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**School Newsletter**

**Newsletter 6 - March 2024**

**Board of Management News**

The next Board of Management meeting takes place at the end of March. The Board will be conducting its annual review of Child Protection at this meeting. If any parent wishes to provide feedback to the Board in relation to the school’s compliance with the child safeguarding requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools they are welcome to do so. Any submission should be addressed to the Secretary Board of Management with the title Child Protection Review by 14.30 on Tuesday 19th March.

**Confirmation/First Penance**

Congratulations to our pupils in 6th class who made their Confirmation on Friday 23rd February. Our thanks to Fr. Simon and Mr. Brennan for assisting them in their preparations.

Our 2nd class pupils will make their First Penance on Monday 11th March in The Church of the Assumption, The Heath at 6pm. Holy Communion will take place on Saturday 20th April at 12.00 in The Church of the Assumption.

**GAA**
The GAA season will be back up and running in The Heath GAA in the coming weeks.
Remind your children to keep an eye on The Heath GAA noticeboard in the school for news, photos, competitions and training times.

Our club coach Paul continues with his weekly class football sessions on Thursdays and Fridays in the school. School hurling/camogie training has commenced and Cumann na mBunscol matches will commence after Easter.

**Chess/Draughts**

Well done to our 6th class pupils who recently participated in the annual Rock NS Chess competition. Chess has been taking place on Tuesday lunchtimes since the start of this term and we our now in the middle of our school Chess league. Our annual class draught tournaments are also taking place at present and are nearing a conclusion. Well done to all the pupils in 1st-6th classes for taking part. The school draughts championship will begin once the class leagues conclude with the top eight players in 3rd to 6th playing to be the 2024 school champion.

**Computer Classes**

Computer classes for 3rd-6th are on-going and will run until Easter. Parents are reminded that there is only one payment for computers of €50 this year. If you have not paid yet, please do so before Easter. Once again this year the computer classes have been of great assistance to pupils.

**Keeping Children Safe Online**

Safer internet day also took place recently. The main aim is to raise awareness around the area of proper internet usage for children. All classes were spoken to with regard to internet safety & mobile phone usage by school staff and our computer teacher, Sue, from Riomhaire Tech. Areas addressed included, the taking and uploading of photographs, safeguarding personal information, cyberbullying, social media usage and playing age appropriate games. As a result of these talks many children divulged information which is very concerning and the school is asking all parents to help us protect all our children by:

1. Conduct a review this month of your child’s online usage.
2. Not purchasing a mobile phone for their child until 6th class.
3. Ensuring that all online activity is monitored at home. While many parents tell us their child doesn’t have a mobile phone they are able to access the internet through PS4s, xBoxes, iPads, Tablets, TVs etc.
4. Checking to see if your child is part of any online class group. If they are please remove them from these groups, delete the group and inform your child that they are not to participate in class groupings. None of our children need to be part of groups on Snapchat, Just Talk Kids, Whatsapp etc. Research tells us that group chats result in cyberbullying, confusion regarding content shared, exclusion and general tension and upset within the class setting. Children and young people may be exposed to inappropriate or upsetting and harmful content within group settings and this is being reported to our school on an increasingly regular basis with parents often unaware when contacted by the school.
5. Reinforcing the message with their children that once something is posted or sent, they lose control over who sees it, anyone can share it and manipulate it and it is stored indefinitely by the platforms even though children delete it off their own device.

**School Photographer**

Our school photographer will visit the school on Thursday 21st March. If you wish to have your child photographed please return the booking sheet by Monday 11th March. If you require further details, please contact the school office. A group photograph of 6th class will be taken on the day. Please ensure your child wears their full school uniform on the day.

**Parents Council**

The Parents Council have been working with the school to brighten up and provide extra resources on the infant yard this year. The most recent addition has been the two new play houses. We would like to thank Niall Heffernan, one of our parents in the school, who not alone took on the task of making the houses but also sponsored them. Many thanks to Niall for his generosity.

The Parents Council will hold a Clothing Collection from 8th - 10th April. If you have any clothes you no longer need please drop them into the school on these dates. Many thanks to the parents who supported the Parents Council annual Table Quiz in Treacys over €1,000 was raised on the night. Our thanks also to Seamus Mulhare for acting as quiz master on the night.

**Student Council News**

The Student Council is busy at present with Seachtain na Gaeilge which runs over the next fortnight. Our Lá Glas is on Friday 15th March when all children are encouraged to wear green clothes to school to bring our Gaeilge fortnight to a close.

**Junior Infant Enrolment**

Enrolment for next year’s junior infant class is now complete. A meeting for new parents will be held towards the end of May. Parents will be notified in advance. Again this year the school was oversubscribed with in excess of fifty applications.

**Debating**

Congratulations to our debating team who were narrowly defeated in the Laois Schools Debating final against Ballyadams N.S. in Laois Education Centre. Great credit to Mr. Maher and Mr. Brennan for all their work preparing the children over the last four months.

**Laois Today Schools QuizCast**

Well done to our quiz team which reached the Laois Today Schools QuizCast final held in the Dunamaise Theatre last Friday. The quiz is available to watch on Laois Today.

**Hot School Meals**

Thanks to parents for the great response to our Hot School Meals survey. As a result of the very positive feedback the Board of Management has approved the trialling of the programme in the last term and in the next school year. The Lunch Bag has been selected by the school as the company to provide the service. Parents will already be aware of the company who currently provide a cold lunch to pupils. Attached is a letter from the company outlining the service they will be providing. Preparatory works will begin over Easter and parents will be invited to participate in the last term once the service is ready.

The school will send the names of all children to the Lunch Bag for the setting up of the service next week. If you do not want your child’s name to be sent please contact the school before next Monday 11th March.

The Lunch Bag will also be seeking to hire and train a local person to heat and distribute the meals in the school each day. If any parent is interested or knows of someone who is please contact the school office and the school will pass on your details to the company.

**Upcoming Events**

* Cumann na mBunscol Schools Quiz – Wednesday 6th March
* FAI 5 a side Schools Tournament – Thursday 7th March
* First Penance – Monday 11th March
* Cumann na mBunscol Schools Cross Country – Wednesday 13th March
* Lá Glas – Friday 15th March
* The Heath St. Patricks Day Parade – Sunday 17th March
* Bank Holiday – Monday 18th March
* School Photographer – Thursday 21st March
* Easter Holidays – Friday 22nd March

**Referendum**

The school will be closed this Friday 8th March to facilitate its use as a polling station.

**Easter Camp**

Ms. Daly and Mr. Maher are running an Easter camp on Tuesday 26th, Wednesday 27th and Thursday 28th. Details are available from the office.

**Easter Holidays**

The Easter holidays will commence on Friday 22nd March with school closing at 12.00. The school will re-open on Monday 8th April.