



Newport | NS

Learning Together in Harmony

Newport National School, Newport, Co. Mayo

Newsletter no. 29: October 2015



Our new infants!

School Newsletter



A very warm welcome back to all our students who have settled back to school, during this wonderful Indian summer. I extend a particularly warm welcome to our 25 junior infants and our two new pre-school children. We hope you all enjoy your time in Newport NS and find that we offer a high quality learning environment and a broad learning experience. We wish all our parents, pupils and staff a fruitful and enjoyable school year.

Opening Times and Safety

The school opens to receive pupils each morning at 9:20am. Supervision is provided from 9:10am by one teacher and one SNA. No responsibility is accepted by the Board of Management for pupils arriving before that time. Please ensure that you see an adult staff member in the yard before driving off and leaving your child. Class Assembly time is from 9:20 to 9:40am and formal lessons begin at 9:40am. No pupil should arrive any later than 9:30am. Classes end each day for Infants at 2pm and for all other children at 3pm. Parents of infants meet their children at the classroom door and the other children are met in the school yard.

We are governed by the Education Welfare Act and all absences are recorded. Children are prone to childhood illnesses and regularly need to be cared for at home. Please send a note explaining each absence. Should your child miss in excess of twenty days, we are obliged to inform the National Education Welfare Board (Tusla). We ask you to ensure that your child arrives at the school at 9:20am as the admittance of all children together cuts down on the disruption to the class. Should your child get delayed, a note is sufficient to explain what has happened. There is no need to interrupt the class at that point.

Our seventh green flag

We are working up to being awarded our seventh Green Flag. This year the Green schools committee will focus on energy conservation and global citizenship. We have booked a guest speaker to come to meet all the classes in December. We have a new Green Schools Committee, made up of representatives from 1st to 6th Class. Some classes will be researching the topics of energy conservation and global citizenship further and you will be aware of projects being completed in school.



- **Art in the ASD yard**
- **Wild Nephin Launch**
- **Schools Cross Country**





Uniform

As we are now into our second month back at school we are delighted to see that every child has had a chance to acquire the correct school uniform. We have received many compliments on the uniforms which look lovely in the recent class photographs. Some inventive children in the senior classes have sourced black shoes which can be used for PE as well as on the AstroTurf. These are available in the sports shops and are ideal as they are fulfilling uniform requirements as well as being acceptable to the client! We appreciate your co-operation with the wearing of a complete school uniform. Sports clothes are worn on P.E. days only and no branded sports clothing is worn in order to ensure uniformity. Parents experiencing financial hardship in relation to purchasing the correct uniform shoes should make a confidential telephone call to either myself or Fiona and assistance will be arranged immediately.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

The annual **parent/teacher meetings** take place during the week commencing November 9th with most appointments being arranged for the evening of Thursday November 12th. Teachers will contact you in advance of this week to arrange appointments. The school will close at 2.45pm (in line with Department of Education rules) on Wednesday November 11th and Thursday November 12th in order to facilitate meetings. Please ensure your children are collected promptly in order to ensure appointments run to schedule. These meetings provide a formal opportunity for you to meet your child's teachers and you will be given an outline of their progress since the beginning of the year. If during the year you have a concern about your child please arrange a meeting with your child's teacher. You can do this by writing a note in the homework journal or by ringing Fiona, the school secretary. We have a complaints policy in place which broadly directs parents or pupils to bring an issue to the attention of the class teacher at the earliest possible stage. The vast majority of incidents which cause concern can be sorted at this early stage. Over the years we have found that that problems addressed by a class teacher are easily resolved with no long term fallout. It is natural and anticipated that there will be occasional disruption to relationships and we are well placed to deal with issues as they arise once we are informed of the problem.



Child Protection Policy

Our Child Protection Policy is available on our school website (Downloads section) and I would encourage all parents to familiarise themselves with it. Bríd McAuley (Deputy Liaison Person) attended training last year, and has advised class teachers on the procedure in relation to identifying and reporting cases of child abuse which includes neglect as well as physical and emotional abuse. Reports of such concerns are to be made to either myself or Ms. McAuley. We do not make any judgements but pass on the information to the relevant authority.

School improvement plan

Newport NS is embarking on year 2 of our school improvement plan. This year we are introducing a focus on Numeracy. In literacy we continue to focus on comprehension and reading for pleasure as well as working on an improvement in individual achievement. Each class teacher is explicitly teaching comprehension skills and we have a **Drop Everything And Read (DEAR)** slot allocated to reading for pleasure in each classroom. In mathematics all classes are going to work on improving numeracy through games, competitions and the learning of tables. Parents can play a major role in this initiative by tracking which tables are being taught and by timing your child or downloading an app to help them with the tables. A dedicated school improvement noticeboard is located on the ground floor corridor.

The **Board of Management** is continuing to follow on with school enhancement works. We dealt with some plumbing and leaking issues when school was closed. Classrooms are brighter and warmer as a result of clearing bushes from the bank at the rear of the school. New carpets were fitted in two classrooms and we bought some new furniture to replace old stock. We intend improving our energy rating by installing double glazing throughout the school. We will replace the old wooden double doors as they've become warped. Our additional classroom should be built in the final term as we are close to putting the project to tender (see next paragraph). A new Board of Management will be elected in November and the new term commences on December 1st 2015. We are very thankful to the committee who have worked tirelessly over the past four year term to deliver many new initiatives and services to the school. Each improvement ultimately benefits our children and will have a positive impact on their learning outcomes. The end of year report from our Board of management is on the school's website under the B.O.M./ P.A. tab.





School extension

We will begin construction of an additional classroom for children with autism as soon as a builder is appointed. In order to accommodate the new classroom close to the current ASD class it was decided by the board that the existing school hall would be reconfigured to accommodate the new classroom. A separate general purpose hall is being constructed on the Rosmore side of the school. The plans are published on the back page of this newsletter. More detailed plans are on display in the school.

New Boards of Management

The current term of a Board of Management will expire on 30/11/2015 and a new Board of Management will take up office on 01/12/2015. The Department of Education and Skills has today published on its website "**Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019**" which publication is to be used by a school when forming its new Board of Management. Shortly the Patron, Archbishop Neary will appoint a representative to arrange for the election of two parent nominees to the Board of Management. The next term runs for four years up to November 2019. The board which acts as a corporate body comprises two representatives of the patron, two teachers, two parents and two members of the community.

INTO Stand Up For Education Campaign

Thank you to all the parents who supported the proposal of reducing class size and increased funding in Primary school. As we approach budget day you will notice that all the major groups (Health / Garda) are publicising their needs. If education is to be properly funded at primary level we need to make this known to the decision makers in advance of a manifesto being agreed for the General Election. I ask each parent who is being canvassed to highlight the need for reduced class size and a restoration of resource teaching hours for children with special education needs. This campaign is about securing the future for all children and if we miss this opportunity to request reduced classes it will ensure that four year old children are taught the basics of reading and maths in classes of up to thirty students.

Newsletters

As most parents now have access to email and the fact that printing costs are very high we are looking at scaling back the amount of correspondence sent in hard copy. We will begin by sending newsletters by email and by hand with a view to reaching a point where there will not be a need to print off the newsletter.

Cross Country

56 children competed in the annual cross country team selection process at the GAA pitch. This event is run by a committed group of volunteer parents. The parent group then provided coaching for the four teams who represented the school at the West Mayo finals in Ballyvary. Our teams achieved very commendable times as a result of all the effort put into their training where nothing was left to chance.

Niall McLoughlin was selected to represent the school at the Mayo cross country event in Ballina on Thursday, 1st October. A very talented athlete, Niall came NINTH in the competition and, as a result, has qualified for the Connacht Finals.

Wild Nephin

On Friday 4th of September, 5th and 6th classes went to the Wild Nephin in Shramore. We went on 2 buses. First we looked through a magnifying glass and saw some sea creatures in large containers. We also listened to a talk by Michael Holmes and Michael Ring. At that point, it started raining so we went into the hut (the bothy).

There were maps in it of Shramore and we saw a very old fireplace and we got some pictures taken. After a while it stopped raining and we had some refreshments provided by Nevins.

Then we went to see some birds including a barn owl, bald eagle and a few more. The birds were trying to fly away. We went to the forest then across the bridge where we got a camping demonstration about starting a fire and putting up tents. The children loved it.

When that was finished we walked down by the river and the scientists from Ballycroy National Park put a white sheet under the bushes and hit the bushes with sticks and saw the insects that came out. Eoin McNulty and Brian Loftus saw some fish in the river. Ms O'Donnell got to hit one of the bushes with a stick and loads of insects fell out.

All in all we had a very memorable and enjoyable day.

(By Sixth Class students)

Fundraising Activities

Our Board of Management has put a lot of time into fundraising for the various activities which are being carried out at the school. Our last 'Rags to Riches' was a huge success with €450 being raised from the bags of clothes parents, friends and neighbours brought in for the collection. We ran another clothing collection on 7th October, and 600kg of clothing was collected, so many thanks to everyone who brought in bags.

Thank you to Board of Management members Catherine Sheridan, Martin Dillane, Alan Murphy and Sandra Hart, who organised a church gate collection at each of the masses in Shramore and Newport in July which raised €490. €1200 was raised from our September flag day collection in Newport and Westport. A big thank you to the volunteers who gave an hour each to collect on behalf of the school and to Board of Management members and Fiona who oversaw the event.

2015 Flag Day volunteers were : Orla Kelly, Liz Chambers, Claire Moran, Michelle Chambers, Declan Holmes, Lorraine Knox, Claire Mulroy, Niamh Murray, Emma Stokes, Kitty Long, Maite Morrison, Pat Conway, Carrie Cann, Noreen Chambers, Cathal Brady, Agnes McNea, Lee-Ann Bennett, Mary Kilkerr, Chris Troy, Larry Kilbane, Ann Chambers, Peggy Moran, Keri Davies, Michelle Cattigan, Martin Dillane, Liz McManamon, Brian McLoughlin, Fiona Mulchrone and Stephen Geraghty,

And a message from Junior Infants...

Ms. Crowley's new infants have been busy little bees, settling very well into their first year in big school!

We worked very hard during the month of September, learning songs, rhymes, prayers and, of course, our Jolly Phonics letter sounds, songs and actions.

We have been talking about growing up, and all the things that we can do now that we couldn't do when we were babies.

We have also enjoyed learning Gaeilge, and now we know lots of new words about school.

In art we got very messy indeed painting our 'Handprint Trees' with fingerprint leaves. And best of all, we've made lots and lots of new friends!