



FAMILY NOTE NO. 1 – 11th September 2019

Dear Parents,

Fáilte romhaibh ar ais! Welcome back! I hope you are all well after the summer break and are looking forward to the new school year and new journey ahead.

A particular warm welcome to our new Junior infants and new transfer pupils who started in Scoil Barra this year. The Junior Infants are like old 'pros' already and our new pupils from other schools and other countries seem to have found the transition quite easy due to the friendly welcome they received from the staff and their new classmates.

Also joining us in Scoil Barra anew this year are teachers: Ms. Jean Boyle in Senior Infants, Mr. Kevin O'Dwyer in 2nd Class., Ms. Elaine Forde in 4th Class, Ms. Orla Murray and Ms. Louise Moriarty as Support Teachers, and SNAs: Siobhán Dunne and Julie Egan. We hope that all our new pupils, staff members and families enjoy the atmosphere, work ethic, comradery and magic of Scoil Barra!

We welcome back our SNA Róisín O'Mahony after a spell of illness last year and teacher Dermot Leen from his career break and we are delighted that our Parish Priest and School Spiritual Leader Fr. George has made such a remarkable recovery from his serious illness to join us again.

Congratulations are due to Mr. Stokes and Ms. O'Connor on their marriages last summer and to Ms. Cook, Ms. Breathnach and Mr. Collins on the birth of babies Darragh, Séan and Hannah.

Unfortunately, every new school year starts with some sad news. Our deepest sympathies go to the family of our very own pupil Alycia Hyde whose 'papa' (dad) died suddenly at the start of the year. We also pass on our condolences to the school communities of our neighbours BCS who lost their dear teacher John Spillane during the summer, and Scoil Mhuire who lost their beloved pupil Emmy Eckert tragically. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anamacha.*

The following are some important notices, changes, dates and reminders as we start the year:

1. **Electronic Memos:** This Family Memo is being sent out in hard copy as well as by email (Word and PDF formats) so that you can check if you have received the memo by email. After this, most notes and memos home will be sent electronically only. It is, therefore, vital that we have all families' correct email address. If you have not received this memo by email, please use the procedure (outlined at the end of this document) to have your email included on the mailing list. Do not send it in by journal or by phone to the office, the procedure below is the most efficient way for our IT Manager, Marguerite, to add on new email addresses to the group.
2. **Front Office Hours:** We are trialling new lunch times for ancillary staff which will also have the benefit of having Eileen, our secretary, in the front office available for enquiries at Infants' 'Home Time', 1.40 p.m. Hopefully, this will be of benefit to parents and will help general communication.
3. **Well-Being & School Improvement Plan:** It was agreed at our recent staff meeting that the aspect of school we will focus on this year as part of our SIP (School Improvement Plan) is **Pupil Well-Being** both as a discreet subject and in its very broadest sense in school (which also includes staff well-being). As part of this focus the staff will research Well-Being programmes for teaching in class. We will also focus on broader related areas such as: Yard and Classroom Behaviour Management re Sanctions and Positive Reinforcements/ 'Choose Respect' Theme continued/Restorative Practice re breakdown in pupil relationships/Assembly

Opportunities for acknowledgment and positive reinforcement/Staff well-being/Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) etc.

As part of our SIP and this particular initiative, we hope to get parent and pupil contributions and feedback.

4. **School Musical:** We hope to stage a School Musical this year with the pupils from 5th and 6th Classes. At the moment we are looking at our own version/combination of *Aladdin* and *The Greatest Showman*, with a possible title of '*Aladdin – This is Me!*' Some songs, dance and script reading will take place in the classroom as part of the Music, PE, English and Drama curriculum. We will also have rehearsals and auditions after school hours, starting this week when pupils will sing for starters!!
Provisional dates are below. So....here goes....let's bring the madness on!

5. **PFA/Nature Trek/Monies Spent:** Thanks to hard work and fundraising by our PFA (Parents and Friends Association), we have invested in 11 picnic benches for the 3 yards so that pupils can sit and do quieter activities on yard if they so wish. For now, they are in the field. They were painted by our caretaker Podge and a past parent, Michael O'Connor, over the summer and they look lovely!
The PFA need more help! Please give your name into Eileen in the office if you are interested in becoming involved in any way, big or small. Further information re the type of activities that the PFA get involved with will be sent out at a later date by the PFA. **Once again, thank you to the PFA and all those who helped last year.**

Nature Trek: Last year's School Nature Trek provided monies to fund various much needed materials: a new set of Scoil Barra Sports gear for girls and boys, 4 portable Library trollies for each corridor, Choose Respect Signs for inside and outside of the school and a whole new make-over for the Infant Corridor (thanks to Ms. Moloney and her team of volunteer staff members who spear-headed this initiative, putting in a lot of hours after school in the last term to create a magical place!)

With this year's Nature Trek funds, we are hoping to invest in a permanently fixed projector and screen in the hall for use during assemblies, meetings and hall activities etc. At present, we wheel in and out a portable projector every morning which is not ideal, a permanent fixture would be the ultimate goal!

Some Reminders re School Rules, Procedures and Best Practice:

6. **Safety in the Car Park:** As always I urge parents to be **sensible, patient and safety conscious** in the mornings and at 'home' time, but especially in the mornings when the whole school community are arriving at the same time and under pressure! If you cannot get a space in the set down area, please do not just 'drop' your child in the middle of the car park, it is very dangerous as cars are moving and sometimes passing out the car that has stopped to let the child out. Move on to the area the other side of the church, the BCS side, and let your child out where they are safe. **PLEASE DO NOT GET OUT OF YOUR CAR IN THE SET DOWN AREA, IT IS FOR SET DOWN ONLY.** If you want to bring your child into the school grounds, park further up on the BCS side.

Wheelchair Car spaces: At present we have two members of the school community who need to use wheelchair car parking spaces in our car parking area, **so please refrain, at any point, from using these spaces.**

7. **Uniform:** All children must come to school in full uniform as per the school rules. Shoes must be a dark colour. In colder, wetter weather, soft material 'pumps' are not ideal, proper shoes that keep out the rain and keep children's feet warm are required. Runners are not to be worn except with the school track suit.
Tracksuit: For practical reasons, we decided at a recent staff meeting to allow children who have training/dance practice after school to wear their tracksuit into school with their training gear on underneath so that they do not have to engage in long and cumbersome changing routines ahead of the sessions. This is optional, children can continue to wear uniform and change if they so wish.
In order to maintain the consistency of the uniform, please ensure, as parents, if your child **is** wearing a tracksuit coming to school that it **is** either PE Day or that they **do** have training after school, otherwise, the integrity of the uniform policy will break down. Children wear school tracksuits with the school-crested light blue polo shirt underneath.

Junior and Senior Infants may wear tracksuits throughout the year.

Summer Uniform: Summer uniform comprises of school shorts, school tracksuit top and the blue school-crested polo shirt and may be worn in September, May and June.

If your child is missing a part of the uniform or not wearing the proper footwear etc., they will receive a note from a teacher to alert parents re same which needs to be signed by the parent and returned to school for record-keeping.

8. **Jewellery:** For health and safety purposes, it is school policy that **only stud earrings may be worn to school**, no 'dangling' earrings are permitted.
While other pieces of jewellery such as necklaces and bracelets are not specifically prohibited, common sense should prevail. If a child is wearing a piece of jewellery that inhibits their writing or their concentration or causes them distraction, teachers will be obliged to ask them to put it into their bags and to avoid wearing same in future.
9. **Hair:** We ask you to ensure that your child's hair is back off their face, out of their eyes and kept neat and tidy in school. If there is a case of head lice in the classroom throughout the year, we may ask children with long hair to tie it back to avoid head lice continuously being passed on from head to head despite people's best efforts to eradicate them, but otherwise, neat and tidy and off the face will suffice.
We seem to have had a number of incidents last year, with boys in particular, of fringes being worn very long and getting into the children's eyes, making it difficult for them to see properly and to concentrate, it is also not good for the health of their eyes in the long term. Please ensure your child's fringe is not in their eyes.
Hair Dye: In keeping with the policies of our two local Post Primary Schools, we now have a similar policy whereby hair dye must blend in with natural hair colour i.e. shades of brown, black, blonde or auburn/red/plum. This **does not** include bright unnatural colours such as blue, pink, green, yellow, orange or bright purple etc.
10. **Punctuality/ Attendance:** Punctuality and good attendance are good habits for life that need to be encouraged and practiced from a young age. Please do your best to ensure that your child is in time for school. If you are late through unavoidable circumstances, please put a note into your child's journal, just one line will suffice to inform us of same. This is as much for safety as it is out of courtesy. If a child is late for school, the only way we know that he/she was safe and with you in that time gap, between start of school and the time they missed, is if you inform us.
If your child is late and there is no note in the journal to inform us, your child will get a 'Late Slip' to be signed by the parent and returned to school for record-keeping. If lack of punctuality is persistent, the school will have to address it further.
Attendance: The Golden Rule is: If your child is sick, keep them at home. If they are not sick, they should be in school. Please inform the teacher by note in the journal when your child has been out sick as to the dates and the reason. This will be recorded on our on-line attendance system. The reason for a child's lack of attendance may be very important if TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) Attendance Officer becomes involved.
11. **Rented Books:** It is essential that pupils take proper care of all Rented Books. The Rental Period is for the 2019-2020 School Year. Parents are asked to check their child's new set of Rented Books as soon as possible and be satisfied that they are in good repair at the start of this school year. If not, please alert the class teacher within the next week re same. Books will be inspected during the year by class teachers to ensure that they are kept in good condition. **Under no circumstances should these books be written on, marked or defaced in any way. Books which are deemed to be in sub-standard condition when returned by pupils at the end of June 2020 must be replaced. If a book is lost/misplaced during the year it must be replaced.**
12. **Communication:** If you have a concern or need to discuss an issue regarding your child, please make an appointment to see the Class Teacher or Support Teacher through Eileen in the office or directly with the teacher. Shorter, informal messages can be passed on through the journal or homework folder. If you still have concerns or issues having discussed same with the teacher, please make an appointment to meet with myself or Mr. Harrington, Deputy Principal. We are all here to help make school a happy, safe and productive place for the children, so together, we should be able to address issues and solve problems!

*****Please find below the procedure to follow for submitting your email address to the Parent Mailing List**

or to change your email address if you have not received this memo by email. Please inform Eileen in the office if parents/guardians have 2 separate email addresses for communication purposes that need to be used by the school, and please ensure that we have both addresses on our mailing list.

*****Also below is an updated list of dates/events/closures for the year as we have it so far.**

Enough for now!! Wishing everybody the best of health and happiness for the school year ahead, may it be a positive and productive year with lots of learning and lots of fun!

Karen O'Sullivan (Principal)

School Closures 2019-2020

- **9th Oct:** *****No school for pupils: Day 1 - Staff Training for the New Language Curriculum**
- 28th Oct - 1st Nov: October Mid-term Break
- 23rd Dec - 3rd Jan: Christmas Holidays
- 17th - 21st Feb: February Mid-term Break
- 16th & 17th March: St. Patrick's Weekend
- 6th April - 17th April: Easter Holidays
- 4th May: Public Bank Holiday
- 15th May: School Holiday
- 1st June: Public Bank Holiday

Events and Activities 2019-2020

- 25th Sep: Start of Year School Mass @11.30 a.m., Church of Christ Our Light
- 2nd Oct: Information Meeting for Parents of Jr. Infants @7.30 p.m., school hall
- 4th Oct: Nature Trek
- 12th Nov: First Holy Communion Enrolment Ceremony @7.30 p.m., Church of Christ our Light
- 13th Nov: Lord Mayor's Visit to Scoil Barra @ 10.40 a.m.
- 11th-15th Nov: Enrolment Week
- 14th Nov: Open Afternoon re Enrolment Week, 1.00-2.30 p.m.
- 19th&21st Nov: P/T Meetings for Classes Sen Infs-6th, 2.45-5.15 p.m. (Junior Infants after Christmas, no dates yet)
- 17th&18th Dec: Carol Concerts @7.30 p.m., Church of Christ our Light
- 11th Feb: First Penance @ 7.30 p.m., Church of Christ our Light
- 4th March: Confirmation
- 25th April: First Holy Communion @ 11 a.m., Church of Christ our Light
- 8th&9th May: Final Dress Rehearsals: School Musical (Friday evening and Saturday afternoon)
- 10th-14th May: School Musical (Sunday matinee and Nonday-Thursday evening performances)
- 5th June: School Sports Day
- 2nd June: Manchester Tour Information Meeting for parents
- 4th June: Books Sales Day
- 10th-13th June: Manchester Tour for 6th Class

Procedure for submitting or changing Parents/Guardians email addresses:

1. Send an email to this address: noreply@scoilbarra.ie
2. The **title of the email** should include the name of your child, their class and name of their class teacher e.g. Title of email: **Anne Malone First Class Ms. O'Shea**
3. The content of the email is irrelevant, it is the title that will be used to create the group email listings. However, you might just confirm who is sending the email on behalf of the pupil as the content.
4. If you have more than one child in the school, you will need to do the same for each child separately.
5. If you do not have an email address and, therefore, would prefer to continue to get hard copies of notes and memos, please inform the school of this in writing with a note to the class teacher including the name of the child, class and class teacher. They will pass that information onto the office.