

# BALLINABRANNA NATIONAL SCHOOL

Milford

Co. Carlow

Roll No. 17756D

Registered Charity No: 20109301

Phone: 059 9146253

e-mail: [ballinabrannans@gmail.com](mailto:ballinabrannans@gmail.com)

## October 2020

**GAA** Thank you to Carlow GAA and Games Development Officer Robert Samson. The children are thoroughly enjoying the return to GAA training and practising their skills each Thursday. Robert will be with us for 5 weeks this term.

**John Tyndall Mural Prize Giving** – Weather permitting on October 9<sup>th</sup> we will welcome Jennifer Murnane O' Connor TD to the school to present the prizes she has sponsored for the children's mural design competition. The prize giving ceremony will be held outdoors on our basketball court, with only two class groups at a time. Thank you to Jennifer for her generous sponsorship of this project!

**National Tree Day** On National Tree Day, 6<sup>th</sup> class planted a tree that was kindly donated to our school for National Tree Day by Tetra Pak. As part of Tetra Pak Tree Day, up to 1,500 native tree saplings were made available for primary schools to plant on their grounds or in a pot in the classroom. Thank you to Ms Fitzharris for organising this.

**Stay Safe and RSE** – All of our classes will be taking part in the Stay Safe programme and learning about Relationships and Sexuality Education this term. Further details and free resources for parents to use to help support this learning at home can be found at <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/healthwellbeing/RSE> or [www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)

**Gardening** – 3<sup>rd</sup> class pods have been taking turns to work in our school's courtyard garden. They have been very busy, weeding, sweeping and planting. The garden is looking fantastic. Well done rang a trí!

**Parent Teacher Meetings** – Our formal parent teacher meetings will take place in February this year. If the meantime should 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.

**Split the Pot** – Our Split the Pot Draw resumes this Friday 9<sup>th</sup> of October. To enter just return the Split the Pot envelope with €2 inside it and your contact details on the front, there will be a box in each class to collect the envelopes. The draw will be held live on Facebook, the winner takes home half of any money collected with the remainder going directly to support the school. Additional envelopes for other family members/neighbours who would like to take part are always available if needed. Many thanks for your support!

**Homework** - This month will see a gentle return to homework for the children in our older classes. Each class teacher will talk to their class about what is expected from their class group and how to manage using and returning any school-books or copies safely.

You will see activities such as:

- Reading
- Practising Spellings
- Practising Tables/Mental Maths challenges.

From time to time online homework or challenges will be set, this will help the teacher to prepare the children for online work during any school closures.

Homework 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!

**Nut allergy** - A reminder that the school is a **nut-free zone** as there are children with life threatening allergies to nuts and nut products attending the school.

**HSE Hearing and Vision Screening** for Junior Infants take place on the 1st October. The HSE team will also see children who are due a follow up hearing or vision test.

**Teaching Placements** – Chloe O' Toole and Conor McGrath will undertake their school placement in our school over the next few months. Chloe will be working with Mr Breen in 5<sup>th</sup> class and Conor will work with Ms Hayden in Junior Infants. We wish them every success.

**Fairtrade and Covid-19.** The loss of livelihoods and the risk of unemployment for farmers and workers is deepening throughout the Global South. Farmers and workers are already among the world's poorest people, living in communities with weak or non-existent safety nets. This crisis is showing the critical role we all have (businesses, retailers and consumers) in supporting food security and ensuring the long-term resilience of our supply chains. Look out for the Fairtrade logo when shopping and support Fairtrade when you can!

**Covid-19 Information** - The HSE has issued guidance for parents which addresses the following issues:

- Symptoms to look out for and when to contact your GP
- When to keep your child at home and phone your GP
- When it's okay to send your child to school or childcare

You can access this guidance at the following link: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/protecting-your-child.html>

1. If your child becomes unwell at school and presents with symptoms associated with Covid-19, we will follow the procedure that is set out in our school's Covid-19 Response Plan. This involves bringing your child to a designated area called our "isolation room." We will contact you and ask you to collect your child as soon as possible. Please note that the school is not required to inform anyone that your child has been removed due to his/her symptoms. This procedure is purely precautionary.  
If you have other children in the school, they do not have to be removed from the school at this point. You are required to contact your GP to discuss concerns and we would ask that you keep the school updated on the advice given by your GP.  
The next steps will depend on the advice given to you by your GP.
2. If your child is referred for a test, all other members of the household that attend the school should remain at home.
3. If your child is confirmed positive for Covid-19, the HSE will begin the process of contact tracing. This will most likely mean that the school will be contacted to assess the Public Health Risk. From this point onwards, the process will be led by the Public Health HSE.
  - The school cannot take any action in relation to exclusion, part closure or full closure, unless the Public Health HSE determine that the action is required.
  - If any action of this nature is required, the HSE will liaise with the school to provide clear guidance to the school community.
  - If the school has not been contacted by the Public Health HSE in relation to a confirmed case in the school community, then contact with the school has not been deemed necessary.

It is a distressing time for families who are dealing with a suspected or confirmed case and all pupils and their families are entitled to confidentiality.

The school cannot and will not make the name of a pupil with a suspected or confirmed case known to the public.

Unfortunately, we have no control over exchanges on social media, where information based on hearsay is shared.

We would respectfully request that parents who choose to communicate about this issue on social media should consider how comments could be misinterpreted. Please refrain from naming pupils and their families on these platforms.

We will continue to implement the measures set out in the school's Covid-19 Response Plan to provide a safe learning environment for our pupils and a safe and healthy workplace for all our staff. We look forward to and thank you for your continued co-operation.

**Attendance/Punctuality** This year our top priority is everyone's health. While it is accepted that there is a direct link between school attendance and pupil progress, we must make exceptions this year. We thank you all for erring on the side of caution - keeping children home who are unwell, getting GP advice when the symptoms are on the Covid 19 list and observing all the guidelines around isolation etc. It will mean attendance figures will be lower. However, if we manage to keep the school open and keep each other well we are doing the right thing. Please keep letting us know details of all absences by email and thank you for following the protocols.

The school is obliged, by law, to inform Tusla when a pupil is absent for a total of 20 school days in one school year. As teachers have to fill in the category of absence when informing Tusla it is essential that an email is sent in after every absence explaining it. If absences are Covid-19 related (we will have all your email notes) this will be indicated to Tusla.

**Medical & Contact Information** – A reminder to parents that if your contact details have changed or your child's medical information has changed to please update the school immediately. If there has been a change in family circumstances, for example separation, please speak to the class teacher or principal in confidence.

**PE/Tracksuit Days** are currently as follows: (GAA training on Thursdays for 5 weeks for all)

Junior Infants Ms Hayden – Tuesday and Thursday

3rd class Ms Ní Cheallaigh – Tuesday and Thursday

Sen Infants Ms O' Gorman – Thursday

4<sup>th</sup> class Mr O' Connor – Tuesday and Thursday

1st class Ms Amond – Monday and Friday

5<sup>th</sup> class Mr Breen – Thursday and Friday

2<sup>nd</sup> class Ms Kehoe/ Ms Fitzharris – Wednesday and Thursday

6<sup>th</sup> class Ms Agars- Tuesday and Thursday

### Upcoming School Events

Halloween Dress Up Day  
October Midterm

Friday 23rd of October More details to follow  
Closed Monday 26<sup>th</sup> - Fri 30<sup>th</sup> October