



## NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As we begin the second half of term one and look towards the Christmas season, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents/guardians who attended our class curriculum evenings in September; the centenary Mass in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in October and the Parent Teacher meetings before the Halloween break. October was a brilliant month for our school with so many events including the fantastic exhibition of the children's work on the Church in the Community Centre, our Book Fair and the visit of Jason Mc Gahan and Colin Trainor with Sam Maguire, which was a particular highlight for all Gaelic enthusiasts. Hopefully Sam Maguire will return to Our Lady's, in the near future, decorated in the orange and white of Armagh. All these special occasions were brilliant experiences for our children and are available to view on our school website.

Please read the following important information regarding our school and planned events for the remainder of the half-term. Thanks.

**END OF YEAR SURVEYS:** At the end of the 21/22 school year, we completed surveys with pupils, parents and staff members. The results from the surveys were very positive regarding many aspects of our school which was very pleasing. Many of our children and parents acknowledged the dedication of our staff and the positive contribution they make to school life. The surveys identified the variety of learning and afterschool activities as strengths of our school as well as the very good facilities and the respectful relationships between all members of our school community, especially between staff and children.

The surveys also recommended areas for further development including a desire for a greater variety of afterschool activities, particularly ones that are not sporting related. An outdoor reading area was also on the wish list on the children's surveys as well as some fun activities such as a roller coaster or dog zoo. Parents also suggested that they would like: more Music teaching, training for staff on Autism and more communication regarding children's progress in school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents who completed the surveys. Your time, responses and suggestions are very much appreciated. We have already started to work towards making some of these improvements to our school. We have purchased new tables for outside the P3 and P4 classrooms so that the children can read or draw during play times. Our School/ECO Council are currently carrying out a survey with our pupils regarding what afterschool activities they currently enjoy and what new activities they would like to be available for afterschool. We plan to host a fun family day in term 2 or term 3 to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We hope to have some fun activities organised for this event. Miss Holland, our new Primary One teacher, will teach Music in all our Primary 4-7 classes over the course of the school year on a Thursday afternoon. We have arranged Autism training for all teachers and classroom assistants on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> January with Autism NI. Regarding communication on children's progress in school we have already facilitated face to face Curriculum evenings for all classes in September. Our teachers met face to face with parents at the end of October for our annual parent teacher meetings. Parents may also contact the school to speak to a teacher afterschool on a Tuesday or Thursday if they have any queries regarding their child's progress. I have also included teachers email addresses below if you wish to email a teacher. Teachers have been directed to only respond to emails during school hours. During term 2

we hope to facilitate another contact between parents and teachers although we haven't established how this will be done, yet. Parents will receive an end of year written report as normal at the end of June.

I hope you will acknowledge that we have took on board the views of all members of our school community as we aspire to deliver high standards of teaching and learning in a safe and secure school environment for all children.

**Teacher's email addresses:**

**Primary One - Ms Loughran:** [nloughran844@c2kni.net](mailto:nloughran844@c2kni.net)

**Primary One - Mis Holland:** [cholland190@c2kni.net](mailto:cholland190@c2kni.net)

**Primary Two - Mrs Dillon:** [kdillon751@c2kni.net](mailto:kdillon751@c2kni.net)

**Primary Three - Miss Quinn:** [rquinn395@c2kni.net](mailto:rquinn395@c2kni.net)

**Primary Four - Mrs Mc Cloy:** [amccloy737@c2kni.net](mailto:amccloy737@c2kni.net)

**Primary Five - Mrs O'Hara:** [kohara636@c2kni.net](mailto:kohara636@c2kni.net)

**Primary Six - Mr Mc Cusker:** [rmccusker298@c2kni.net](mailto:rmccusker298@c2kni.net)

**Primary Seven - Mr Forker:** [aforker354@c2kni.net](mailto:aforker354@c2kni.net)

**Principal/SENCo – Mr Mc Kee:** [tmckee362@c2kni.net](mailto:tmckee362@c2kni.net)

**SCHOOL/ECO COUNCIL:** Congratulations to our School/Eco Councillors who were elected by their peers at the end of October. I am certain they will be excellent representatives and ambassadors for our school. They are; Aoife Hughes (Chairperson), Meabh O'Callaghan (Vice-Chairperson), Emma Girvan (Secretary), Nuala Jordan (Assistant Secretary), Tomás Mc Allister (Treasurer), Cormac O'Hara (Assistant Treasurer), Carly Donaghy and Simon Rennie (PROs), Conor Rice and Jack Mc Anallen (Timekeepers), Aoife Campbell, Eimear Donnelly, Sáerlaith Conlon, Anna-Mae Connolly, Lochlainn Kelly, Cara Duggan and Daniel Crudden (Class Energy Monitors). They will be very busy during November: completing an afterschool survey, leading our anti-bullying week activities, and planning our Ditch the Dark Day.

**BOOKFAIR:** There was a brilliant turnout at our Book Fair during October. Thank you for all your generous contributions. The school will receive **£1150** worth of book vouchers to purchase new reading books for our reading schemes or class libraries which should enhance the children's reading experiences.

**KNAPPAGH:** A book on Knappagh House and Estate by Dr. Máiread Terris is available to purchase. Please contact the school if you would like to purchase a copy. Thanks.

**AFTERSCHOOL/EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

**Transfer Class:** Finished last week. Well done to all the children who attended afterschool transfer class and a huge thank you to Mr Mc Cusker and Mr Forker for facilitating this year's classes.

**Fiddle:** P4-P7 children on a Monday.

**Street Dance with Suzie:** PE for some classes on a Monday; P2/3 and P5-P7 afterschool class.

**Swimming:** P7 on a Wednesday.

**Gaelic football:** P6 & P7 children on a Wednesday.

**Uni Hockey/Basketball:** P2/3 and P4/5 on a Thursday.

**Irish Language:** P4, P5 and P6 on a Friday.

**PARENTPAY:** Please keep up to date with all school payments. Thanks. Please contact the school office if you need support with payments. All communication will be dealt with the strictest confidentiality.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**ODD SOCKS DAY:** Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November will be an 'Odd Socks Day' to conclude our Anti-Bullying week activities. The theme of Anti-Bullying week is 'Reaching Out'. We will encourage all our children to reach out to others this week and in the future.

**NOVEMBER MASS:** Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November will be a special Mass for all our loved ones who have passed away. P1-P7 children will attend Mass @10am.

**P1-P3 MATHSEEDS PARENTS INFORMATION SESSION:** On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November @7pm Ms Loughran will host an online Mathseeds Information Night for **P1-P3 parents**. It is very important that at least one parent joins this session to learn how Mathseeds can assist children with their understanding of Numeracy in P1-P3.

**PRIMARY 3 REMEMBRANCE ASSEMBLY:** Primary 3 children will hold their Remembrance Assembly for deceased family members on **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November at 1.30pm in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tullysaran.**

**P5-P7 CONFESSIONS:** P5-P7 children will attend **Confessions** in school on **Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November.**

**DITCH THE DARK DAY:** We will be hosting an early morning walk/cycle/scoot to school and hot breakfast for children and adults on **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December.** More details will follow but please put this early morning date into your diary. Thank-you.

**SCHOOL PANTO TRIPS:** **Reception/Primary 1, 2, 3 & 4** - Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December, Armagh Market Place to see '**Cinderella**'; **Primary 5, 6 & 7** - Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December, Grand Opera House Belfast to see '**Cinderella**'; Further details of cost and times will be sent out next week.

**FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION:** There will be a **Special Mass** celebrated by Bishop Router in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Tullysaran **@10am on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December.** P1-P7 children will attend.

**OPEN EVENING FOR NEW PUPILS IN 2023/24:** Our first face-to-face **Open Night** since 2019 will take place in school on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December** between **7pm and 8pm.** Please spread the word among new families in the area who may consider Our Lady's as a suitable school for their child(ren). Open Night is aimed primarily at parents of children who would like to enrol their child(ren) in our Reception or P1 class in September 2023. However, everyone is most welcome to attend, especially those who have never visited our school before.

**CHRISTMAS DINNER:** Christmas dinner is scheduled for **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December.** The school will provide a **FREE Christmas dinner** for all children who wish to take a dinner this year. Children are invited to come to school in their own clothes wearing a Christmas jumper, hat or festive clothing. **All children will go home at 1 pm to facilitate our staff Christmas lunch. There will be no buses operating at home time (1pm). Thank you for your anticipated co-operation with these arrangements.**

**CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCES:** **Primary 1 & 2** Christmas Performances are scheduled to take place on **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December @ 1.30pm.** There will be a raffle at the Christmas Performances with all donations going in support of the '**Make a Wish**' Foundation (Donation of raffle prizes would be greatly appreciated. Thanks).

**CHRISTMAS MASS:** On **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December** **P1-P7** children will attend a Christmas Mass in the Immaculate Conception Church, Tullysaran **@10am.**

**CHRISTMAS BREAK:** School closed on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December @ 12 noon (no dinners or buses available).** Children will return to school on **Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2023.**

Staff have once again requested that parents/guardians should not purchase gifts for them this Christmas. We would stress this without reservation. Staff have always appreciated the kindness shown to them over the years however we feel, parents/guardians have enough expenses throughout the year, and we are grateful for all the support you give to the school.

Please drive and park safely around our school at drop off and collection times and be respectful of residents' properties close to our school. Please also contact the school if you have any queries or concerns. All the events will be on our school website calendar and a text message will be sent out if there are any changes to our plans. Thank you for your continued support.

Take care and all the best

*Tomás McKee*

**Mr Tomás McKee**

**Principal**