

FAMILY NOTE NO. 4 (21st September 2016).

Dear Parents,

Please note the following:

1. Confirmation Ceremony: We have been informed by the Cork Diocesan Office that Scoil Barra's Confirmation Ceremony will take place on Friday, 28th April 2017 at 10.30 a.m. in the Church of Christ Our Light.

2. First Holy Communion Ceremony: Fr. George O' Mahony, P.P., has informed us that Scoil Barra's First Holy Communion Ceremony will take place in the Church of Christ Our Light on Saturday, 20th May 2017 at 11.00 a.m.

3. Start-of-Year Mass: We look forward to celebrating our annual Start of Year Mass on Friday, 30th Sept. at 11.30 a.m. in the Church of Christ Our Light. All members of the school community are invited to join us for the Mass.

4. Birthday Party Invitations: A reminder that it is school policy that birthday or party invitations are not given out in **the classroom or anywhere on school grounds**. If you wish to invite pupils to your party please do so privately. The BOM, Staff and many parents are very concerned about the distress caused to individual children who are not invited. We therefore appeal to you to co-operate with us in this matter: **please do not give your children invitations for distribution coming to school**. *Please note that school staff members cannot be involved in the circulation of such invitations, nor are they able to provide a listing of names and contact details of other pupils in the class, nor are they to be involved in the sharing of birthday cakes/party bags in the classroom. Your cooperation in this regard would again be very much appreciated.*

5. Weight of Schoolbags: The weight of schoolbags has become an annual topic of conversation arising from concerns expressed about the potential damage being done to pupils' backs/posture due to the lifting/carrying of overweight bags. In Scoil Barra pupils are encouraged to bring to school only those items which are necessary during the school day. Similarly, pupils may leave in school those books/copies etc. that are not required for the completion of Homework on a nightly basis. I would encourage parents to check that there are no unnecessary items being carried in their child's schoolbag and to advise their child regarding correct lifting and carrying techniques.

Advice around this issue is available from the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (see <http://www.iscp.ie>). Overleaf, you will find a summarised version of some advice previously included on the website of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists which you may find useful.

In this regard, you may wish to note that a set of 30 Atlases, 30 English Dictionaries and 30 English/Irish Dictionaries were purchased by the school during the summer holidays for all classes from Third to Sixth and these sets of books are stored and available for use in each classroom, thus lightening the weight of schoolbags for all pupils from Third to Sixth Classes.

6. Red and White Day: *In celebration of the Cork Ladies Football Team's involvement in next Sunday's All-Ireland Football Final (v. Dublin), pupils may wear their 'Red and White' Cork Supporters colours to school on Friday next, 23rd September. Best wishes to the Rebelettes as they appear in the final for the eleventh time in twelve seasons, and seek to achieve a quite incredible 6-in-a-row!*

Donal O' Sullivan, Principal.

p.t.o.

“Schoolbags - Don't have to be a pain in the back”

‘Carrying a schoolbag is frequently associated with pain or discomfort and can often lead to poor posture. This is a topic of worldwide concern for parents and children. However, these effects can be greatly decreased if some attention is given to the choice of schoolbag, the contents of the schoolbag and the way the schoolbag is lifted and carried.

Chartered Physiotherapist, Sara Dockrell has highlighted the health risks to children in carrying over-heavy schoolbags and offers some guidelines to parents in their choice of schoolbag.

Choice of Schoolbag

Buy a schoolbag that can be carried on the back, which has a padded back, adjustable padded shoulder straps and waist strap. It is important that it is the correct size for the child. Don't buy one that is too big, as it will hit against the child's bottom as he/she walks.

Contents of the Schoolbag

The child should only carry what is necessary in the schoolbag, with heavier items placed closest to the child's spine. There is a general rule of thumb that a child should not carry more than 10% of his/her own bodyweight.

Schoolbag Lifting and Carriage

The way the schoolbag is lifted and carried and the length of time for which it is carried are very important. Avoid swinging the bag around to get it on to your back. Put the bag on a surface and then with your back to it, put your arms through the straps. Alternatively another person could help.

A schoolbag that is worn on the back i.e. over both shoulders is the best. It requires less effort, and promotes a better posture than carrying the bag over one shoulder or in one hand.

A survey of some Irish 10-year olds found that only 62% of them carried their bags on their backs although 93% of them had schoolbags that could have been carried that way. It may not always be considered to be the cool thing to do. The schoolbag should only be carried when necessary so leave it on something until you are ready. Don't stand around with the bag on your back when you don't have to.

The problems associated with schoolbag carriage are also associated with poor posture generally, and in particular, sitting posture. The current trend towards an increase in sedentary activities among children means that they are sitting for long periods of time, often in a poor posture. This factor along with falling levels of fitness are all contributing to the pain and discomfort associated with schoolbag carriage. Recent research suggests that fitness may play a role in how well a child can carry his/her schoolbag.

Addressing the problems of schoolbags will involve a bit of thought and co-operation on the part of parents, children and teachers but if it can help to make schoolbags safer and more comfortable to carry it will be worthwhile’.

Author: *Sara Dockrell, a member of the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists and Lecturer in the School of Physiotherapy, Trinity College, Dublin. She is involved in teaching and research on problems associated with schoolbag carriage and schoolchildren's posture at computers.*