



St Patrick's National School,
Ballinamuck, Co Longford

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Dear Parents /Guardians

It is Christmas time with a difference for all of us this year but nonetheless we are looking forward to the time out to relax with family and extended family within the regulations with which we have to comply.

It's been a challenging first term with many changes thrust upon us due to COVID-19 but my thanks and gratitude is extending to my teaching staff and ancillary staff for their efforts to ensure everything operated seamlessly on a day-to-day basis for the children. We have to do our best to keep our school community safe and we ask for your continued patience with us as we follow and implement the guidelines as directed and updated regularly by the DOE and the HSE. Thanks to yourselves for your understanding, acceptance, and cooperation with these new changes.

In the last few weeks, our redesigned website is up and running. We thank particularly Ms Yvonne Gavican who put a lot of work into the website and reviewing it as it progressed.

(www.ballinamuckns.ie). We hope the website will showcase our children's talents and achievements. It will also be a useful learning and informative tool for the entire school.

Enrolment forms for the next academic year 2021/2022 are available to download from the website and we welcome all applications. Also available on the site is an "**Absence Note**" and we urge you to download and submit this form for any days'/part days your child is absent. Another useful and important link especially in these difficult times is the parish website address which can be found at the bottom of the homepage. We plan on keeping the site updated with all school events and activities and it will also contain useful links for you as Parents and Guardians.

At the start of the New Year, it is Father Bernard Hogan's intention to have a prayer service in the 5th & 6th classroom in preparation for the sacrament of **Confirmation**.

We want to congratulate Clodagh Tully in fifth class who has just donated her lovely long hair to The Rapunzel Foundation, where it will be used to create a wig for children who suffer from hair loss. Clodagh is also raising funds for Make-A-Wish Ireland, as she hopes that her efforts will help a child forget about their illness for a little while. Please support Clodagh's sponsored haircut by donating online through a link on the school website.

Thank you for your tremendous support for our Christmas Raffle. The draw will take place tomorrow morning through video link set up to respect COVID HSE guidelines and to enable all classes to view in the safety of their own bubble. Particular thanks to all our local companies who have provided the prizes this year and we would encourage you to support them also if and when feasible. They are as follows –

1. Chapter One - Cavan

2. Ciaran Hourican Construction
3. Brendan Larkin – Larkin Windows
4. Deirdre’s Beauty Studio – Deirdre McEvoy
5. Eclipse Hair Salon – Caroline Martin
6. Corrigan Fuel Services
7. McNally Engineering
8. Carrigy Buses
9. Mark Cunningham

And to Mary McKenna who kindly baked a beautiful Christmas cake to raffle.

Subject to the lifting of restrictions in the new year, we intend to invite a local GAA development officer into the school to begin GAA coaching at all class levels with the proviso that all health and safety guidelines are adhered to.

On my own personal behalf

Thank you all very much for welcoming me into your school community. Thank you for your patience and support. We have had to be flexible in the way we do things and have adapted as best we can to our ever changing environment. We have been faced with challenges but all the time have endeavoured to put the health and safety of your child to the fore. A word of thanks to the children for their resilience and for being so adaptive when it comes to their learning. It is my intention to respect the tradition of the school and go ahead with events as has been the way in the past but only if safe to do so. I am conscious of the children's lived experience in school. I will work towards making school life as fun as possible over the coming months with the aim of creating the correct balance where children use all their talents and skills to the best of their abilities. Hopefully as restrictions are lifted and our working environment becomes safer we can return to a more natural way of teaching and learning.

Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir

Damien McIntrye
School Principal

A few dates to note are as follows –

- **Tuesday 22nd December – school closes at 12 noon for Christmas Holidays***
- **Wednesday 6th January - school reopens after Christmas break**
- **Saturday 8th May 2021 – First Holy Communion in St Patrick’s Church**
- **Saturday 22nd May 2021 – Confirmation in St Patrick’s Church**

*** Bus Eiermann School Transport have confirmed they will be here tomorrow at 12pm for the school run.**