



Family Note No. 6 – 3rd February 2020

Dear Parents,

‘Anois teacht an Earraigh, beidh an lá dúl chun shíneadh’ (Ie Antaine Ó Reachtabhra 1784-1835)

Quote above from a famous Irish poem that was taught in primary school in my time ...which is many many years ago! I am sure it may bring back memories for some of you..... *‘Now, Spring has come, the days will be stretching...’*

It is indeed lovely to feel the stretch in brightness both in the mornings and evenings and see the buds starting to appear on the foliage.....lovely to face into a new season and the new life that comes with Spring.

The following are a few notes and reminders for the new season:

1. New Term of Office for our Board of Management (BOM):

The board’s term of office is 4 years. The last board just completed its 4 year term of office in December and a new term of office with a new board commences this month with its first meeting tonight, 3rd February 2020.

The school board consists of 8 members: 2 Patron’s Nominees, 2 Community Nominees, 2 Parents’ Nominees, a Teacher Nominee and the Principal. The word *‘nominee’* is very specifically used as opposed to *‘representative’* to depict the role of each member which is *not* to represent the views of, or bring a mandate from, each of the four sectors above, but to work together as a corporate entity to manage the school and, as a guiding philosophy, make decisions based on what is best for the pupils, staff and the school in general. Board members serve in a voluntary capacity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the last board for the time, patience, interest and support they gave tirelessly for the past 4 years. Some members have served for 2 and 3 terms and one is even facing into a 4th! I would like to make special mention of the three members who are retiring from the board: **Mary Daly** (Community Nominee), **James Hussey** (Parents’ Nominee) and **Paddy Staunton** (Chairperson). Paddy also served as treasurer before he became chairperson.

Thank you to those members who remain in situ for the coming term of office: **Nicola Radley** (Parents’ nominee), **Michael O’Leary** (Health & Safety Officer and Patron’s Nominee), **Joanne Doherty** (Recording Secretary and Teachers’ Nominee) and **Bernard Vallely** (Treasurer and Community Nominee).

Our new members for the coming term of office are: **David Rainsford** (Parents’ Nominee), **Tony Mahon** (Past grandparent and Community Nominee) and a warm welcome back to **Michael Farrell** (New Chairperson) who was the first Principal of Scoil Barra from 1985 until 1999 when he went on to become Corporate Secretary of UCC at which time Dónal O’Sullivan took over as Principal here. We are very lucky to have Michael’s expertise and experience as Chairperson and, of course, his heart has remained in the school!

2. Parents and Friends Association (PFA)

As with the BOM, the members of the PFA all serve in a voluntary capacity and work tirelessly for the benefit of the children and the school in general. The group had their first meeting of 2020 last Wednesday and welcomed three new members who 'signed up' at the AGM in October: **Maria Kalaitzake (Treasurer)**, **Margo Kennelly (Secretary)** and **Tina Sweeney (Deputy Secretary)**. Those who remain in situ are: **Vera O'Neill (Chairperson)**, **Genevive O'Leary (Deputy Chairperson)** and **Imogen Deasy (Deputy Treasurer)**.

The unselfish giving of time and effort by those who serve on the Board of Management and on the Parents' Association is humbling, and the school community as a whole is very much indebted to the volunteerism of these people. *Go raibh míle maith agaibh.*

3. Musical 'Aladdin – This is Me'

Hopefully, you all found the hard copy note sent home last week seeking help for the various aspects of our Musical. Please return the note with your contact details and the area you wish to help out with to the office or the class teacher as soon as you can. If the note is mislaid, just sent in the details on a piece of paper, it doesn't have to be the original note....or email to info@scoilbarra.ie

The **Big Stage Build** commences on **Saturday, 7th March**. It is a significant undertaking as we build a custom –made stage 'from scratch'! We have never failed to form a great team of volunteers to take on this challenge and we have always had a stage that equals any theatre...so, hopefully, this year will be no exception. Let us know if you, or yours, can help in any way at all.

The PFA will be working on PR, Sponsorship and the Musical Programme in conjunction with a staff group. The cost of staging the musical is high, we do not make a profit but we always aim to break as even as we can! Sponsorship comes by way of businesses taking out ads in the Musical Programme. The PFA will be appealing to any parent who has a business, or someone they know who has a business, and would like to sponsor the Musical by taking out an ad in the programme. They will send out a note re same shortly...be thinking about it meantime!!!

4. School Initiatives and Projects

As some of you are aware already, the Irish American Partnership in Boston have donated \$5,000 to our school in honour of our past pupil **Samantha Barry** who is Editor and Chief of Glamor Magazine and is quite the success story. We are very proud of her and very grateful for all of the tributes she has made to the school and staff as her 'roots', resulting in great support, including the latest donation. We have a list of projects we hope to use the money for including a '**Sensory Corridor**' in the school extension and investment in **Creative Writing Workshops** for pupils, given that Samantha started her career as a journalist.

Our **Nature Trek** this year was a great success, as always, thanks to the dogged efforts of the children and you the families. It yielded €8,440, which is phenomenal. As mentioned in a previous email, one of our projects targeted for Nature Trek proceeds is the purchase of an **Overhead Projector** for the hall and a remote controlled screen. This will be of great use for assemblies, for all other gatherings in the hall and our upcoming musical. In time, we hope to invest in an 'awning' for over the entrance into the Infant Corridor and a shelter for the children's bikes.

We are in the process of creating a lovely **Stone Path** to the front of the school, created with stones that will be individually painted by all pupils. This is a project being undertaken by a past pupil who

is presently doing her work placement as a student teacher in the school. Funds towards the project will come from the Samantha Barry Donation....so we can paint a special stone in Samantha's honour!

5. Credit Union School Quiz

Best of luck to our two 6th Class Quiz Teams who are involved in the above Quiz Competition today in the Oriel House Hotel. The 9 pupils involved have already done themselves proud by being picked for the teams based on their great wealth of general knowledge and we have no doubt that they will do us proud today when representing the school.

6. School Carol Concert

Well done to staff, pupils and parents for the lovely Carol Concert that was produced in December. It was very difficult for me not to be involved, my first Carol Concert since I started teaching *not* to be playing piano for!! However, I *did* get to sit back and enjoy listening to the children singing with beautiful accompaniment from four parents who stepped in so willingly to fill the breach and I was so proud of everyone involved. It was very special, *maith sibh go léir* (well done to one and all)

7. Condolences

Our hearts go out to First Class pupil, Adam Porter, who lost his beloved mam, **Niamh Carty**. Niamh battled her illness bravely but tragically lost her fight in early January. Our thoughts and prayers are with Adam and his family at this very sad time. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam*.

8. General Reminders:

- **Head lice:** are becoming an issue in some classes. Can I appeal to parents to check your child's head regularly with a fine comb, treat the head if you find eggs or lice and, most importantly, recheck and retreat if the need arises. Unless parents are very diligent with that process, head lice just continue to be passed around from child to child and the problem is never solved.
- **Monies Due/Unpaid:** We will be sending reminder notes shortly to families regarding monies due/unpaid. Please check if you have paid the following monies: **Charges and Rent** (due last June when buying books and resources for this school year), **Swimming** (if your child has had swimming lessons so far this year), **Recorder lessons** (3rd to 6th Classes), **Dance Lessons** (5th and 6th Classes)
- **Email Communication:** If you are still not getting school emails either as whole school mail, or class/group mail, please email the school to info@scoilbarra.ie to let us know, include in it your child/children's class and class teacher's names. Also, please check that the emails are not in your 'spam' section.
- **School Website/Calendar:** We are currently experiencing difficulties with the school calendar on our website. We are aware of this problem and hope to have it remedied as soon as possible.

I hope the rest of this term will be a healthy, happy and productive one for pupils, staff and parents alike. Enjoy the stretches in the evening and all that comes with Spring!

Karen O'Sullivan (Principal)