



Ballinamere National School

Newsletter

September 2018

Welcome

Welcome to the new academic year. We hope it turns out to be a pleasant and stress free time for you and your child. In particular, we extend a very warm welcome to our new pupils and staff who have joined us this year. We are delighted with how well and how quickly our new Infants have settled. They have already flown the safety of the nest (the basketball court) at break time and are happily playing in the school yard.

Our Staff for 2018/2019 is as follows

Principal: Deirdre Cusack

Deputy Principal: Mary Margaret Guinan

Junior Infants Teacher: Fiona Brennan

Senior Infants Teacher: Johanne Hogan

First Class Teacher: Mary Margaret Guinan

Second Class Teacher: Alison Quinn

Third Class Teacher: Bríd Murphy

Fourth Class Teacher: Claire O'Sullivan

Fifth Class Teacher: Mary Guest

Sixth Class Teacher: Evelyn Brennan

*Ms. Alison Quinn, our Second Class teacher, is currently on maternity leave. Ms. Lisa Buggy is filling this vacancy. Also, Ms. Niamh Mullen is covering for Ms Mary Margaret Guinan who is recovering from a minor mishap.

Support Teachers

Susan Fitzsimons

Maeve O'Donovan

Mike Forde

Esker Autism Centre

Emer Boland

Deirdre Sheridan

Oran Fahey

SNAs

Siobhan Gorman, Michelle O'Brien, Mary O'Toole, Liz Molloy, Sharon Hctor, Yvonne Tierney, Breda Hackett, Evelyn Maloney, Geraldine O'Gorman, Keith Mealiffe, Sylvia Lynam.

*Sylvia Lynam has joined our staff in a part time capacity. We extend a very warm welcome to her.

Visiting Music Teacher: Majella Killeen

Secretaries: Dolores Molloy and Ann Marie Quinn

Cleaner: Maria Daly

Caretaker: Greg Cusack

Baby News

Congratulations to Evelyn Brennan and Alison Quinn who both welcomed baby daughters during our last school year. Congratulations also to Oran Fahey who welcomed a baby son over the school holidays.

Procedures

- School hours are from 9.15am to 3pm. Junior and Senior Infants hours are 9.15am to 2.00pm. Punctuality before and after school is very important. **Late arrivals can cause disruption to class timetabling and work.** We strongly recommend that children not be dropped excessively early or left waiting excessively long as **the Board of Management cannot accept responsibility.**

If your child travels to school by bus, please inform bus drivers if he/she is not travelling i.e. if they are sick or have alternative arrangements. Failure to notify bus drivers causes anxiety and delay

We also request that children participating in after school activities e.g. camogie / football training be collected on time. Failure to do so causes unnecessary delay and hassle for those involved.

- Parents should drop/collect all children, including infants, at school gate. This allows for closer monitoring of people on school grounds and fosters a greater level of independence. Children to use rear doors for entry to and exit from school. Considerable additional parking spaces beyond the school are now accessible. The Board of Management has completed work outside the school to extend the footpath which links up with this parking area. Please make use of these parking spaces and advise your child to use the footpath.
- Parents who need to collect children **during school hours** please come to front door. Parents / Guardians collecting children during school hours will be required to complete a 'Signing Out Book'. Children will not be permitted to wait outside front door / gate unaccompanied. For security reasons, a coded lock has been installed at the front door. Please ring bell for entry.
Please note if you are collecting a child during school hours and have other toddlers/babies in the car you are welcome to park near front door to eliminate the need to take toddlers/babies out of car.
- Parents are welcome to discuss any concerns they may have about their child. In order to facilitate this please make an appointment for before or after school hours. It would be appreciated if an indication of the purpose of the meeting could be given.

All pupils must have slippers for indoor wear. Our change of footwear policy has been a significant factor in the maintenance of our beautiful school and we thank you for your support.

Children should wear full uniform at all times unless requested to do otherwise by class teacher. Tracksuits to be worn on P.E. days only. **PLAIN navy tracksuit bottoms** may be worn but branded tracksuit bottoms e.g. 'Canterbury' or other branded names are **not** to be worn. Please respect the above procedures. They are in place to ensure the smooth running of class and school. All children should have black/navy slippers for indoor use.

Parental Contribution

To support the school in meeting ever increasing costs we politely ask for parents to make a contribution. This contribution helps cover the cost of

Pupil insurance
Standardised tests
Art and craft materials
Music lessons (1st to 6th classes)
Buses to sports events
Photocopying
Classroom resources
I.T. purchase and maintenance

The rates are as follows:

- €40 per child in Junior and Senior Infants
- €70 per child from First to Sixth Class
- €150 max per family

The option to pay electronically via DebaPay will be available over the coming days. For those parents who are new to the system you will receive an email requesting bank details and a password. Once these details have been entered all future requests will require password only to approve. Please contact the school if you have any queries.

Parents of **new pupils who have not paid Book Rental for 2018/19 will be contacted shortly with the option of paying via DebaPay.*

New PCs

Over the summer holidays the school invested in eighteen new PCs for our computer room. These new PCs and our Fibre Broadband connection, which was also installed over the holidays, constitute a significant investment in our school digital infrastructure.

Policies

Copies of curriculum and organisational policies are available in the school on request. Some policies can also be viewed on the school website www.ballinamerens.ie.

Healthy Eating Policy

We strongly encourage parents to adhere to our Healthy Eating Policy. Please see Policy on school website.

Last year some pupils in 4th class made a representation to the Principal for stronger enforcement of our policy. Their recommendation included the banning of the following:

- ALL biscuits, cakes, buns including homemade ones
- Nutella and Nutella products
- Chocolate Corner yoghurts and all dessert yoghurts
- Fruit Winders
- Cereal Bars
- Jelly

The staff have also made a recommendation!

They have requested that pupils not bring popcorn or frubes as more often than not they end up on the floor.

Also, we have a number of children with nut allergies in the school. We would greatly appreciate if children were not given nuts or nut products as part of their lunch. We will be creating awareness in the classes as part of S.P.H.E programme so that other children understand this condition

All of the above proposals received full support from our pupils. Your children have indicated strongly that they want to eat healthily in school. We are asking ALL parents to support their children in this healthy lifestyle choice. This option has never been easier with a vast range of breads, crackers, fruits, vegetables, cheeses and meats now available.

Re-usable bottles are preferable to cartons which cannot be sealed and add to waste. Pupils are encouraged to bring home their own waste and recycle / compost as appropriate.

Property

PLEASE LABEL all children's clothing and personal belongings. Every effort will be made to return found items which are clearly labelled to their owners. Unclaimed clothing will be accessible in the school foyer at regular intervals over the year e.g. Parent Teacher meetings, school holidays.

GAA

Football training for boys and girls from 4th to 6th class began this week in the school and will continue every Monday from 3pm to 4pm up to Mid Term break. A sincere thank you to Alan Scully who is coaching at these sessions.

Irish Dancing

Ann Allen, grandmother to Maeve and Sam Jordan has very kindly volunteered to teach Irish dancing to our pupils in 2nd to 5th class. We are very appreciative and look forward to some fine footwork displays!!!

After School Club

Our After School Club is up and running and working very well for all concerned. A small number of places are still available. Please contact Claire O'Sullivan if you are interested.

School Calendar

Please see attached list of days off during the year. Standardised tests will be administered between the 20th May and the 7th June 2019. If at all possible please ensure that your child is at school at this time. Tests are given in a class setting and we cannot guarantee that an alternative time will be arranged. Thanking you for your co-operation.

We hope that 2018/19 will be a healthy and happy academic year for our entire school community.

The Staff

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School Calendar 2018 / 2019

30th Aug	School re-opens
18 th , 19 th , 20 th Sept	School closed for Ploughing Championship
26 th Oct	Presidential Election
29 th Oct-2 nd Nov	Mid Term Break
21 st Dec	School closes for Christmas Holidays
7 th Jan	School reopens
18 th Feb-22 nd Feb	Mid Term Break
18 th Mar	St Patrick's weekend Bank holiday
12 th April	School closes for Easter Holidays
29 th April	School reopens
6 th May	May Bank Holiday
3 rd June	June Bank Holiday
27 th June	School closes for Summer Holidays

Parents Association

Clothing Collection

We are having a clothes collection Friday, 28th September. Bags may be dropped to the school at school opening time or on the evening of Thursday 27th from 7pm to 7.30pm. We will take all your new and used unwanted clothing, shoes, belts, handbags, linens, household textiles etc. No duvets, pillows, cushions or soft toys, socks or underwear. Thank you for your support as this continues to be a valuable fundraiser for the school.

Christmas Cards

This year the school will again participate in the Christmas Cards for Schools fundraiser. For parents unfamiliar with the process, in the classroom each child designs his/her own Christmas card. The children produce their work on a template which is then sent to the printing company. Parents are provided with one printed card (their own child's design) as a proof and can place an order. Cards come in a pack of 10. This fundraiser involves a huge amount of work for the teachers so a big 'thank you' in advance from the Parents Association.

Easter Cake Sale

For the past couple of years we have held an Easter cake sale in the school. This also has proven to be a worthwhile fundraiser. Details will follow at a later date.

AGM

The Parents Association AGM will be held on Tuesday 25th September in the school at 8.00pm. All are welcome.

