

Welcome to the December edition of Ballymurn News. We ask that all family members read our newsletter to keep up to date with what is going on in our school. The Board of Management and staff of Ballymurn N.S, wish to take this opportunity to wish all of our families a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

*Nollaig shona is athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh go léir*

## School Staff

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Ciara O'Connor who has been our special education teacher since September for her time and effort with the pupils. She will be missed around school and we hope to cross paths again in the future. Sarah Boggan will be the teacher in SET from January 8th.

We would also like to warmly welcome our new permanent teaching staff member, Claire Sutton, who will begin teaching with us in 2nd and 3rd class in January. We are so lucky to have Claire as part of our school staff team and we very much look forward to working with Claire for many years to come.

## Christmas Celebrations

Huge congratulations to our Junior and Senior Infants who performed an outstanding show in the Church on Tuesday for their parents and families. The children learned many songs, lines and dances in preparation for their nativity and we are so proud of their performances. Thank you to family members and friends for supporting the children on their big day.



We were also very proud of the children from the Crescent Class who performed their Christmas show in their classroom for their families yesterday. You put on a fabulous show and were the best singing and dancing Christmas trees!

We are very much looking forward to seeing our pupils from 1st to 6th class perform at the Carol Service in the Church tonight at 7pm. We are sure that you will all shine on stage tonight as well! All family members are invited to attend and see our pupils perform tonight and we look forward to seeing many of you there.

### **Parents Association**

As always our PA has organised some festive treats for the children on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December. During each class's annual Christmas movie the children will all receive freshly made hot chocolate and chocolate chip cookies. They will also get a wrapped selection box to take home. A big thank you to our PA who put so much time and effort into these events.

### **Wellbeing Survey results**

A huge thank you to all parents who participated in our recent wellbeing survey. A total of 48 responses were received. 100% of parents/guardians who completed the survey agree that our school is welcoming and accessible for all pupils, that our school is well kept & bright and that they know who to approach if they have a query or concern. 95.8% believe that our school is welcoming and accessible for all parents/guardians/carers, that physical activity is promoted and that the school sees health and wellbeing as a priority. 91.7% are aware that their children have opportunities to take part in art, sport, dance, drama, etc., that support is available for children with emotional needs, that healthy eating is promoted in school, that the school communicates respectfully with them, that they are encouraged to become involved in school activities and that their children belong as part of the wider school community. 97.9% of parents/guardians believe that their children are always safe while they are in school and that every child is encouraged to do their best. 97.9% also agree that they are informed when new policies are updated and that there are structures in place for parents and pupils to have a voice. 87.5% know that an issue will be dealt with when it has been discussed with a staff member. 89.6% of those who took part in the survey believe that the school is committed to dealing with bullying and its prevention and that staff communicate respectfully with their children consistently. 93.8% agree that there is extra help and support available to pupils who need it, that their children know who to go to if they have a worry or concern, know that external services are linked in with the school for those who need it and that the school seeks the views of parents when developing school policies. 93.8% also feel part of the school community and feel that conversations with staff are respectful and confidential. 85.4% believe that the school listens to the children's voice when developing new policies. 79.2% of parents agree that school staff communicate when things are going well in school and celebrate achievements.

Parents/guardians' views as a result of this survey, alongside pupil surveys from junior infants to 6th class and staff surveys, will help to inform our new school self evaluation (SSE) cycle going forward. Our aim is to improve on our current provisions in the area of health and wellbeing based on the feedback received from parents, pupils and staff. We look forward to working on this with the school community over the next number of years.

### **Wexford People Helping People Christmas Appeal**

A huge thank you to everyone who donated to the Wexford People Helping People Christmas Appeal. Your generous donations are very much appreciated and we are proud to be part of such an important

campaign, particularly at Christmas time. Thanks again to Bridget Cummins for giving us the opportunity to donate.



**Ballymurn 5k Fun Run/Walk** - The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Ballymurn 5k Fun Run/Walk will take place on Sunday, January 28th 2024!. This amazing and uplifting event is organised each year by Bobby and Mag Redmond, in aid of both our school and Temple Street Children's Hospital. It is a fantastic family day out, where people in the community get the chance to meet up and take part. The emphasis is on FUN, and it doesn't matter whether you prefer to walk, jog or run around the block. This year we'd love to see a big crowd participating to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> annual event. There is no entry fee, and anonymous donations towards the school and Temple Street are greatly appreciated.

Our PA along with all parents in the school community, have been asked to organise the refreshments in the hall after the race. The PA will send out further details after Christmas.

When we return to school after the Christmas break the children will commence a 5K running challenge in the school yard each day to help them prepare for the main event!





**Hurling 365** - Hurling 365 has finished until after the Christmas holidays. The pupils already look forward to its return in January.

We would like to thank all volunteers for giving up their time as supervisors and coaches to ensure this initiative is possible in our school. We appreciate your dedication.

**Attendance Campaign** - A new attendance campaign has been launched by the Department of Education this year which we have been fully engaging with. The aim will be to promote an increase in whole school attendance across all classes. It will remain in line with our active Statement of Strategy for School Attendance which is available on our school website. We are beginning to develop targeted intervention to promote attendance. Each class is currently working towards achieving the highest attendance rate every month and as a whole school we are striving to hit 100% school attendance on at least one school day next term.

Whole school attendance in November was 93.8%. Well done to Ms. Boggan's 3rd class who had the highest rate of attendance for November at 96.9%. The pupils enjoyed 15 minutes extra yard time and a bag of Tayto last week as a reward.

**Absences** - In line with this, Leanna has sent a text to all families containing the link for our back to school form, which must be filled in each time your child returns following an absence from school. This link is also available on our website, ballymurnns.ie, under the "Useful Information" tab. <https://forms.gle/TqEMPsyC77PyetJ69>. At present there are a number of absences unexplained on our roll book, Leanna has sent an email and if your child has any unexplained absences would we ask you to complete an absence form for each one.

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.

During the school year we will send reminders when your child reaches a certain amount of absent days.

**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

**Morning Supervision**- School gates do not open until 9.10am, and no pupils should be on the premises before this. Morning supervision is outdoors, and on wet days, children must wait in the shelter until school opens at 9.20am. Please ensure that adults who are dropping your kids to school take care to not pull in or turn opposite the school gates.

**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. We also ask that people please do not park directly opposite the school, as our bus for pupils with Special Educational Needs parks there. 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, through the school office.

**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.

**Parental Complaints Procedure** - New parental complaints procedures have been issued by the Department of Education and will come into effect in all schools from January. Please make yourselves familiar with the attached procedures.

## **Class Reports**

### **Ms. Ormonde's Junior & Senior Infants:**

November and December have been two fun filled months of junior and senior infants. In November our themes in Aistear were 'The Post Office' and 'The Supermarket.' The children loved learning about the responsibilities of those working in the post office/post vans and about the journey their post makes when they send it. In December we had a Santa's Workshop role play, an art wrapping station, a construction area where children were making sleighs and toys and a playdough station where children were creatively developing their fine motor skills.

In Maths, the children in senior infants have been working on the numbers 7 & 8 and also on their skills using a number line. Junior infants have been learning to write and explore number 2 & 3 and on their counting skills. The children love to work in groups and have been learning to work collaboratively with their peers.

Our naughty elf 'Snowball' returned from the North Pole on December 1st and has been causing havoc in our school ever since!! The pupils even found him in the photocopier one morning. He has, however, brought a lot of joy to our pupils and they look forward to finding him each morning.

The children have been preparing for their Christmas nativity for the last few weeks and they were so excited to perform it for their friends and families this week. It's not easy to stand up and perform in front of an audience at such a young age, so well done to all the pupils. I would like to wish all of the junior and senior infants and their families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you all again in January after a well deserved break.

### **Ms Lawlor's Senior Infants & 1<sup>st</sup> Class**

November and December have just flown by in our classroom. Our Aistear theme during November was *People at Work*. The role-play area was transformed into a veterinary surgery where the children went in to role as the vet, nurse, receptionist and customer. We did a little bird watching and learned about the robin.

The children really enjoyed Science Week. We explored the body's senses and then we had a taste challenge to investigate whether or not we could taste properly if we wore a blindfold and pegged our noses! This was great fun and it proved that it's easier to taste food properly when we can see it and smell it. We also had fun with a floating experiment and static electricity activities.

During December we have been learning about the North and South poles and the animals that would live there. The children have been very creative and will have some lovely winter art to bring home at the end of the week.

They have all been working hard in class and have been very excited as we count down to Christmas. The children have been colouring the steps on our class advent calendar and both classes have been busy rehearsing for their Christmas performances. We were also delighted to welcome back Fionn and Luka to our class last week. It's been a very exciting month!

I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and I will look forward to seeing everyone back at school in 2024!

### **Ms. Kehoe 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Class**

Another busy term in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> class. We welcomed external art teachers from the Living Arts Project, Wexford. We had two sessions with them so far. We went on nature walks with the art teachers and gathered pieces of nature to draw, print, shade and use as tools to work with. The pupils have began an art journal and we look forward to continuing the sessions after Christmas and continuing the artwork.

We explored lots of different topics alongside the core subjects. We looked at Irish history through the years and a focus on history in Northern Ireland. Lots of pupils had a great interest in it. We had lots of discussions and carried out research over the few weeks.

We began the novels 'Holes' by Louis Sachar. We have been reading it daily over the past few weeks and doing activities based on the book. This week we began watching the movie based on the book which has been most enjoyable.

We read a poem 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening' by Robert Frost in English. We used the poem as inspiration for our own art lesson. The children drew lovely illustrations of Irish woodland animals and we created a cold winter sky by printing their drawings onto ink.

In history and geography over the past two weeks we explored Mexico, of life before and after the presence of Spain. We researched ancient civilisations and focused on the Aztecs. We explored the conquistadors arriving on the Mexican shores and how they took over.

These are just some things the class have done over the term. We have been busy preparing for the Recital also and look forward to the performance. I wish everyone a wonderful and peaceful Christmas. Enjoy the break and we will see you in the New Year!

### **Ms. Boggan's 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Class**

The children in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> class have been excitedly preparing for the carol service this month. It was wonderful to see how enthusiastic they were to perform at the carol service and so many volunteering to sing in smaller groups or to read on the night. They are so excited to sing on the night and for all of their families to hear them performing.

We have reached the end of the novel 'Matilda' by Roald Dahl. The children really enjoyed reading the novel together and exploring all of the different characters in the story. We did lots of drama related activities such as still images creating scenes from the novel, thought tracking where the characters came to life in that moment and hot-seating the characters where the children take on the role of a character from the story. The children also enjoyed doing the conscience alley activity where they got to act as the character's conscience in different stages of the story.

In maths the children have been doing lots of work on learning their tables- we play the maths game everyday, practise weekly tables and use the tablets to improve their knowledge of their tables. We have also been working on problem solving in class where we have been using the UPSC method to solve the problems- Understand, Plan, Solve, Check. They read the questions, look for the important information in the question, they then plan how to work out the answer, solve the question and finally check their answers. The children enjoyed working on the topic of length in class. They estimated and measured things using non-standard measurements and standard measurements. They enjoyed estimating the lengths and comparing the actual measurements of the various items.

I would like to wish all of the children and their families a wonderful Christmas and best wishes for 2024.

### **Ms. Sheehan's 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class:**

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Class have been very busy lately. We have been reading the novel *Millions* by Frank Cottrell Boyce in English and having debates and discussions about the moral dilemmas of what to do with so much money!!

We have been learning about lots of different European Myths and Legends and the class have enjoyed presenting geography projects on their favourite related countries. We had fun with lots of experiments during science week from making invisible ink and floating ink to designing a stand for a

mobile phone. We have been looking at carbon production and Bogland conservation recently. In Gaelige have been focussing on the themes of hobbies, the internet and Christmas.

We have been very lucky to have had two sessions with visiting artists from the Wexford Living Arts Programme. The kids were out collecting pieces of interest to them in the local environment and then making sketches, drawings and prints. We look forward to six more sessions in the New Year. The finished pieces will be part of an exhibition in the Spring where our budding artists' work will be on display.

There has been lots of singing in preparation for our Carol Service performance and the whole class enjoyed a Pyjama Day this week as a reward for all their hard work this year. I hope everyone has a lovely break and we will be back for more adventures in the New Year. Happy Christmas!

### **Ms. Doyle's Crescent Class**

We have been so busy this term in the Crescent class. We have learned all about hibernation and created a lovely space outside our classroom displaying all the different animals that are sleeping, be careful when you are passing by not to wake them!! We celebrated one of our friend's birthdays in November and had a lovely party together. We are so excited about Christmas. We have made beautiful snowmen, Christmas wreaths, Christmas cards along with snow globes and Christmas trees. We also made delicious Christmas cookies. We have been super busy practising for our Christmas play and learning our new songs. We would like to thank the kind students from 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class for all their help in preparing us for the big performance. We have a special trip planned to see Santa before the Christmas holidays which we cannot wait for! Hope everybody has a lovely Christmas from all in the Crescent class!

## **Dates / Upcoming Events**

- Christmas Carol Service: Thursday, December 21st at 7pm in Ballymurn Church
- Christmas Holidays - school closes at **12.15pm** for all children on Friday 22nd December and will re-open on Monday 8th January, 2024
- 10<sup>th</sup> Annual 5K Fun Run- Sunday, January 28th 2024
- February 1st - Grandparents Mass followed by refreshments in school
- February 5<sup>th</sup> - Public holiday, school closed
- February 13th - Pancake Tuesday
- February 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> Midterm break, school closed both days

## **A message From the Parish Committee**

If your present financial situation requires assistance from our Parish of Crossabeg & Ballymurn, we currently have vouchers to the value of €40 available to anyone who has financial needs at the moment.

Please contact us at the following confidential phone number 087 7902589.

This line is open every Wednesday from 5pm until 7pm. Your situation will be treated in the strictest confidence.



## Ballymurn Church Christmas Mass Times

**Christmas Eve      7pm**

**Christmas Day      10am**