BALLINABRANNA NATIONAL SCHOOL

Milford

Co. Carlow

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**2nd September 2019**

**Welcome Back** We are delighted to welcome all our pupils to Ballinabranna NS for this academic year, a special welcome to our new Junior Infants, the new pupils throughout the school and to our new parents and staff members.

To our staff we welcome back Ms O’ Gorman, Ms Watchorn and Ms McDonald. We also welcome our new staff member Ms Conway who will be teaching 2nd class. We hope that everyone will be very happy here with us in Ballinabranna.

Thank you to all who have worked so hard to have the school ready for the children’s return. The school has been thoroughly cleaned and kept ready for the pupils to arrive. Thanks to Brenda in the office, Woods Contract Cleaners and Aidan Lowry.

**Newsletters by email**- This year parents can receive school newsletters by email rather than the paper version. Our newsletter is also published on our school website. If you also wish to avoid looking in school bags for school newsletters just give Brenda your preferred contact email address. Parents can opt to receive the paper version should they wish to do so.

**Contact details-** If your contact details have changed please inform the school immediately. If you did not receive the welcome back to school text sent via schoolalerts.ie please contact us immediately. The school alert system will be used regularly over the year. If possible, we ask parents to register for alerts using Facebook messenger, Viber or Telegram as this greatly reduces the cost to the school.

**School Books-** We ask all parents to pay the book fee immediately. If there are any difficulties in this regard, please speak to Ms Corrigan in confidence. We thank parents for their prompt payment which ensures that the book rental scheme can be maintained in the future.

**Nut allergy -** A child in our school has a severe allergic reaction to nuts. This allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock) can occur through ingestion of peanuts/nut products, cross contamination and breathing peanuts through the air.

As this is a life-threatening condition, we are asking for your help in minimising the risk for this child by:

* Avoiding giving children peanuts in their school lunches
* Avoiding giving peanut butter sandwiches, other spreads containing nuts such as Nutella and snacks/bars containing nuts or labelled ‘may contain nut traces’ in school lunches
* Ask your child/children NOT to share lunches.

Due to **the serious nature of the risk** it is important that all parents follow these guidelines to reduce the risk of allergic reaction for this child.

**Kitchen- Cash and Carry-** We’re delighted with the new kitchen off the school hall that was installed in June by our PA.

This was a Parents Association led initiative that has been in the planning for some time and it all came together thanks to generous donations given specifically for this project and Cash and Carry Kitchens Ltd who supplied and fitted the kitchen at a substantial discount. Thank you to all involved.

**Aboretum Fundraiser –**Thank you to the amazing Orla Fallon for the wonderful concert at the end of the school year generously hosted by the Aboretum Home and Garden Centre! The children loved being part of this special event and we are very grateful to everyone who helped organise everything and those who attended and supported this event. A total of €4530 was raised and lodged to the school account. Thank you!

**Cake Sale –** Thank you to all who supported our Parent Association’s Cake Sale on the 7th of June. A fantastic €759.55 was raised. There were delicious treats on offer which were greatly appreciated by the enthusiastic customers.

**6th Class** Congratulations to our graduating 6th class. They organised a Jumble Sale in June and raised €640 for the Irish Guide Dogs Association. This was a super result, with thanks to all who donated or purchased items. The Irish Guide Dogs Association have written to the school to thank all involved.

**HB Icecream Party** - Thank you to all who helped raise €263 for Down Syndrome Ireland through the HB Icecream party organised by our Parents Association in June.

**Uniforms** – Our pupils have returned to school looking fantastic in their school uniforms. The wearing of uniforms helps to ensure that peer pressure is not exerted on children to buy or wear expensive branded clothing. PE uniform (not hoodies) may be worn on PE days or “Match days.” The class teacher will inform the children of their regular PE day. Pupils are expected to wear their school uniform on training days and change for training. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

**Insurance –** 24-hour pupil insurance is available from Allianz at the low cost of €9 per pupil. This insurance is optional and parents were advised of the cost on our school booklists this year. If you are availing of this cover please ensure the form and fee are returned to the school by the 20th of September. Additional forms are available from Brenda in the office.

Under this policy, the pupil is covered 24 hours a day, for School Activities, social domestic and leisure activities (including during School holidays). Claim forms are available from the school or from the [www.allianz.ie/schools](http://www.allianz.ie/schools) website.

**Public Service Agreement Hours** Our school teaching staff worked the 36 hour additional hours outside of the school day under the Public Service Agreement in 2018-2019 by:

* A planning day in August Staff Meetings and Staff Planning
* Continuous Professional Development Teacher’s Personal Preparation
* Standardised Test correcting and collating results Parent Teacher Meetings

**Split the Pot** – During the past year Split the Pot raised a whopping €2670 from the weekly draw for the school. In addition, many families and friends of the school won a cash prize from the draw. This money is invaluable to our school, lodged weekly it goes directly towards the school’s day to day running costs.

**Carlow Primary Care & Child Psychology Service** are offering free parent workshops during September/October to support parents/carers to help children dealing with anxiety, behavioural or emotional issues.

Workshops include: Parenting Positively 10th Sept & 24th Sept 2-4.30pm

Managing Strong Emotions-11th Sept 10am-12.30pm

Ready Steady Relax: Anxiety Management -12th Sept 10am-12.30pm

Managing Mood Difficulties in Children and Adolescents- 1st Oct 2-4.30pm

Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People who Self-harm- 11th Oct 10am-1pm

Supporting Children and Adolescents who have Experienced Trauma.- 3rd Oct 10-1pm

To book - leave your name and contact details along with name of the course as a voicemail on 076-1082018.

**After School Opportunities:**

**Gaelic Football Training** returns from 3-4pm, Mon 2nd of September for 3rd-6th class (weather permitting) with Mr O’ Connor and Mr Breen.

**Art Classes** with Jean Robertson return on 24th September on Tuesdays from 2-3pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 3-4pm for all other classes. For further information or to book a place contact Jean on 086 8686783.

**Creative Keyboards:** Creative Keyboards will start keyboard lessons in Sept. Lessons cost €120 for 10 sessions on Thursday. Keyboards are supplied. Students learn music from grade 1 to grade 8 level. Class times: 2pm-3pm: Jnr/Snr infants 3pm-4pm: Beginners. To book please contact Krisha on 087 2022505.

**Irish Dancing** with the Dargan School of Irish Dancing will return on Weds, October 2nd. Lessons are €5 per child, with sessions from 2-3pm for infants and 3-4pm for all other classes. Contact Claudia on 085 7199026 to book a place.

**School Calendar 2019-2020**

School Closures : Ploughing Championship - 17th,18th, 19th September

October Midterm - closed Monday 28th - Fri 1st November

Christmas - Closed Monday 23rd Dec - Fri 3rd Jan (reopens Monday 6th Jan 2020)

February Midterm closed Thurs 20th and Fri 21st of February 2020

St. Patrick's Day - closed Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th of March

Easter- closed Monday 6th to Fri 17th of April

May Bank Holiday - closed Monday 4th of May

June Bank Holiday - closed Thurs 28th, Fri 29th of May and Monday 1st, Tues 2nd of June

Last day of school before summer holidays Fri 26th of June.

The Department of Education and Skills is introducing a new Primary Language Curriculum. This will necessitate an additional school closure in Term 1 this year as staff attend a whole school training day provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). We will inform parents of this closure date as soon as we have the date.

**Upcoming School Events**

Witch Walk Friday 25th of October

Christmas Carol Service Thursday 12th of December

Parent Teacher Meetings Thursday 14th of November 2019

Sacrament of Penance Thursday 5th of March 2020 at 7pm

First Holy Communion Saturday 16th of May 2020 at 11am

**Important School Information:**

**Child Protection -** Our school fully endorses the *Children First – National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* and follows the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.* Our Child Protection Policy is available to parents to view. Sandra Corrigan is the Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection and Stacey Amond is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. If you have any concerns about any Child Protection issue you can speak to these staff members.

**Absences** – We ask parents to avoid taking family vacations during school opening times as this causes unnecessary disruption to your child’s education. If your child reaches a total of 20 days absence, the school must report this to TUSLA stating the reasons for the absences, this is a legal obligation. A written explanation must be given each time your child misses school.

**Homework** is assigned from Monday to Thursday. This work helps to reinforce what the children are learning in school and develops good study skills for later life. It is essential that children get into good work habits as soon as possible. If children are having difficulty with their work, parents should support and help, but not do the homework! A note in the homework journal will alert the teacher of the difficulty. Junior Infants homework will begin later this term.

A general guideline with regard to time spent on homework is as follows:

 Infants 15-20 minutes

1st/2nd 20-30 minutes

3rd/4th 30-45 minutes

5th/6th 40-60 minutes

If your child’s homework is taking considerably longer than these guideline times please inform the class teacher.

The importance of spending time daily reading to, or with your child can not be over emphasised!

**Healthy Eating**

We encourage all children to eat a healthy lunch *everyday.* We ask that parents continue to provide children with a sensible choice of nutritious foods for their lunch.

On Friday children may bring a sweet/savoury treat with their lunch, we recommend that this fits in the cupped palm of their hand as this is the recommended portion size for a child.

Our School Dentist recommends water as the best drink for children as other drinks can cause tooth decay – *no fizzy drinks please.*

Once again, thank you for your co-operation in ensuring that the children in Ballinabranna NS enjoy a healthy nutritious lunch everyday. This has a hugely positive impact on their ability to concentrate, learn and participate in class activities.

**School Hours :** School classes start daily at 9.20am. The school will open to receive pupils from 9.10am. **No responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before that time.** Classes end each day at 3pm. Parents who wish to have their child escorted home should make their own arrangements to have them met at the school gate and the person escorting them should be at the school no later than 3pm, or in the case of infant classes 2pm, as the school cannot accept responsibility for looking after the children after that time.

It is important that parents are aware that no arrangements exist for the supervision of children who arrive at the school whether by school transport or otherwise, before the official opening time or who remain after school hours to await collection by the school bus or otherwise.

For children travelling by the school bus, the school cannot accept responsibility for escorting them from the bus to the school or from the school to the bus. The parents who feel that their children may need to be escorted should make arrangements to ensure that an escort is provided.

**Parent – Teacher Communication**

We encourage parents to keep us fully informed of any issues which may be affecting your child. In dealing with problems or concerns “A stitch in time saves nine.” If you wish to discuss an issue in depth with your child’s teacher please contact the school to arrange an appointment and to outline the issue. We will be happy to meet with you.