

BALLINABRANNA NATIONAL SCHOOL

Milford

Co. Carlow

Roll No. 17756D

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September 2020

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. This has been a return to school like no other, we are extremely grateful to the children staff, parents and wider community for the care and attention to physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, being vigilant for any Covid-19 symptoms and to following all of the Covid-19 procedures in place.

An immense thank you to all who have worked so hard to have the school ready for the children's return. A trojan effort went in over the summer from staff members, board members and the wider community to ensure that the school was fully prepared to reopen following the Covid-19 school building closures.

To our staff this year we are delighted to welcome back Ms Kehoe. We also welcome our new staff members Ms Ní Cheallaigh who will be teaching 3rd class and Mr Donegan who will be our Special Education Teacher. We hope that everyone will be very happy here with us in Ballinabranna.

Paperless Communication – This year we will be avoiding sending paper notes or newsletters to families wherever possible. Class Teachers will be using the Funky Frog app to send notes to the class parents. Our newsletters will be posted on the Funkyfrog app and on our website. If you need any help setting up on Funkyfrog, or getting a new password, email Warren support@funkyfrog.ie

Contact details- If your contact details have changed please inform the school immediately. It is vital that we can contact you during the school day where needed. If you have moved to a new house or changed email address over the summer, please let Brenda in the office know. If your child's medical information or needs have changed please update the school accordingly.

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. Online cashless payment is available through the FunkyFrog app.

Nut allergy – There are children in our school who have 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 these children.

Confirmation We were delighted to see the pupils from 6th class 2019-2020 receive the Sacrament of Confirmation over two services on Saturday the 22nd of August. The children had a wonderful, prayerful celebration of the sacrament and we wish them every continued success as they move on to Secondary School.

Swift Boxes Installed – Thanks to Ballinabranna, Raheendoran, Milford Development Group and Padraig Webb from Birdwatch Ireland 3 Triple Swift nesting boxes were installed at the school over the summer. The swift is an amber listed bird of conservation concern in Ireland, their numbers have declined by 40% over the past 20 years, with loss of breeding places as the main threat to their survival. We will be keeping a close on the swift boxes and hope that some swifts will make them their home from May to August next year.

The project was jointly funded by Carlow County Council and the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment under the Community Environment Action Fund (Local Agenda 21) 2019.

John Tyndall Mural - This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of John Tyndall (1820-1893). Tyndall is a renowned scientist and mountaineer, born in Leighlinbridge, who attended primary school in Ballinabranna. As part of the celebrations Cllr. Ken Murnane, in association with Carlow County Council, has generously funded a mural on Ballinabranna school's gable wall to commemorate John Tyndall.

This project, led by Ken Murnane, Randal Dempsey and Siobhán Amond, began in the last school year, when they invited the school children to assist in designing a mural which would help all visitors to Ballinabranna to be aware of this important historical connection.

We are honoured to have Jennifer Murnane TD sponsor the prizes for the children with the winning designs. These will be presented in the coming school year.

From the pupils' responses, local artist Sheila Murray has created a wonderful, clear piece of art, which captures key information relating to Tyndall and his work. The paint for the project has been sponsored by The Paint Hub, Carlow. We are thrilled to see the completion of the mural this weekend.

GAA Return to School Training- We are delighted to welcome Carlow Games Development Officer Robert Samson to our school this Thursday to provide GAA coaching for all classes over the next 5 weeks. Thank you, Robert, and Carlow GAA.

Insurance – 24-hour pupil insurance is available from Allianz at the low cost of €9 per pupil. This cost has been included on the September Book Bill for each class. To avail of this cover please ensure that you have paid by the 25th of September. 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 website.

Public Service Agreement Hours Our school teaching staff worked the additional hours outside of the school day under the Public Service Agreement in 2019-2020 by:

- A planning day in August
 - Continuous Professional Development
 - First Aid Retraining
 - GAA 5 Star staff training
- Staff Meetings and Staff Planning
Teacher's Personal Preparation
Parent Teacher Meetings

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 Eddie O' Connor is the Deputy Designated Liaison Person. If you have any concerns about any Child Protection issue you can speak to these staff members.

Healthy Eating We encourage all children to eat a healthy lunch *every day*. 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 every day. This has a hugely positive impact on their ability to concentrate, learn and participate in class activities.

School Bags - Children only need to bring their lunchbox and drink to school each day in their school bag, please ensure that teddies and toys stay home for safekeeping.

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 class teacher or school to arrange an appointment and to outline the issue. We will be happy to meet with you where needed, whilst following the appropriate Covid-19 regulations.

Upcoming School Events First Holy Communion (3rd class) Sat 19th of September 2020 at 10am and 12 noon

School Calendar 2020-2021

School Closures :

October Midterm - closed Monday 26th - Fri 30th of October
Christmas - closed Wednesday 23rd Dec – Tuesday 5th Jan (reopens Wednesday 6th Jan 2020)
February Midterm - closed Thurs 18th and Fri 19th of February 2020
St. Patrick's Day - closed Wednesday 17th of March
Easter- closed Monday 29th of March to Fri 9th of April
May Bank Holiday - closed Monday 3rd of May to Friday 7th of May
June Bank Holiday - closed Monday 7th of June
Last day of school before summer holidays Fri 25th of June.