



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

February Newsletter 2025

Dear Parents,

It has been a difficult time since our return to school in January with storms and inclement weather. We are looking forward to the onset of Spring!

Sympathy

I would like to begin this newsletter by extending my deepest sympathy to Mia & Jay Collins, their sister Zoe and the extended family on the death of their beloved mother Denise. This situation is unprecedented in our school community and words cannot adequately express the grief we all feel. Denise was a wonderful mother, daughter, sister and friend. She was energetic and fun loving and endured her illness and her husband Gerry's with stoicism and determination. We remember them both in our prayers as we continue to support their children in any way we can.

Catholic Schools Week

We celebrated Catholic Schools Week from Jan 19th-25th. The week began with a prayer service for 5th/6th classes and Ms Kelly introduced the programme each morning with a thought for the day. All classes partook in various activities which focused on the Catholic ethos which permeates our school. Children were afforded an opportunity to reflect on the theme for this week which was "Alive in Christ".

As part of Catholic Schools Week 5th class celebrated Grandparents Day on Feb 12th. Grandparents were invited to visit the classes and share their faith and life experiences with the children. The children in turn had an opportunity to show their love and appreciation for their grandparents. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed refreshments some entertainment and a chat in the school hall.



Sacramental Preparations

2nd & 6th classes are preparing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation so we remember them in a special way in our thoughts and prayers this year.

First Confession

First Confessions will be held in the school on Monday, March 10th during the school day. Preparation for First Confessions has commenced. We thank you for your support.

Confirmation

In preparation for Confirmation 6th class pupils have been learning about the Gift of the Holy Spirit. They have each chosen a name that is special to them and they are busy preparing powerpoint presentations to explain the significance of their chosen names and the Saint from which the name derives.

Dates for your Diary

First Confessions: Monday, March 10th

Non Uniform Day: Friday, March 14th

The Sacrament of Confirmation: Tuesday, March 25th @ 11.00am

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

School Closures

Midterm break: Thursday & Friday 20th & 21st February

St Patrick's Day: Monday 17th & Tuesday 18th March

Easter Holidays: Monday, 14th April to Friday, 25th April

Student Council

Our Student Council has been working hard on various projects to make our school an even better place for everyone. They have been gathering ideas and suggestions from students through surveys, ensuring that every voice is valued.

In addition, the council is collaborating closely with the Wellbeing Committee to promote positive mental health and wellbeing throughout the school. As part of their efforts, they will be making a donation of €200 to *Pieta House* from the proceeds of their bake sale. The remainder of the money raised will go towards the purchase of C-Pens and seating for class libraries.

The Student Council also continues to play an active role in monitoring anti-bullying and inclusion on the schoolyard, ensuring that all students feel safe and respected. Ms Gately and I will be working closely with the Student Council and Wellbeing Committee as we formulate a new Anti-Bullying Policy.

Stay Safe Programme

The Stay Safe Programme is currently being taught in Junior Infants, 1st, 3rd and 5th classes. This is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protective skills by participation in lessons on safe and unsafe situations, bullying, inappropriate touch, secrets and the dangers of communicating with strangers. It is very important to encourage your child to discuss the content of these lessons at home. Parents can learn more about this programme at www.staysafe.ie. Our children's safety both in the real and virtual world is a priority for us all. Please check your child's online activity at regular intervals to ensure their safety.

New Anti-Bullying Guidelines- Bí Cineálta

In 2024 Norma Foley, Minister for Education, introduced Bí Cineálta-Procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour for Primary & Post Primary Schools. These procedures replace the 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures. Over the next few weeks I will be consulting with parents, pupils and staff as we formulate a new policy that will meet the needs of our school context. There will be a half day school closure in Term 3 to enable staff to engage with the new procedures. An interesting departure in the new procedures is that schools are not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school.

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 has been completed in 1st Class. It has just commenced in Senior Infants (Mrs Sexton) and will run for the next 8 weeks. Parents need to support their child by reading the familiar book they have in their folder every night. 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.

Literacy

Following on from our WSE Recommendations we are currently in the process of updating our main school library and our class libraries. We are hoping to rekindle a love of reading in our pupils. DEAR TIME (DROP EVERYTHING AND READ) will be timetabled in all classes twice weekly and we would be very grateful if you would consider trying this out in your homes with your children. It is important that adults also engage in the activity. We would also ask you to consider reading aloud to younger children. It is an ideal bedtime activity that helps children unwind, away from screens, and it also provides you with a chance to spend some quality time with your child. In this anxiety induced era it is more important than ever to consider introducing some tried and tested routines into our everyday lives.

Maths

On Tuesday February 4th, all teachers attended a maths workshop facilitated by Oide. This face to face professional learning event built on the foundation established during School Closure Day One. Teachers explored the specific material changes in the “Algebra” and “Shape and Space” strands and learnt how to effectively integrate these elements into teaching practices. The over-arching aim of the Primary Mathematics Curriculum is the development of mathematical proficiency. How children learn maths is as important as what they learn. For further information on the new PMC and how best to support your child, please visit;

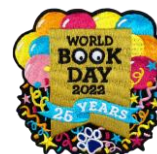
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Credit Union Schools’ Quiz

Cloonakilla NS entered two teams into the Credit Union Regional Quiz on Sunday 9th February. Both teams did very well. The U-13 team of Nicole Daly, Eleanor Neary, Cian Nugent & Saoirse McCrossan Reilly secured a 6th place finish while the U-11 team of Lauren Dully, Luke Coffey & Esmee Maher secured a Top 10 finish.

World Book Day

World Book Day will be celebrated on Thursday, March 6th. Special activities will be held in all classes to mark this event and to promote further interest in reading. Some classes may opt to dress up as their favourite book character. This is entirely at the discretion of the class teacher. Please take a few minutes out of your busy schedules at home to mark this occasion with your children. Book tokens will be distributed to all classes so this is an opportunity for the children to purchase a book of their own choosing.



I.C.T.

Our tech team is comprised of selected pupils from 4th-6th classes. They are very helpful and assist in the day-to-day management and distribution of our devices. They also ensure that devices are stored and charged correctly within classrooms and report back when procedures are not being followed!

Recently, we purchased 16 new iPads. They are timetabled and used in all classes to enhance teaching and learning in all subject areas. Pupils have reported that they thoroughly enjoy using iPads and find them very beneficial for project research or consolidating maths skills and concepts through the use of games. All classes from 2nd upwards use the online Spellings for Me Programme for testing on a monthly basis. The



Lexia

Programme is another online

programme that pupils use on a daily basis in our school.

Touch typing is also conducted with small groups of pupils who require assistive technology. 5th and 6th classes have been using their I.C.T. skills recently to compile SESE projects on France & World War 2 through the use of Powerpoint and Google Slides. They have also used Microsoft Word to type narratives.



Classes also regularly participate in online zoom calls run in conjunction with Education Centres in Ireland & committees within our school. Workshops can vary in topic from meeting a mindfulness expert to online maths quizzes. Well done to the current Wellbeing Committee and Coiste Gaelbhratach who both hosted events through the platform Zoom to the whole school. Please feel free to visit our school website to catch up on recent events.

<https://www.cloonakillans.com/>

We would encourage you as parents to monitor and restrict your child's usage of the online world. While it's educational to spend time on screens, remember that human interaction is even more important for our well-being.

Do you have any ICT knowledge that you feel would be of benefit to our school community and would like to share with us?

If so, please contact Ms.Cunniffe at her class email: cloonakillans5th@gmail.com



Sport

Soccer

Our school has registered for the Spar FAI Primary School 5s Programme. We will enter one boys' and one girls' team and will choose a panel from 5th and 6th classes in the coming weeks.

Gaelic

GAA coaching continues each Wednesday with Alan Fitzpatrick from Clann na nGael. He is currently coaching 2nd and 3rd classes. Other classes will receive coaching in the coming months. 6th class girls represented Cloonakilla NS in a Gaelic football blitz which took place in Johnstown pitch on February 12th. The girls played three games in total against Summerhilll NS, Ardkeen NS and St Mary's NS. Well done to all involved.

Hurling

Proinsias Killion has been busy teaching our 4th class students hurling skills each Wednesday. It is great to see them making progress weekly and the students look forward to his fun activities.



Swimming

Swimming lessons continue for 5th & 6th class pupils until early March. We were delighted with the large numbers of students who have opted for the lessons.

Cycle Safety

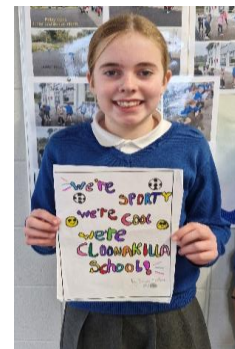
Both 6th classes will be taking part the 'Cycle Right' campaign which is organised by Roscommon Sports Partnership. Each class will complete a 4 week programme where they will learn new skills regarding cycling safety and bicycle care. This will begin on March 24th.

Active Schools

This term we are focusing on the Gymnastics Strand incorporating Balancing and Landing. We have been collaborating with the Green Schools Committee in the 'Big Travel Challenge' from the 4-14th of February. Thank you to all the parents and students who have walked, scooted, cycled and taken the bus to school in this time period.

Active boxes have been reintroduced for all classes to use at break times outside. We will add more resources once we are back on the grass areas. It is great to see our pupils staying active and having fun at lunch time.

Well done to Saibh Meehan who was the winner of our Active Schools Slogan competition. Her slogan 'We're Sporty, We're Cool, We're Cloonakilla School' has been displayed in all classrooms and communal areas.



Green Schools

Theme Global Citizenship & Travel

A walkability audit was carried out by the Green Schools Committee in November. They were accompanied by Ciaran Hussey Green Schools Travel Officer.

The findings were as follows:

- A shelter near the bus stop would encourage more students to use public transport
- Pencil bollards highlight the presence of the school and stop cars parking on the footpath
- Litter along the route – Raise awareness in the community about littering
- Excellent to have a pedestrian crossing near the school entrance

Actions taken by the Green Schools Committee from findings

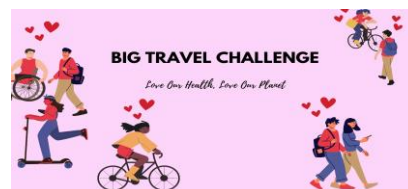
- Report findings in schools newsletter to remind the school community about turning left and using the roundabout on exiting the school
- The Green Schools Committee wrote letters to our local County Council outlining their concerns and proposals for a shelter for the bus stop across the road from our school
- The local community representative in our local council was contacted about littering along the walking route to our school



Green Schools - The Big Travel Challenge 2025

Our school has currently been taking part in the Big Travel Challenge. This is an initiative of the Green-Schools Programme. The Big Travel Challenge asks school communities to focus on modes of active travel such as walking, cycling or scooting. The aim of this initiative is to try to get as many pupils and members of the school community using these modes as much as possible over a period of nine school days.

The Green Schools Committee have been working with our Active Schools Committee and Wellbeing Committee. The challenge not only promotes sustainable travel but also a healthier body and mind. Well done to everyone who has stepped up to this challenge. Our daily numbers have been very impressive and all our results will be submitted to the Green Schools Big Travel Challenge Competition before the 28th of February.



The Green Schools Committee will visit all classes throughout the month of March to focus on road safety. The Road Safety Authority's programme "Be Safe" will be used to promote road safety in our school. Our school will take part in An Taisce's National Spring Clean in April.

Wellbeing:



The aim of our Wellbeing Committee is to support the overall wellbeing of students, staff and the school community. Throughout December, the Wellbeing committee designed and organised a Wellbeing Advent Calendar for the whole school. This included lots of different activities to support our wellbeing. Each week we celebrate Wellbeing Wednesday as a whole school.

Currently, they are drafting up a wellbeing yearly plan to ensure we have a wellbeing focus every month.

The Wellbeing Committee are currently approaching local businesses requesting prizes and contributions for our Easter Raffle. This raffle will raise funds to purchase resources for wellbeing areas in all classrooms. Any parent who would like to

contribute a raffle prize (brand new items only please) or make a donation is greatly encouraged to do so. Tickets for the Wellbeing Easter Raffle will be on sale after the midterm break and the raffle will take place immediately before the Easter holidays.

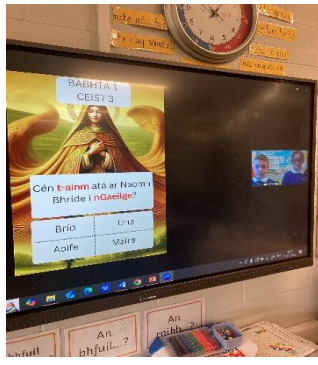
Coiste Ghaelbhrtach:



Beidh an fócas i mbliana ar níos mó Tráth na gCeist chomh maith le hamhrannaí Gaeilge. Bhí dhá thráth na gCeist ag an gCoiste Ghaelbhrtach go dtí seo – An Nollag agus Lá fhéile Bhríde. Bíonn gach rang ag foghlaim amhrannaí Ghaeilge freisin. Bíonn an Coiste ag pleanáil imeachtaí chun Seachtain na Ghaeilge a cheiliúradh cosúil le Rince Gaeilge, Amhráin a chanadh, Tráth na gCeist, Cluiche ‘Cé Mise’ ar an intercom chomh maith le Seó Faisean.

The Gaelbhrtach Committee encourage spoken Irish throughout Cloonakilla NS. We have created a Ghaelbhrtach display board which will be updated as the different themes arise. This will be updated based on the different themes, seasons etc. throughout the year. Our school is fortunate enough to be engaging in the Gaelbhrtach scheme. This is a two year scheme. This year we are focusing on two areas: Irish quizzes throughout the year and learning Irish songs.





Coiste Gaelbhreach committee members Luke & Sophie hosting a Tráth na gCeist on Zoom based on Lá Fhéile Bhríde.

Non-Uniform Day

A non-uniform day will be held on Friday, March 14th. Children will be encouraged to wear green on this day as it marks Green Schools Awareness Day and it also coincides with the end of Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Music Generation

Violin lessons are continuing on Fridays for 3rd & 4th classes with tutor Natalia Gorovenco. The children are really enjoying the classes and making great progress. I am delighted to have the opportunity to participate in this scheme.

Junior Infant Enrolment

Our Junior Infant Enrolment for September 2025 is complete.

School Photographs

County Photos will visit the school on Monday, Feb 17th. The sample cards will be distributed approximately 2 weeks later. We request that you order online by March 7th. Orders must be made by scanning the QR code on the back of proof card or by following the instructions. **LATE ORDERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Parents Association

The Parents Association would like to thank all parents/guardians for your support with the Christmas Cards and the Christmas Concerts. A presentation of €500 will be made to Pieta House in the coming weeks.

Parents Association will be seeking volunteers to help with a Flag Day on 14th & 15th of March. If you can spare an hour or two we will be sending out a message soon with further details or drop us an email to pa.cloonakillans@gmail.com

Please support this fundraiser as all money goes towards supporting your children in school. Your help and support for these events would be appreciated.

Date for your diary: The annual school walk will take place on 14th June.

I would like to wish you all a very enjoyable midterm break.

Kind regards,
Mary O'Rourke, Principal