

Family Note No. 10 – 13th February 2019

Dear Parents,

I hope you are all well and enjoying the stretch in the evenings and the onset of Spring ... at long last! We are well settled back into school after the Christmas Holidays and the following are some updates and notices:

1. *Mid-term Break:**

Mid-term break is next Monday 18th until Friday 22nd February. School resumes on Monday 25th February.

2. PFA (Parents and Friends Association) Meeting:

The PFA hope to have their next meeting on Wednesday, 27th February, at 7.30 p.m. in the school staffroom. All are very welcome.

3. Car Park and Safety Pupils:

In the last Family Note, on behalf of the Board of Management, I made a plea for courtesy and co-operation regarding safety in general for our children in the car park at morning and home times, and a specific plea for people to adhere to the rules of the Set Down Area where cars are not to stop but to move on, allowing others to avail of the Set Down Facility. Most people have been very co-operative and mindful of others, taking turns, being patient and watching for the children's safety etc. Well done and thank you. Double parking at the side of the church, which presented the most danger, has been solved now with the placing of cones preventing same. Please encourage your child to walk on the inside of the cones for safety. The 'yellow box' area has been coned off and we hope to make that a permanent fixture in the near future. Some people still continue to stay in their cars in the Set Down Area after their child has left the car. As a result of this, other cars that cannot get into the Set Down Area are stopping alongside it in the middle of the road to let children out. This holds up the flow of traffic and creates danger for the child as they get out of the car in the middle of the road. There tends to be plenty of space further along if people would drive on and get a space further along where they will not be holding up all the traffic behind them. People also need to vacate their space in the Set Down area a.s.a.p. to allow others in and, thus, keep traffic moving. The Board of Management hope to identify the few people who are not co-operating and who have been abusive and disrespectful to school personnel who are trying to oversee the situation with a view to addressing the issues with these individuals specifically.

4. Meeting with Teachers:

In September, we asked that parents would make an appointment if they needed to speak to a teacher, as much as possible, as opposed to catching them in the morning before school starts, as this is a busy time of the day for teachers as they try to get ready for, and start into, teaching their class. Parents have been very obliging and co-operative in this respect and the staff are grateful re same. However, I am aware that, sometimes, there is an emergency or a situation that just can't wait and we are very anxious to accommodate such situations and not have parents stressed because they couldn't be accommodated. If parents can wait until after assembly in the mornings, I am only too happy to meet with a parent who wants a message passed onto the class teacher, or, on occasion, a Support Teacher may be available to sort out an issue if it cannot wait for an appointment later in the day with the Class Teacher. If this is the case, come to Eileen in the office and she will make every effort to help in this regard.

5. Re School Milk:

Thank you to those parents who gave feedback on the School Milk issue. The issue was raised at Whole Staff level, In-School Management level and Board of Management level also. Overall, there was a huge consensus that, due to the problems outlined by staff at the start of the year (waste, smell, straws, cartons refuse, milk not cooled etc), the school will not continue with the supply of milk. However, it was noted that, to date, those who wanted to continue to take milk for their lunch, did so. They use their own flasks which are then brought home, washed out and re-used, thus eliminating some of the problems with the school-supplied milk. This practice has also allowed for colder milk when brought in a flask and the avoidance of the use of straws which was one of the latest concerns re our school milk system.

6. Collection of Children and Security/Child Protection:

In the context of security and safety, can parents please notify the school through the office or in writing if you have allocated someone else to collect your child other than yourself or whoever normally collects them.

7. Re Birthday Invites:

Just a reminder that the school has always had a policy that parents would not issue birthday invites through the school as it has the potential to cause upset when children don't get an invite etc.

8. Autism Event:

We have been asked to notify parents of Ireland's first All-Autistic Conference in Rochestown Park Hotel Sunday, 24th February 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. More information can be accessed at www.konfidentkidz.ie/events

9. Extra-Curricular Updates:

- Our two school Quiz Teams recently competed in the Credit Union Primary Schools Competition and competed really well, we were very proud of them.
- Andre Nation, Ballincollig's National Cup Team American Professional player and coach has commenced coaching sessions with our 4th, 5th and 6th Classes. This is a great opportunity for the children to learn the skills of the game and to broaden their sporting experiences.
- Rugby continues for 6th Class this term as they finish a term of Spike Ball (mini-volley ball), compliments of the Transition Year students in Ballincollig Community School.
- 5th Classes continue with rowing having finished a term of rugby.
- GAA continues for 1st to 4th Classes.
- Chess continues both as a lunchtime club and a class activity.
- A Lunchtime Coding Club is underway for Senior pupils while a Lunchtime Lego Club has started up again for younger and older pupils, a great introduction to Robotics!
- The school made application, and was selected, for a Pupils' Cookery Pilot Scheme which will commence shortly with 4th Class initially. We were equipped with all utensils needed and the school will provide the ingredients, look forward to some tasty results!
- A representative school choir from our 5th Classes will partake in a concert in St. Mary and St. John's Church on 14th March at 7.30 p.m. along with representative groups from all other schools in the community and the ETB Youth Orchestra.
- Some teachers are in the process of starting up a 'trad' music group in the school shortly, a first for Scoil Barra!
- Our pupil-artists have been getting a chance to show off all their art and crafts work at assembly in recent times, unicorns being the most common theme, we have the finest display of unicorns in the country at present!

As you can see, we are a very busy school with a lot of extra-curricular activities happening within class time, at lunchtime and after school. Acknowledgement and gratitude is due to all the teachers who give of their time in a voluntary capacity to provide such an amount of extra activities and valuable experiences for the children.

10. First Penance Ceremony:

Our Second Class pupils had a very special occasion last night in the Church of Christ our Light as they received the Sacrament of Penance. They were angelic, and embraced the theme of 'Saying Sorry' and 'Forgiveness' with incredible enthusiasm and uncomplicated sincerity! Well done also to all the families who partook in the ceremony with great reverence and patience as each child had their own special experience. Thank you to the children's teachers and SNAs who prepared them so well and to Fr. George and Fr. Cian.

Finally, I hope you all enjoy the Mid-term break and the absence of lunches, uniforms, homework, early morning runs etc. I know the staff and pupils will! Hopefully the weather will oblige so the children can get plenty of fresh air as well as some rest.

Karen O'Sullivan (Principal)

