



Dear Parents/Guardians,

It is wonderful to be back in school after the most unprecedented closure in Irish educational history. School routines have really changed, and we are so impressed with how well the children have settled into the new school routines. On behalf of the staff and our Board of Management, I would like to welcome everyone back. It has been a busy, but exciting first month back at school. In particular, we welcome our two new classes- Junior Infants and The Crescent Class.



We are very proud of how well they've adjusted to their new school environment.

**The Crescent Room** - Thursday, August 27th was a really special day in Ballymurn, as we opened The Crescent Room, our new class that caters specifically for pupils who have a diagnosis of ASD. We must pay tribute to Ms. Ormonde, who gave so much of her time over the summer holidays to have everything ready for the boys and girls. We welcome Evie, James, Cristian, Kwame and James to the class and hope that they will be very happy in Ballymurn.

**First Holy Communion**- Our boys and girls in 3rd class made their First Confession yesterday in the church. After the disappointment in May of not getting their special day, their First Communion will now take place on Saturday morning in the church. We hope that all families have a lovely day on

Saturday. We will hold a small celebration for the class in school next week, in lieu of the usual event that cannot take place in the hall this year after mass.

**Absences** - Although our older pupils have an absence report form in their homework diaries, we have compiled a new form to make the return to school as simple as possible in light of Covid-19. We have had many queries from parents about whether they need to call us etc when pupils return from illness this year, so to make it easier, we have added a section to the form where a parent can declare that they have followed all public health advice before their child returns to school. Children will be given four of these forms each to take home for use during the year. If you require more, please email the office.

As always, we must remind parents that we are obliged by law to report instances where children have been absent for a cumulative total of twenty days or more during the school year to Tusla.

**Extra-Curricular Activities** - Unfortunately, because of Covid-19, there are no extra-curricular activities in schools at the moment. Mini-7s has been cancelled until 2021, and Rackard League has been put on hold until at least November. It is also unlikely that Sing Out Loud will take place before Christmas. Hopefully, in Term 2, there will be a more positive outlook for us all.

**Floor Replacement Project:** Last Winter, we discovered that flooring in a section of the old part of the school had rotted and needed to be replaced. This was a complicated, messy job and we were lucky to secure the services of excellent consultants and tradesmen, who ensured that despite lockdown and delays, the job was complete in time for the children to come back to school. Many thanks to our amazing caretaker and cleaner, Charlie and Carmel, who worked so hard over the summer- before, during and after the floor replacement works, to ensure that we all came back to a spotless school after our holidays. We want to say a huge thank you to them for this hard work. Thank you also to the rest of the school staff, who had to run around and reorganise rooms that resembled a building a site, at the same time as preparing to reopen with all of our new Covid measures in place.

**Child Safeguarding Statement** - Our Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed by the Board of Management on September 16th. A copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement can be found on our school website. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) in Ballymurn NS is Emer O'Gorman and the Deputy DLP is Niamh Lawlor. If you have any concerns regarding child protection, please contact the DLP or the Deputy DLP.

**Garda Vetting** - It is a legal requirement that any parents who wish to be involved in school activities e.g. Rackard League, Hurling 365 etc., must be Garda vetted through the school. We realise that many parents are already Garda vetted through the G.A.A and other organisations, but unfortunately, everybody still needs to go through the school vetting process. If you would like to become involved and have not been vetted previously, please contact the school office for a form. This also applies if you are giving a lift to another child to matches.

**Parent Contact Details** If you have changed your home address, e-mail address or contact numbers, please email Leanna with your new details ([office@ballymurnns.ie](mailto:office@ballymurnns.ie))

**No Uniform Day on Fridays:** This is voluntary but if children wear their own clothes, they are asked to donate €1 each to the school. The Voluntary Contribution of €100 per family is due by 9<sup>th</sup>

October. These monies can be paid in instalments. More information on this was circulated to all families via email this week. Thank you 😊

**Mangahigh.com:** Mangahigh is an excellent web based mathematics programme, that has been designed to support the primary school maths curriculum. We have purchased access to mangahigh for 3rd-6th class this year. All children in these classes have been given unique login details to access mangahigh.com and we greatly encourage them to make use of it at home to develop their maths skills. Maths Week begins on Saturday, October 12th, and there will be an exciting competition taking place on Mangahigh for our students to participate in.

**Covid-19 and Supervision:** A reminder that children must not enter the school premises before 9.10am. From this time onwards, our filtered arrival system allows all children to walk straight around the school to their designated classroom door. Those collecting 1st/2nd class are asked to be on the yard between 2.50pm and 2.55pm. Dogs are not allowed on the school premises and we ask that if you have a dog on the road, to keep them well back from the gate as the children exit.

**Healthy Eating** - Reminder that the school operates a 'healthy eating policy'. Children are allowed a small treat each Friday and we thank parents for their support in implementing this policy. This is available on our website '[www.ballymurnns.ie](http://www.ballymurnns.ie)'

**Parking-** Please remember to park with care on the street outside the school. Do not double park or block access to staff cars. The car park spaces provided are for staff use and the school bus only. Please do not park in these spaces when dropping off or collecting your child from school. Please be conscious of how/where you park, taking the children's safety into account at all times.

**Communication** - Parents are reminded that if you have a concern/issue which you would like to raise with the school; you must make an appointment to speak to your child's teacher. Because of Covid-19 concerns, these appointments will take place over the phone wherever possible.

**Grievances-** If any parent/guardian has a grievance they would like to raise with the school, please follow the procedures as laid out in our 'Communication Policy'. This policy is available to read on our website '[www.ballymurnns.ie](http://www.ballymurnns.ie)'

In all cases we endeavour to deal with issues raised as promptly and fairly as possible. We will do our best to resolve any and every situation as far as is practicable.

**Parents' Association-** All parents/guardians of children in our school are automatically members of the Parents' Association, the aim of which is to support the Board of Management and staff in the running of the school. In recent years, we have had a small group of parents who have shown huge dedication to the school through their involvement in the PA. Many of their children have now moved on to second level education and they will be leaving their PA positions. We express our gratitude to all of these people for the work that they have done. I would like to strongly encourage new parents to become involved this year.

In normal times, we would hold our AGM around this time. However, due to the pandemic, it is not currently possible to hold such an event, so we will be in contact soon when an alternative can be arranged.

**Hallowe'en Hike** - The Hallowe'en Hike is an annual fundraising event in our school. The children really enjoy it, and in light of the pandemic, we know that other Hallowe'en celebrations outside of school may be curtailed, so we intend to go ahead with our Hike, keeping the children in their usual class bubbles. Unfortunately, we won't be able to invite parents to attend this year. The Hike will take place at 10am on Friday 23rd October. This is subject to change, if restrictions or deterioration in the Covid-19 situation mean it would be unsafe to go ahead. We would ask that you support us in this fundraising effort. All cards must be returned to the school by 5<sup>th</sup> November irrespective of whether monies have been collected by your child. All the children are encouraged to dress up in their Hallowe'en costume on the day of the Hike.

**Allianz Pupil Insurance** - Pupil personal accident insurance forms went home with the children yesterday. There are two options available, €6 school only cover or €9 for 24 hour cover. Please return completed forms along with payment to the school office on or before Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020.

**Christmas Shoe Box Appeal**- The Christmas Shoebox Appeal has gone online this year.

You can do your shoebox online any time up until 23rd December but from 9th - 15th November, we are running the Christmas Shoebox Appeal Week. During this time we will be encouraging schools, families and communities to celebrate the Christmas Shoebox Appeal by building and donating their shoeboxes online, sharing pictures on social media using #TeamUpForTeamHope, coordinating fundraisers to purchase shoeboxes, and learning about the Appeal and the importance of giving.

Although this year may be different, the need for shoebox gifts is more important than ever. Help us spread the word and continue to bring joy to children affected by poverty. Each gift-filled shoebox is €20. Visit <https://www.teamhope.ie/christmas-shoebox-appeal/> for further details.

Le gach dea ghúí,

**Emer O'Gorman**  
**Príomhoide**

#### **Dates / Upcoming Events:**

- First Holy Communion - Saturday, 26th September
- Hallowe'en Hike - 23rd October at 10am (weather permitting). Children are encouraged to dress in their Hallowe'en costumes on this date. **Sponsorship cards will be sent home shortly with the eldest child in each family.**
- Mid-Term Break - Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October - Friday 30th October inclusive. School re-opens Monday 2nd November at 9.20am.
- Christmas Holidays - school closes at **12.15pm** for all children on Tuesday 22nd December and will re-open on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January, 2021.

# Class Reports

## **Ms. O'Gorman's Junior and Senior Infant Report ☺**

The children in Junior and Senior Infants have had a lovely month. They have been amazing in the way that they have adjusted to the many new routines that are now part and parcel of school life. The Senior Infants have settled back into school with ease and they've been so kind and caring to our new Junior Infants, showing them around and helping them with their belongings. Junior Infants had a strange start, in that their parents didn't get to come into school on the first day with them, but they all took it in their stride and have been so independent since.

After the six months at home, all of the children have been spending time developing their fine motor skills. They spend time each day cutting, rolling plasticine, threading and other activities which help strengthen the muscles in their hands. Senior Infants have started reading homework, and are doing a great job so far, the Juniors look forward to joining in with this soon.

Aistear is the word we use for learning through play. Our Aistear theme for September was *My Home and Family*. Our role play area was transformed into a family home where the children could pretend to be any member of the family. They have also enjoyed playing with play dough, construction toys and junk art materials. We have been working on the theme 'Mé Féin' in Irish, and the boys and girls oral language development on this topic has been excellent. We have started working on our Fundamental Movement Skills with Murt during P.E., which everybody is really enjoying.

## **Ms. Lawlor's Senior Infants and 1<sup>st</sup> Class Report ☺**

The children have been very enthusiastic about being back in our classroom. They have been managing new routines such as washing and sanitizing hands regularly, sitting in their pods and using baskets to store their personal belongings. They have been working hard with their reading, writing and maths too. First class seem to be enjoying the extra hour, no complaints yet!

Our Aistear theme for the month was School. The children can name all the jobs that the different members of staff do in our school and they have been playing school in the role-play area. The most popular job seemed to be the secretary! They have been constructing interesting items for school using the junk art materials.

With the hot weather we had a lot of bees flying into the classroom. We decided to learn more about bees and the children constructed their own bee. The children listened to the music Flight of the Bumble Bee. We are planning on flying their own bees to the music before they take them home soon.

### **Ms. Boggan's 2nd Class Report 😊**

2nd class have settled back into school very well and are doing a great job at following all of our new procedures. They have been working very hard and are learning lots of new things.

In maths we have been doing some revision work and lots of work on addition and subtraction. The children love playing our tables games everyday to improve their tables.

In English we have begun our novel 'The Diary of a Killer Cat' by Anne Fine. The children are really enjoying the story so far. I read 'The Twits' by Roald Dahl to the class as our read-aloud book over the last few weeks and the children got great enjoyment out of listening to the story. We have also been doing lots of paired reading and group reading in class.

In Irish we have been learning a new poem and song each week. We have also been practising new phrases in the form of stories, conversations and games. The children particularly enjoyed playing the games 'Deir Ó Grádaigh' and 'cluiche péirí'.

### **Ms. Morrissey's 3rd/4th Class Report 😊**

It's been great to see that the children are so glad to be back in school with their friends again. In 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class it has been a very impressive start to the school year. Children are showing great example with hand washing and adhering to some very new routines and this is very appreciated!

In art, the children have done the most eye catching self portraits with a little bit of a twist! They learned all about proportion and symmetry while creating a very eye catching design in the face itself!

We have been working extremely hard with our reading in class and are enjoying our new literacy stations each week which focus on lots of fun and exciting reading and writing tasks. We have been learning all about recounts and their structure, and what a great recount should include.

We got creative in music and used some percussion instruments to accompany our African folk song Tue Tue. The children kept the beat really well and had some fun along the way. The singing was impressive also!

In maths the children have been busy working on place value, addition and time! The children have made such a good start, so well done on such a busy September!

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> class students have had their first Confession this week, impressing both myself and Fr Finn. They are looking forward to their Holy Communion this coming Saturday (26<sup>th</sup>) so we send our best wishes to all involved!

### **Mrs. Brophy's 5th/6<sup>th</sup> Class Report 😊**

September has been a busy month in our class as we all focused on settling back into school life. All the children have been working very well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their efforts.

We have been learning lots of new things across the curriculum. In Maths we covered Place Value and Operations. We are moving onto Data now. We shall be covering Pie Charts, Bar Graphs and Trend Graphs.

In English we have begun our novel 'The Goldfish Boy' by Lisa Thompson. Our central character Matthew suffers from OCD and is a key witness to the kidnapping of a toddler. We've also begun Narrative writing. I am really looking forward to reading the wonderful narratives from the children.

In Gaeilge our theme is Mé Féin. The children have been revising how to talk about themselves and their family. They have also been learning about the irregular verbs.

History sees us studying Ireland in the 1950s and 1960s. We have been looking at how people lived in these decades, the clothes they wore and music they listened to.

In Geography we have learnt the counties and mountains of Ireland. We are also learning about the food, farming and fishing industry in our country.

Finally we have begun our Stay Safe program in SPHE. Our focus shall be on teaching the children how to look after themselves in various situations.

Overall we have had a successful September and are looking forward to another great month in October

## Parents' Association

**SCHOOL BOOKS SAVINGS CLUB:** It has not been possible to recommence the school book savings club this year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions it places on parental access to the school.

## Notices

### **Bloomfield Breakfast Club/After School Club:**

Parents wishing to enrol their child in either club should contact Annemarie on 0873550020. Breakfast club runs from 8am in the morning and after school child care is provided up to 6pm daily.

# A Message from Fr. Finn

All those who have been involved with young people say that they are best prepared for life by paying attention to, and developing their spiritual, mental and physical components of life. This work is best achieved as parents, teachers and parish working together from infancy to adulthood with young people.

From a spiritual point of view this work commences for the young person at Baptism. From here they are assisted by parents and community.

In a practical way this means that:

1. A child experiences their faith in their home, in family life and in parish life.
2. Here they learn how to bless themselves, know their simple and first prayers at a very young age.
3. From there to have confidence and the ability to participate with other children when they start school, in ceremonies and religious discussions.

They are then well placed to reap the full benefit of the professionalism of their teachers over their primary school life. I look forward to working with parents and school in assisting each child to be well prepared so that they can get the best from their future life.

**Fr. Jim Finn**