



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL
BALLINAMUCK
CO. LONGFORD

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Dear Parents/Guardians

On behalf of myself and my teaching staff I want to wish you and yours a belated Happy New Year! We look forward with optimism and hope that 2022 will be a brighter year for us all as we adjust to unrestricted movements in our communities, with a spring in our step! We also look forward to restrictions being lifted in our school in the not too distant future.

Casting our minds back to pre- Christmas I want to say a sincere thanks to you all for your generous contributions to our school raffle which was matched equally by all our local suppliers and businesses which we trust you will support by shopping locally for your supplies and services.

In terms of school fundraising we are again asking for your support in terms of donating used clothes, shoes etc for our **Cash for Clobber** clothes collection. Bags can be dropped off to the school for collection this Friday morning 28th January 2022.

On the 30th November last an Inspector from the Department of Education visited our school to conduct an inspection on how our school stands in "Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling" and to assist in assuring the public that the Department's guidelines are being implemented and followed in the school. Child protection policies and procedures were also reviewed. I'm pleased to advise you that the Inspection report that followed confirms that our school was in full compliance and received a very positive "Supporting the Safe Provision of Schooling" report. This report acknowledges and affirms the dedication and commitment of the school staff, the Board of Management, the principal, the in-school management team and the Parents Association and the parent body of our school.

Congratulations to Ms Mary Mulligan on her recent appointment to APII post in the school.

Fr Ber Hogan has given provisional dates for both **the First Holy Communion & Confirmation** ceremonies which are as follows – First Holy Communion – Saturday 7th May 2022 at 11am & Confirmation – Saturday 30th April 2022 at 11am. Both ceremonies will take place in St. Patrick's Church Ballinamuck. Fr Hogan will be having a short enrolment service with the children in the sacrament classes, in the next week or two, in our school hall.

In preparation for the First Holy Communion, Fr Hogan wants you, as parents/ guardians to support your child in her/his preparation, by participating in the weekend masses and particularly by doing the Mass readings on one of the weekends leading up the First Holy Communion w/e. In this regard, in the coming few days we will contact you to see which Sat/Sunday will suit and place you on the listing. The readings will then be sent out in advance of your planned date.

Enrolment is now open for the next academic year and an application form along with our Admission notice is now available on our School website – <https://ballinamuckns.ie/about-us/school-policies/>. As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter this year, we would appreciate any support you can lend to us in this regard specifically by recommending our school to your extended family and friends.

The Arts-in-Education BLAST Residency Programme in 2021/2022 has commenced. The professional artist assigned to us is Sarah Ellen Lundy - Visual & Sound Artist. Sarah is interested in systems and spaces and works with images and objects to provoke thoughts and imagination outside of the normal.

3rd and 4th class children have started the programme and then the 5th & 6th class children will participate after mid-term break.

The **Primary Sampler Module** programme under the umbrella of 'Languages Connect' will commence on the week beginning 7th February. This will give the children from 3rd to 6th class the opportunity to engage with a new language and culture. **French** has been selected because of our ties with Essert in France. The programme will run for six weeks with each child receiving up to one-hour tuition per week.

By now you will have been advised through the Seesaw app of an important meeting of the **Parents Association** which takes place this evening Wednesday 26th January at 8pm – with the objective of filling a few key roles. Please show your support for the PA by attending the meeting and perhaps putting yourself forward to lend a hand in its running.

A Safety Internet day is also scheduled, details of which are attached.

The school's 'Child Safeguarding Statement' and 'Anti-Bullying Policy' can be found on our school website <https://ballinamuckns.ie/>. "**Absence Notes**" which needs to be completed for any school absence can be accessed under the parents' tab of our homepage. Alternatively, you can email class teachers directly so we can record absences. We very much appreciate that many of you communicate your child's absence by message or phone calls, however we have a requirement to accurately complete school returns, one of which seeks a reason for absence as opposed to merely stating "unexplained".

Finally, the Department of Education is in the process of conducting a review of the School Transport Scheme. The review began in February 2021 and encompasses the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs and the Primary and Post-Primary School Transport Schemes.

For parents of children who avail of these services, you are asked to complete a survey which is available at <https://dessurveys.education.gov.ie/surveys/Parent-and-Guardian-School-Transport-Survey-or-on-gov.ie> at gov.ie/schooltransportreview

Is mise le meas,

Damien McIntyre
School Principal

A few dates to note are as follows;

- Clothes Collection – Friday 28th January morning
- Walk on Wednesday (WOW Day) - Wednesday, 23rd February 2022
- Mid-term break – Thursday 24th & Friday 25th February 2022
- March – Thursday 17th & Friday 18th – public holidays
- Easter Break – Monday 11th of April to Friday 22nd April 2022
- On account of the new public holiday introduced for Friday 18th March, our end of year school closure is now **Tuesday 21st June 2022 at 12pm**