

Tús maith, leath na h-oibre

**St. Joseph's National School,
Leitrim Village,
Co Leitrim.
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Theme for School Year 2020 – 2021
“Childhood is a journey, not a race”

Principal: Richella Kelly Deputy Principal: Siobhán Finnegan McElgunn

3rd December 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Important Dates

Christmas Holidays:

School Closing @12 noon on Tuesday 22nd December 2020. (Children may wear a Christmas jumper to school on this day. Optional so school uniform is also acceptable)

School Re-opening: **Wednesday 6th January 2021**

Admission Closing Date: **14th January 2021**

Thank You

Thank you for your support and co-operation to date with our measures to combat the spread of Covid 19, keeping it out of the school and keeping the school open. If your child is unwell please keep him/ her at home. Please make contact with the school on the first day of your child's absence so we can record the reason for his/her absence on Aladdin (our digital Roll Book). Please complete an Absence Sheet (either hard copy or electronically) when your child returns to school.

Please ensure that your child/ children bring a **coat** to school every day. We aim, if at all possible, to get fresh air every day. If your child's coat does not have a hood, please ensure that he/ she brings a hat to school. Thank you for your co-operation in relation to this.

Christmas 2020

As we cannot hold any Christmas Concerts or a Carol Service this year class teachers have decided to record some of the songs children are learning in class. If you have not already done so, please return the consent form to allow this to take place. Teachers will then e-mail the recordings to you. We hope you enjoy them. You are asked not to upload these recordings or post them to any social media site. Any breached of this will result in the school not undertaking any such work in the future.

Letter Writing/ Card Writing

This year we are continuing to work on writing genres as part of our school self-evaluation plan. We took a slight deviation from our plan for pupils to write letters and cards to patients in St. Patrick's Hospital, Carrick-on-Shannon, people in the area availing of the Meals on Wheels programme, grandparents and neighbours cocooning and people availing of the Leitrim Calling service. Pupils and the recipients really enjoyed this project.

SSPS and Child Safeguarding Level 1 Inspection

On Thursday 19th November school DES inspector Teresa McSorley visited the school to carry out an inspection on Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling (SSPS) and a Child Protection Level 1 inspection. In short the inspector looked at all the measures in place in the school to combat the spread of Covid 19. The school met all DES criteria in relation to both aspects of this inspection. The BOM will upload the full report on the school website when allowed to do so.

Congratulations!

Well done to everyone that participated in the **Barna Recycling Halloween Colouring Competition**.

Congratulations to the following pupils who won a €20 Smyths Gift Card: -

Daniel Noone and Anna Griffin in Senior Infants, Oisín Byrne, Ava Moffatt and Eva Browne, First Class, Alex Kopec and Poppy Doherty, Fourth Class.

Well done to everyone that participated in the **Carrick-on-Shannon, Credit Union Art Competition**.

Congratulation to the following pupils in Second class who won prizes: - Ryan McWeeney, Eleanor Cuffe, Finn Quinlan, Darcy Reynolds, Liam Farrell and Conor Keane. Ryan's and Darcy's artwork will go forward to the next level of the competition. Best of luck!

Congratulations to Amy and April Gilchrist along with their pet who feature in the 3rd and 4th class Folens Christmas Annual, Siamsa. Congratulations to Alex and Toni O'Looney for their Sean Nós performance on 'Réalta agus Gaolta' on TG4 on Sunday 22nd November.

A large number of pupils have participated in various competitions and these have been discussed and acknowledged in class. A large number of pupils are being very creative at home and have shared their artwork and creations with their class. Congratulations and well done to all.

BOM Review and Ratification of School Plans and Policies

Last week the BOM ratified the following school policies, which can all be found on the school website, www.leitrim-ns.ie: -

- Remote Learning Plan
- Child Safeguarding Policy and Risk Assessment
- Stay Safe Policy
- RSE Policy

Also please find attached official notification of the annual Child Safeguarding Review

Aldi Prize

In September a sub committee was formed to decide how best to spend the Aldi Prize of €50, 000. The sub-committee met and recommended that an architect be employed to draw up a plan for the school yard. The BOM appointed Enda McKiernan. You will be updated as work continues on drawing up a plan and spending this fantastic prize.

Admission for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Our Admission process for the 2021- 2022 school year is now open. You will find all the information you need (Admission Policy, Application Form for Admission and Annual Admission Notice) on the Admission Tab of the school website, www.leitrim-ns.ie. You can also request an Application Form for Admission from the school. The closing date for admissions for the 2021 – 2022 school year will be **14th January 2021**. There will be 27 places available for Junior Infants again next year.

Please note that returning a completed application form with a copy of your child's birth cert and utility bill does not guarantee a place in the school. In the event that the school is over- subscribed

the Admission Policy will be adhered to in allocating places. Should this arise parents have the right to seek an appeal

Reminders

Morning/afternoon supervision and parking outside the school

The B.O.M. want to remind all parents that morning and afternoon supervision is not provided in the school. Children on school grounds before 9.10am and/or after 3pm (2pm for pupils in Junior and Senior Infants) are the responsibility of their parents. The B.O.M. will not take any responsibility for any child on school grounds before 9.10am and/or after 3pm (2pm infants). The school doors now open at 9:10 a.m. for facilitate staggered entry into the school. Class begins at 9:20 a.m. for all pupils.

All parking outside the school is reserved for school staff. While a small number are specifically reserved all parking spaces are necessary for school staff. If parents decide to park outside the school staff may not have a parking space and may be late for school trying to find an alternative parking space. Please do not park outside the school any morning or at 3 p.m.

In addition to this you are reminded not to park in the bus space. If cars park in the bus space the bus cannot safely park and the safety of the children travelling to school on the bus is compromised.

Break time and classroom ventilation

All pupils in school will go to the yard for break times. This year we are striving to get as much fresh air as possible so it's very important that your child bring a coat to school every day. All classroom windows are opened while children are outside for breaks. Teachers use their professional judgements and may have to open a window or two before break time to ensure there is an adequate supply of fresh air circulating in the classrooms during class time. We are striving to achieve a balance between a comfortable classroom environment and sufficient ventilation. The heat is adjusted accordingly in most classrooms but it's very difficult to regulate the temperature in the prefab classrooms. Additional electric heaters are provided which teachers will use at their discretion.

If it is very wet or the yard covered with snow, very stormy etc then all pupils must stay inside for health and safety reasons. We cannot accommodate requests for individual pupils to stay in at break time if they have a chest infection, bad asthma or broken bones etc. If your child is in school, then he/she will go to the yard. Some pupils will be encouraged to sit on a bench on the yard if they are injured or advised not to play.

Birthday Invitations/Christmas Cards

You are reminded that pupils are **not** allowed exchange birthday invitations (or Christmas cards) on school grounds. This is clearly stated in our Admission Form and parents have been reminded via communication letters.

Gifts to Teachers

Teachers ask parents **not** to give gifts to teachers at Christmas. We wish to express thanks for gifts received in the past but feel that this is an unnecessary expense for parents. If you wish you may make a donation to a local charity such as "Billy's World", Saint Vincent de Paul or others instead of giving a gift to a teacher. There is no obligation on you to do so.

Christmas Holidays

The school will close for Christmas at **12 noon on Tuesday 22nd December**. The School bus will collect children at 12 noon. If your child does not travel to school by bus, please make arrangements to collect your child at 12 noon on that day. The school will re-open on **Wednesday 6th January 2021**.

Children have the option of wearing a **Christmas jumper** to school on **Tuesday 22nd December** instead of their school uniform. This is optional so pupils can also wear their school uniform as usual.

End of Term

This has been a term like no other in living memory in the school. Due to new measures and routines in place to combat the spread of Covid 19 pupils couldn't engage in many of what were usual activities. Pupils have adjusted very well to the new routines.

The following is a resumé of the main events and activities that took place in the school since September 2020: -

- New routines in the school to combat the spread of Covid 19: - Staggered opening and exit from the school, staggered break times, new rules for visitors to the school
- Staff changes: We welcomed Ms Kilkenny, Ms McManus, Ms Bruen and Mr Corcoran to our teaching staff.
- Communication letters all sent via e-mail this year (also uploaded to the school website, www.leitrim-ns.ie)
- Maths Week activities, see school website and 'facebook' page for photos of activities.
- Barna Recycling Colouring Competition
- Dress up for Halloween – Friday 23rd October.
- 6th Class hoodies
- Science Week activities, see school website and 'facebook' page for photos of activities
- RSE programme delivered to 6th class pupils
- Friendship week, Monday 16th November, see school website and 'facebook' page for photos of activities.
- Letter writing: Pupils wrote letters/ sent cards to patients in St. Patrick's hospital, people availing of meals on wheels and Leitrim Calling services, grandparents and neighbours cocooning.
- Board of Management reviewed a number of important school plans and policies including: - Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment, Stay Safe Plan, RSE Policy, Remote Learning Plan, Covid 19 Response Plan, Code of Behaviour, Supervision Policy, Admission Policy, Critical Incidents Policy, Health and Safety Policy and Risk Assessment, EPV Days Policy. The board will continue to review more plans and policies in term two.
- DES SSPS and Child Safeguarding Level 1 inspection on Thursday 19th November. The school met all DES criteria in relation to both inspections.
- County Photos visited the school on 2nd December to take photographs of children in Junior Infants and Sixth Class
- BOM purchased a Christmas Annual for every pupil in the school
- Stay Safe Programme taught in every class during term 1.
- Christmas songs recorded in classrooms, e-mailed to parents.

On behalf of the Board of Management and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. I wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely

Richella Kelly

RICHELLA KELLY
PRINCIPAL