. This year we will emphasise how scientific thinking drives progress in various fields and how students can use their curiosity to explore new possibilities. SEN Teachers and myself conducted additional experiments in all classes. Children had an opportunity to showcase their experiments to other classes on Friday in the assembly hall.

IT

We have formed a new “Tech Team”. Pupils were required to write an application letter to apply for the job. The following pupils were successful;

Alex Robinson, Nathan Behan , Cian Nugent, Ella-Joy Griffin, Eleanor Neary, Hannah Webb Lynch, Lucy O’Byrne , Emmy Digan, Ella Dolan, Toby Mullin, Sarah Noone, Abbey Clarke, Aoibheann Mc Gowan, Sophie O’Brien, Andrea Alves Passos & Oscar Jaskula from 4th- 6th classes.

They are given responsibilities to ensure that the usage of laptops runs as smoothly as possible in the senior classes. They also help out with messages regarding how to store IT equipment. We have recently acquired 16 new ipads. We are hoping to upskill and benefit from having these resources throughout the entire school.

If you have a special interest in technology and would like to share your expertise with either staff or pupils, please feel free to contact cloonakillans5th@gmail.com.



Gaelbhrtach

As of September 2024, Cloonakilla NS is participating in the Gaelbhrtach initiative, with the aim of building on confidence and positive attitudes towards speaking Irish (Gaeilge Ó Bhéal) in the whole school community. A Coiste Gaeilge has been founded with 16 children from 3rd to 6th Class and they will help identify fun ways to incorporate the use of Irish into whole school events on our calendar and build on the visibility and use of the language informally in our school. We aim to fulfill a number of criteria which will ensure we have the Gaelbhrtach (flag for the promotion of the Irish language) flying in Cloonakilla soon!

Internet Safety

As an extension of the Anti-Bullying theme which was covered in September as part of the SPHE Curriculum teachers in 3rd-6th classes will cover Cyberbullying for the month of November. David Dully (An Garda Siochana) will address the pupils in 5th & 6th classes next week on Internet Safety. His 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. David is a parent in our school and I would like to thank him most sincerely for giving of his time and expertise for the benefit of our pupils.

Student Council

The Student Council is a key part of our school, representing student voices and working to improve school life for everyone. Made up of a dedicated team of students from 6th class, the council focuses on organizing events, raising awareness on important issues, and fostering a positive school environment. So far this year, they have focused on listening to the opinions and suggestions of all the students in the school and promoting well-being and inclusion in the schoolyard. The student council meet monthly with Ms Kelly and myself to identify priorities and address needs. I have been very impressed by their maturity and work ethic and I look forward to working with them for the year ahead.



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 1st class to 6th 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 Mary Kate Roche continues to work with us to support teaching and learning in our school. Children who receive a diagnosis during the school year are monitored and can be placed on the Continuum of Support at a level that best meets their needs be that Classroom Support, School Support or School Support Plus.

School Self Evaluation

As part of School Self Evaluation we are continuing to focus on Spelling. Spellings for Me Programme is in Year 2 of its implementation in 2nd- 6th classes as is the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Programme in the Infant classes. This programme 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) is available on our school website . Year 2 of this plan continues to focus on developing musical literacy in all classes.

Local History

3rd - 6th 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.

1st & 2nd 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 6th 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 6th class volunteer follows the Buddy Guidelines which are outlined clearly at the start of the term.

Green Schools

We celebrated our 8th Green Flag - Global Citizenship and Marine Environment - on the 29th of September. We hosted a flag raising ceremony for our whole school community to mark this significant occasion. It was a very proud day for Cloonakilla NS. We were honoured to share our ceremony with the Amber Flag Committee and celebrate their second Amber Flag.

Jonathan Jones, (Environmental Officer, Roscommon County Council) raised the flag with our Green Schools Committee. Jonathan praised our Green Schools Committee and our school for all our hard work, dedication and the ongoing collective effort that has gone into making our school community, a model of environmental responsibility.

The Green Flag and the Amber Flag symbolize our school's collective efforts to build a better future, one that is greener, healthier and more compassionate. Well done to all involved!

Ciaran Hussey (Travel Officer, Green Schools Programme) visited our school at the end of October. He introduced our new theme Global Citizenship and Travel to all classes. The ultimate aim of this theme is to increase the number of students walking, cycling, scooting, and using public transport or carpooling to school. The programme will run for a two-year duration. There are 7 steps to each Green School theme. We will be focusing on step 2 – Environmental Review and Step 3 – Action Plan for the remainder of this term. 4th, 5th and 6th classes will take part in a Travel Survey this month. The Green Schools Committee will carry out a walkability audit and speed survey this month as part of our Environmental Travel Review with Ciaran Hussey.

At some point this term it would be greatly appreciated if parents/guardians could talk to the children at home about road safety. Road Safety will be a focus in our action plan for our travel theme in Cloonakilla NS.

Amber Flag

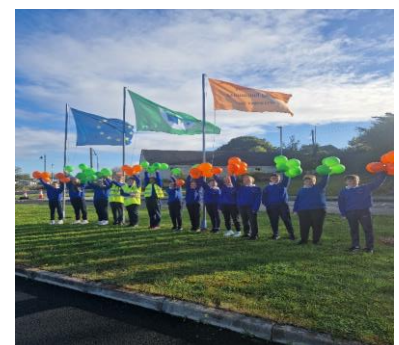
Gerard Tiernan, Pieta House, joined the Amber Flag Committee in raising their 2nd Amber Flag. This is a Pieta House initiative which promotes and develops positive mental health in our schools. Mr Tiernan urged the pupils to take some time in their daily lives to get some exercise and to take a break from their phones and social media platforms.

A new Amber Flag Committee was elected in October. The committee comprises of Mary Kate Kinneavy, Ellen Curley, Matthew Brydone, Kai Costello McCormack, Lauren Dully, Rachael Sammon Egan, Dylan Connolly, Mollie Rafferty, Sarah Brennan & Alicia Lapa. So far this year they have updated the Wellbeing Noticeboard and spun the Wellbeing Wheel each Wednesday. They have also visited the Junior Classes to explain how the Buddy Benches work. The Amber Flag Committee will soon organise a Christmas Calendar and intend to use our Christmas Concerts as a part fundraiser for Pieta House. Other monies will go towards enhancing wellbeing resources in each classroom.

Christmas

Christmas Show for Senior Infants

Senior Infants will attend a Christmas Show "Santa and the Three Little Pigs" in Dean Crowe Theatre on Tuesday, December 10th. Class teachers will furnish you with exact details.



Christmas Show for 4th class

The children will attend a production of Charles Dickens much loved **A Christmas Carol** by Livin' Dred Theatre Company on Thursday 5th December in Roscommon Arts Centre. Children will explore the novel with the class teacher prior to attending the show. Teachers will furnish you with details nearer the time.

Christmas Concerts

We plan to hold a Christmas concert for all classes with the exception of 6th class who will hold a separate performance at the end of the school year. Each class year will combine for this event. All concerts will be held during the school day. Concerts will be held on the following dates:

11th December @ 10.00am - Junior Infants

11th December @ 11.30am - 4th Class

16th Dec @ 11.30am - 3rd Class

17th Dec @ 10.00am - 1st Class

17th Dec @ 11.30 - 2nd Class

18th December @ 10.00am - Senior Infants

18th December @ 11.30am – 5th Class

Christmas Cards

As a fundraiser The Parents Association have organised for children to design their own Christmas cards. The sample cards have been distributed and we request that you order online by Wednesday 20th November. Orders must be made by logging on to logon.designacard.ie/order now or by scanning the QR code or using the code on the back of sample card. **LATE ORDERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Hoodies

In keeping with Cloonakilla N.S tradition, our 6th 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

Active Breaks Challenge:

Active children learn better. Our school reinforces the message that children require 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day. We as a school are committing to an active break every day from November 18th for four consecutive weeks. Five minutes of movement between lessons can have a hugely positive impact on the teaching and learning in the lesson that follows. It helps children to adjust energy levels, restore concentration and self- regulate emotions.

Active Schools Committee;

We have some new members in our Active Schools Committee from 1st and 2nd classes. A big welcome to Ellie Behan, Kate McVeigh, Áine Kidney and Cillian Keegan who have been busy working behind the scenes to ensure Cloonakilla can attain their second Active Flag by June 2025.



European Sports Day

European Sports Day was held on Friday, October 4th. Hourly challenges were set throughout the day over the intercom. Each class also participated in the 'Relay Takeover' races against their own classmates and other year groups. It was a huge success with all classes competing outside to see who would be the winning team for each class grouping.

Gaelic

Gaelic coaching with Clann na nGael has commenced on Wednesdays for the senior and middle classes. 5th and 6th classes enjoyed perfecting their football skills before mid term and now 3rd and 4th classes will train until Christmas.

Rugby

Rugby training is also up and running with Dermot from Buccaneers RFC. 3rd and 4th class had great fun playing tag rugby up until Mid-Term and Ms Finnegan's class participated in a rugby blitz in Buccaneers RFC on the last day of term. 5th and 6th classes are now working with Dermot each Thursday.

Soccer

A past pupil, Sophie Byrne, coached soccer in our school for 5 weeks as part of her transition year work experience. Sophie proved to be an excellent coach. She has recently been selected for the U-16 Ireland Soccer Team. We were delighted to have her showing off her talent and coaching the next generation in Cloonakilla.

A huge thank you to all our coaches who give up their time to pass on their skills and knowledge to our students.

Cross-Country

Students from 3rd – 6th 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 St Brigid's GAA grounds. Cloonakilla NS was very successful in both competitions and all competitors should be very proud of themselves. A special congratulations to Emma Kelly 5th Class, Kayden McCormack Costello 5th Class and our Senior Girls Team (Emma Kelly, Kiersten Keegan, Emily Dolan, Aoibhinn McGowan, Sarah Noone and Chloe Meares) who qualified for the Connacht Cross Country Final in Mohill, Co Leitrim. It was a very difficult course but they all 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.



Parent Collaboration

There will be a questionnaire left outside classrooms during Parent/Teacher meetings this month. Please take a few minutes to fill it in to inform our ASF committee of your thoughts and ideas on achieving this very worthwhile flag. Our school will need to purchase a new set of jerseys for our senior football team this year. If anyone is interested in sponsoring these, please contact the school. Your support would be greatly appreciated.

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 16th September 2024.

Parents' Association

Following this year's AGM the PA committee is:

Chair: Lisa Byrne, **Vice-chair:** Joanne Dolan

Secretary: Christina Melican, **Vice-secretary:** Mary Lynam

Treasurer: Becky Garman, **Vice-treasurer:** Catherine Hogan

I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their wonderful work always.

Yours sincerely, Mary O'Rourke, Principal