



Memo No. 3 to Parents – 5th October 2020

Dear Parents,

We have all made it through September, the most challenging return to school we have ever had, and, hopefully, October will be an easier month as the new procedures and practices continue to be embedded and children, parents and staff settle into the new school 'Normal'.

Items of note:

- **Nature Trek 2020-2021:**

Date: This year's Nature Trek will go ahead on this **Friday 9th October** albeit a little different to other years. With a few small changes, we should be able to enjoy the event as we have always done. Throughout the day, classes will go separately on their walk to the Regional Park with their teachers, SNAs and Support teachers. Unfortunately this year we will not be able to invite parents to come along with us but teachers will take plenty of photos throughout the day and these will be posted on the school website. Pupils can wear their school tracksuit and as the weather looks good, there is no need to send wellingtons to school that day.

Guest: **Donncha O Callaghan**, Retired Irish Rugby Player and coach on RTE's 'Ireland's Fittest Family' will do the honours and officially open this year's Nature Trek. Donncha began his career with his home province Munster, spending 17 seasons with the province and winning 5 major trophies, before finishing his career with Worcester Warriors in the English Premiership. We are delighted to have Donncha virtually open this year's trek. He will pre-record his message and teachers will play the video for pupils in their own classrooms, replacing the usual event in the hall.

Sponsorship: We will not be sending out any sponsorship cards this year. Instead, we are suggesting that parents can make a voluntary contribution per family if they so wish. Money can be sent in by envelope or by payment through Databiz from this Wednesday 7th October. Please use the same procedure that was used when paying School Rent and Charges during the summer. (See document attached with instructions for paying through Databiz). As Databiz only operates with set amounts, we will give the option of €10 or €15 donations. If you wish to give an amount less or more than these amounts, please send in by envelope. Receipts will be given for donations made by cash.

Party: As we will not be able to have any shared food at our usual party, the school will provide a party bag containing a few small treats for each pupil to enjoy after the walk. Pupils just need their normal lunches that day with a drink.

- **Stay Safe Programme for all Classes:**

The Stay Safe Programme is part of the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) Curriculum which all primary schools are required to implement. (Please see attached 'SPHE – Tips for Parents') It teaches children the personal safety skills necessary to protect themselves in situations that are upsetting or dangerous, including situations of physical or sexual abuse. This year, the DES (Department of Education) have directed management to ensure that all important lessons that may have been missed due to school closure, or need revising due to absence, be taught or revised in the first term. After the Midterm Break, class teachers will notify you by class level email of the lessons they intend to cover. You can familiarise yourself with the content of the Stay Safe lessons at www.staysafe.ie/teachers/resources.htm

- **Regarding Recent Letter from the HSE and Case of Covid-19:**

Understandably, we got some emails seeking additional details to those contained in the HSE letter sent to parents last Tuesday 29th October regarding our first case of Covid in the school. We were unable to give the information that was sought. It is important to note that schools are under a strict directive from the HSE in relation to all communication with staff and parents when a Covid case is confirmed. Communication is HSE led, and information is given only by the HSE. However, the HSE letter, sent last Tuesday, did inform parents that there was ***no evidence of transmission of Covid-19 infection in the school, that a public health risk assessment had been undertaken, that the parents of any children deemed to be close contacts of the confirmed case had been contacted and advised accordingly and if a child was not identified as a close contact, they did not need a test, they could continue to attend school and no further actions were required at this time.*** The information, given above, is the essential information for the general parent body to know without impinging on people's right to privacy.

- **Bicycle Safety:**

It is wonderful to see so many children cycling and 'scootering' to school. It is a really healthy mode of travel for the pupils and the environment. However, cyclists, **please be safe and wear a helmet.** It would not be so healthy if you fell off your bike and hurt your head!!

- **Covid-19 Safety and Group Gatherings:**

It has come to our attention that, despite pleas to the contrary, there are still groups of parents gathering, in close contact, while waiting to collect children at drop off and home time. Some parents have noted that they cannot come to the gate to drop off/collect their child safely without having to walk through closely packed groups of parents. We are obviously at a very precarious point in time regarding the virus in Cork, with numbers rising constantly. It is everyone's personal responsibility to be vigilant and to stay socially distanced... for the safety of all.

- **Swimming Monies Refund:**

We will arrange, this week, to have all swimming monies paid last year returned, for those who did not get to have the lessons due to School Closure. It will be paid by cash in individual envelopes.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge four members of staff who have left us this year to embark on new journeys:

- **Denis Kelleher**, retired in September after 29 years of caretaking and cleaning Scoil Barra
- **Ciara Fehily**, SNA, who is embarking on another journey in the field of Education
- **Jason Stokes**, our adopted teacher from Limerick who has returned to his county of origin and
- Teacher, **Phil Galvin**, who retired on Friday after many happy years in Scoil Barra.

We wish all four staff members health and happiness in their new endeavours and thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their friendship and contribution to Scoil Barra. It is a better place because of their time with us.

Welcome on board to **Maria Galgey** who replaces Denis and **Margaret Nwouzor** who is with us short term to help out with the extra Covid cleaning duties. Welcome also to SNA **Jenny O'Gorman** and to new teachers for this year, **Eoghan Linehen** and **Shane O'Neill**....all of whom are already a great addition to our staff with their positive approach, hard work and good will.

Karen O'Sullivan (Principal)

