



BALLYMURN NEWS – 22ND OCTOBER 2020



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Tomorrow marks the beginning of the school Halloween break. We have now been reopened for staff and pupils for nine weeks, and it has been wonderful to be back and experience some elements of normal life. School, like every part of our lives, is very different to what it was like in March. I must extend my sincere thanks to the staff, who have done everything they can to create the most normal school atmosphere that is possible at this time for the children, as well as the ancillary staff who have taken on all the new roles required of them with ease. I also want to commend the pupils of the school, who have been absolutely excellent, and done everything that has been asked of them to stay as safe as is possible.

Enrolment for September 2021

Our Admission's Notice for 2021 will be published on January 14th, in line with guidance that has been issued to all schools in the Diocese of Ferns. From this date, we will be able to begin the process of enrolling our new pupils for next year. Please call the office if you require any more information in the meantime, and encourage anybody that you may know in the wider community to contact us if they have a child due to start in September.

Covid-19 School Precautions

As we are now open during a Level 5 Covid-19 Lockdown, everything within our power must be done to keep the school operating safely. We have very clear procedures in place during the day, and these are running seamlessly, as staff and students are now used to these routines. There are a number of things that we need parental co-operation with:

1. Children should not be dropped to school, or allowed to walk and arrive at school before 9.10am. There have been a number of cases recently where I have witnessed students congregating at the school gate before this time, which is a major road safety issue. This congregation of students from different classes makes the efforts of school staff to keep bubbles separate from each other during the day futile.
2. When collecting children from the school yard or gate in the evening, parents/guardians must ensure to stand 2m apart.
3. Meetings between parents and teachers may only take place via telephone during this time.

Please co-operate with us in this matter- The efforts made by each individual family through their own actions and sense of social responsibility, will be as vital to keeping schools as open as the efforts made by the school. Over the Hallowe'en break, we urge all of our school community to comply with guidelines, to ensure that we return to as safe a school setting as possible.

Parents' Association

We have still been unable to hold a Parents' Association A.G.M this year, due to restrictions. I urge parents to consider getting involved when it is possible to resume P.A. activities.

Extra-curricular activities

Unfortunately, it is still not possible for any extra curricular sporting activities or Sing Out Loud to take place.

Halloween Hike

Weather permitting, we hope to hold our annual Halloween Hike at 10am tomorrow. This will be a chance for the children to dress up and celebrate Halloween safely, with their class bubbles, when it will not be possible for normal Halloween celebrations to go ahead during midterm. We regret that we cannot invite parents to come along at this time, but we will take lots of photos. The Halloween Hike is an important school fundraiser this year, and we ask those who can to please support us, as many of our usual fundraisers can not go ahead in their usual capacity.

Children will have a little party in their classrooms to celebrate Hallowe'en before they go home, and are allowed to bring in treats for this.

Parent/ Teacher meetings

Normally, we would be holding Parent/ Teacher meetings after the mid-term break. Because of Covid-19, parents are not allowed on the school premises. We are still awaiting official guidance from the Department of Education and Skills as to how we should proceed instead. In the mean time, teachers will, as always, make contact with parents if they have concerns about your child. Parents are encouraged to contact the office and make an appointment for your child's teacher to give you a call if there is anything you need to discuss with them.

Remote Learning Contingency Planning

Thank you to all parents who responded to our survey about internet access and devices. The results of this survey confirmed, as we already knew, that internet connections and availability vary widely in different parts of Ballymurn. We have upgraded our Seesaw subscription and in the event of a school closure, will use this platform to communicate with our pupils. Seesaw allows us to send documents, voice recordings, videos and pictures to students, but it is not on a live basis. This means that families can access these items at a time that suits them, as we realise that a lot

of children don't have the devices needed to be available at certain times during the school day. If a closure occurs, we will try to ensure that children bring home as many of their books, copies and other school items as possible, to lessen the reliance on devices. If a particular class group and their teacher are asked to isolate, Seesaw will be the medium used to communicate during this time. Hopefully, all of this will remain as contingency planning that we won't need to implement.

Maths Week

We had a wonderful 'Maths Week' here at Ballymurn NS. The children had lots of fun participating in different games and events. All teachers made a great effort to give the children a lot of opportunities to try out different games and do Maths trails. Maths competitions were held whereby the staff and children had to estimate how many sweets were in various containers. The results were as follows:

1. **Junior School Winners** - Robbie Murphy and Gary Dooley
2. **Senior School Winner** - Sophie Cosgrave

Thank you to everyone who has supported our school and helped out in any way to add to the childrens' learning experience over the past eight weeks. I wish all pupils, staff and their families a very Happy Hallowe'en and a relaxing mid-term break.

Is mise le meas,

Emer O'Gorman
Príomhoide

Dates/Upcoming Events

- Hallowe'en Hike -23rd October at 10am (weather permitting). Children are encouraged to dress in their Hallowe'en costumes on this date. **SPONSORSHIP cards must be returned to the office on or by 2nd November. Thank you.**
- Mid-Term Break - Monday 28th October - Friday 1st November 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, 6th January 2021.

News from our Classrooms

Report from Ms. O'Gorman's Junior/Senior Infant Class

We have had great fun in Junior and Senior Infants during October. Our Aistear themes were 'Autumn' and 'Hallowe'en' and we have had lots of fun learning about these two topics- There has been particularly messy fun in the potion shop in our role play area over the past number of days! We made Frankenstein's monsters and spider webs, as well as doing some lovely pieces of Autumn art.

We have been working particularly hard at our reading and writing, and have enjoyed lots of literacy games in our groups. Our Irish themes for the month were 'An Scoil' and 'Oíche Shamhna' and we have significantly expanded our vocabulary as Gaeilge.

It was Maths Week this month too, and we played lots of fun maths games, some of which we even had to cut out and make for ourselves. We have been putting a lot of work into cutting, threading and using playdough, to continue our fine motor skills development, which is so important to make our hands strong for writing.

We have been working on the Stay Safe personal safety programme this month too, and making sure that a strong home/school link is in place, by bringing the worksheets home to discuss with our parents.

Finally, in P.E., we have been really looking forward to every Friday, when we have Fundamental Movement Skills training with Murt.

We look forward to continuing all of this great work after a restful midterm break.

Report from Ms. Ormonde's Crescent Class

October has been an exciting month in The Crescent Class. The children are now fully settled into their new school and we would like to say a huge thank you to the children from junior infants to 6th class for helping them to feel so welcome. The children have been absolutely loving yard time. They especially enjoy being included in games such as chase, racing and ring a ring a rosie!

In our classroom this month, we have been doing a lot of music and art. The children learned the nursery rhyme 'Row Row Row Your Boat' and our Halloween song '5 Little Ghosts.' They boys and girls love using the percussion instruments to play along with the songs. We have been doing a lot of autumn themed art and we even carved a pumpkin this week which was a big hit with everyone. The pumpkin even has a loose tooth like one of our favourite cocomelon songs!

We have been learning to use Lámh signs in our classroom and we even had the huge job of teaching these signs to the entire school. The children have been so helpful and are really enjoying learning these signs. Well done also to the rest of the school who have made learning them so easy and who are helping us by using them on yard each day. I am already looking forward to November in The Crescent Class. 😊

Report from Ms.Lawlor's Senior Infants/ 1st Class

During October, the children have been learning all about Autumn. We went on a lovely Autumn walk where the children found lots of nature and they used some of the nature to make beautiful Autumn trees. The children have been experimenting with different types of print in art also. In the role-play area, witch's hut the children were reading and writing the ingredients for potions, they also composed lots of spells which they tried out on each other and their teacher!

We had a lot of fun during Maths Week. The children made some very cool Maths Monsters and practised other maths skills with M and M's. We have been learning all about 2D shapes too.

In History the children have been learning about Halloween and the traditions associated with the festival. We also discussed how to stay safe at Halloween. In Science, we have been learning all about the weather. They have been recording the weather, measuring the rain fall and observing the wind. We did an interesting experiment with pinecones to predict the weather which they can tell you all about!

We are all looking forward to dressing up on Friday and going on our Halloween Hike! Well done to all my class for working so hard in class since they came back to school. Have a lovely mid-term break.

Report from Ms. Boggan's 2nd Class

In art this month we focused on the themes of 'Autumn' and 'Halloween'. Firstly we painted trees and using cotton wool we used autumn themed paint colours to add the leaves to the trees. We also made autumn leaf prints using some autumn leaves and paint to create the prints. For our Halloween art we created Halloween characters using toilet roll tubes and coloured card, we also added faces and accessories to the characters.

In music, the children have been learning about tempo using the terms largo, presto and moderato. The children listened to various pieces of music and determined which musical term best suits the tempo of the music piece. They have also been learning about rhythm in music using ta, ti-ti and rests to depict one beat, half beats and one beat rests. The children have been learning and singing lots of Irish songs such as 'Peann Luaidhe Buí' and 'Oíche Shamhna'.

In drama the children listened to the story 'Franklin in the Dark'. In our lessons the children took on the role of Franklin as they moved about nervously. They also did great role plays of Franklin meeting the different characters in the story and the advice that they gave to him to overcome their fears based upon the fears that they themselves overcame.

In P.E this month the children have been really enjoying their tag rugby sessions every Tuesday. They have been playing lots of games and chasing activities to develop their team work and dodging skills. They have also been thoroughly enjoying their fundamental movement sessions every Friday. They have been working on their hopping, jumping, running, skipping, throwing and catching skills in the form of various different games and activities.

Report from Ms. Morissey's 3rd/4th Class

It's so hard to believe that we are almost at our midterm break already. Time is flying and the children are well settled back into routine and working hard.

Maths Week: This month we had a lot of fun celebrating Maths Week. The days didn't seem long enough, as we were busy exploring maths all around us in the form of Maths trails, engaging with some very interesting number patterns on Maths TV, and even seeing the link between magic tricks and maths concepts. We also took part in a daily estimation task in class, from estimating the passing of one minute, to how many shapes in a container and many more. Maths also had a close link to art this month, where we created some amazing patterns using lines such as vertical, parallel, horizontal, oblique and even perpendicular lines. We fit all this in while still doing our weekly maths topics. Well done everyone!

Literacy: Children are still hard at work on recounts this month. We have also been detectives with our comprehension strategy this month and trying to find the V.I.Ps when we read (very important points). Determining importance helps to makes us all better readers, and everyone has been doing a great job of recalling the most important points of information after reading. Keep it up!

Project work: This month children have been busy getting started on a project all about Italy! I am very excited to see the finished products and have heard lots of interesting facts from the children so far. Children will be learning about famous tourist attractions, Italian cuisine, famous cities, fun facts and lots more.

Art: As mentioned above, art has had a big maths focus this month, however we have also gotten a little bit spooky. Children had a chance to explore adding colour to white to create different shades of a colour. After some practise doing this, they then used this knowledge to create a spooky moonlit sky for a Halloween silhouette painting. Children also learned a little bit about the Day of the Dead to inspire some colourful salt skull art!

Music: Things have been a little scary in music this month also! We responded to a spooky Halloween soundtrack and shared with the class what we saw happening in our minds as we listened. We then went on to draw a picture of what this looked like in the movie. The imagination with the class was great, and a little bit scary at times! We also learned the song Dark Disco, and created spells based on the poem The Witch in the Supermarket!

Well done again to all the boys and girls in 3rd and 4th class for all of their hard work, keep it up and enjoy the week off to recharge the batteries!

Report from Mrs. Brophy's 5th/6th Class

Happy Halloween everyone ☺we've have had another very busy month in here our class. We have been learning lots of things and working very hard. In English we have finished our Narrative Writing genre and our novel 'The Goldfish Boy' by Lisa Thompson. The children were very excited to find out who kidnapped Teddy Dawson. We are also working on our grammar and spellings with Jolly Grammar.

In Maths we covered Lines and Angles and are now moving onto Long Division. We shall have our mid-term test this week too. The children are also using Mangahigh for homework once a week. In Gaeilge we have been learning the theme 'Bia' (food) and writing our first Aiste (essay). This is a challenge for the children but they are managing very well.

History saw us studying The Great Famine of 1845-1847 in Ireland. We learnt about the 'Coffin Ships', workhouses, blight and devastation this period of history had for our country. We lost one million people to starvation and two million to emigration. The children have submitted their first history project based on 'Ireland in the 1950s and 1960s' and I am really looking forward to reading them.

We have completed our 'Stay Safe' programme. Parents are encouraged to talk to their children about the very sensitive material we covered in this programme.

In PE we have been enjoying coaching from Michael (Tag Rugby) and Murt (GAA) every week. We are very thankful to these two coaches for giving us their time.

Finally, next week is our mid-term break and I wish all our class and their families and lovely time for rest and relaxation. I shall see you all again in November ☺

A Message from Fr. Finn

Celebrating Hallowe'en and remember our dead by Fr. Jim Finn

Our ancient ancestors having progressed over thousands of years had great respect for time and the marking of time in their yearly calendar. Hallowe'en was the time where one year ended and a new year began.

On the night of Hallowe'en chaos reigned, it was the time of transition, one year was ending but another one had not yet started. People played pranks on each other, the people of the spirit world crossed boundaries and entered the human world, they thought.

St. Patrick and his followers took this festival to announce that through Christ's death all the dead could now go to God and enjoy peace. Our prayers could help them. So on the 1st November we celebrate the 'Feast of All Saints' and on the 2nd November we pray for those who may not have reached God's presence yet.

Let us then thank our favourite Saints on the 1st of November for the help they give us and pray for all our deceased relatives for the month of November knowing that if they are not yet in God's presence our prayers will help them.

SUPERVISION - Your Child's Safety on School Premises

Monday to Friday ----- 9.10am to 3.00pm

Infants (Junior & Senior) ----- 9.20am to 2.00pm

Outside of these times there is **no supervision** for children on the school premises.