School news 20.10.23

Dear Parent/Guardian(s),

**Dates for the Diary**

**Midterm Break:** Closed on Friday, 27th October – Re-opening on Monday, 6th November 2023

**Christmas Holidays:** Closing on Friday, 22nd December – Re-opening on Monday, 8th January 2024

**Frist Confession:** 13th March 2024

**Confirmation:** 8th May 2024

**First Holy Communion:** 11th May 2024

**\*Please note that there is no school on Friday, 27th October.**

**Halloween Dress Up Day**

Children are welcome to dress up for Halloween on Thursday 26th October. No weapons, high heels or scary masks/scary face paint allowed please. We do not want any child getting hurt or frightened.

**Board of Management**

The term of our current Board of Management is coming to an end at the end of November. A new Board of Management must be in situ on December 1st.

Next week, we will begin the process of electing new Parent Nominees to the BOM.

**Enrolment**

We currently have 268 children enrolled at Scoil Naomh Molaise. A very warm welcome to new pupil, Emily Foran, who joined 2nd class at the end of September. We are expecting to have 9-12 Ukrainian children join our school after the Midterm Break. These children will join classes from Junior Infants – 4th class. We look forward to welcoming them to our school community.

As you know, we currently have 11 classes at Scoil Naomh Molaise. In order to retain our 11th class teacher, we must have 258 pupils enrolled (our current enrolment exceeds this figure). In order to gain our 12th class teacher, a threshold of 284 pupils is required. For the last number of years, we have been very close to that higher threshold figure; over some years, and under the next. Many wonderful teachers have joined our staff as that 12th class teacher only for the post to be lost again due to falling numbers in subsequent years; alas, this is the way of life in primary schools at present. We operate in the best way possible with the resources that the Department of Education and the Board of Management provide us with.

**Curriculum Developments**

* The Department of Education has published a new **Primary Maths Curriculum**. All schools will engage with the new curriculum this school year; reflecting on current practices, reviewing school resources and experimenting with new methodologies and approaches for the teaching of Maths. Mr Connolly and Ms O’Connor attended an introductory workshop on the new curriculum in Sligo Education Centre on Tuesday 17th October. The school will be closed for one day later this year in order to facilitate training for the whole staff; we will let you know this date as soon as it is available to us. All schools will begin to implement the new Primary Maths Curriculum from next September.
* Whole School Plans for **History** and **Geography** were developed last year and will be followed by all classes this year. An effective whole school plan ensures consistency and progression across all class levels. We are working at present on our WholeSchool Plans for **Gaeilge** and **P.E.**
* **STEM Education** is a significant feature of the new curriculum. Our pupils thoroughly enjoy hands-on, creative, experimental learning opportunities. We have booked a series of workshops in January in which the children will use lego to discover the principles of science, technology, engineering and maths. *Brick 4 Kidz* previously ran workshops in SN Molaise in 2018 and they were very well received by pupils and staff. There will be more information about this in the coming weeks.
* Our **Accelerated Reader** subscription falls due for renewal in December. This programme is highly regarded in our school and we now run the programme from 2nd-6th class. Accelerated Reader is a graded reading programme tailored to the individual needs of pupils. Pupils complete an online quiz to assess their understanding of a book and progress to higher levels, more challenging material according to their own pace. It is the gold standard for reading in schools giving teachers, pupils and parents valuable information about a child’s reading ability and progress. It is an expensive programme costing approximately €1800 annually but we hope that with the support of parents/guardians and the Parents’ Association that we can continue to implement AR in our school.
* We were successful in our application to be part of the **Languages Connect** Programme this year. After Christmas, 3rd & 4th class pupils will receive instruction in **Irish Sign Language** for one hour per week for 8 weeks. This is a wonderful way to not only learn a new language but also to develop a greater appreciation for diversity and to promote inclusion. This programme is fully funded by the Department of Education.

**Sports News:**

* Gaelic Football Coaching: Conor Gormley, Sligo GAA, has been coaching 3rd - 6th classes this term. Irrespective of the weather, Conor has ensured that the children are having fun while developing their skills.
* SuperValu Athletics Fest: The annual SuperValu Primary Schools Athletics Fest took place at the Atlantic Technological University on Tuesday, 28th September. 40 children represented the school on the day. This event is about mass participation and having fun.
* Cross Country: Well done to the children who represented our school at Cross Country in Rathcormac earlier this month. It was fantastic to see so many children involved and especially, to see a number of children trying cross country for the very first time. Maith sibh! Thank you to the parents who organised events on the day.
* Football Mini 7s: Congratulations to our boys’ and girls’ teams who won the group stage of the Mini 7s today. It’s never easy for a school to play against another school in the parish, especially when the children are used to normally playing on the one team with Molaise Gaels. There was a great display of football from all sides. Well done everyone! Many thanks to Paul Healy for getting the football pitch ready for us today.
* Swimming: As part of the P.E. curriculum, a 6 week swimming programme has been arranged for 3rd & 4th classes at Ballyshannon Leisure Centre in January. The Parents Association will subsidise the cost of the swimming/bus. More details on this soon.

**Extra Curricular:**

* We celebrated Maths Week in the school this week. There were lots of opportunities for fun maths in all classrooms. Senior classes enjoyed ‘Bingo Loco’ on Tuesday and junior classes enjoyed a Puzzle Day today. Thanks to Ms Harvey and 4th class for organizing the events.
* Very well done to all of the children who participated in our STEM Challenge this week. Following on from Space Week last week, the children were encouraged to design and make a vehicle that would enable them to explore space. The imagination and creativity shown was fantastic. Five finalists presented their designs to our tionól (assembly) on Wednesday. Maith sibh go léir!
* 4th class enjoyed an art workshop at the Hyde Bridge Gallery yesterday and 5th class will have this opportunity next week.
* Our recently elected Student Council are busy preparing their agenda for the year ahead. Ms Haran will be guiding the council in their work this year.
* We also have a new Green Schools Committee in place. We are re-focusing our efforts and going back to get the basics right. Our focus this year will be on litter and waste. Ms Harvey will be guiding the Green Schools Committee this year. Watch this space!
* Alma Jordon, founder of Agrikids, visited the school on Thursday 12th October. Her mission is to engage, educate and empower children to be farm safety ambassadors. Alma used pictures, real objects and story to deliver a very impactful presentation on farm safety. Alma is also the author of six children’s books on the theme of farm safety and farm life. We are very grateful to Alma for giving her time so freely and we hope that this experience will leave a lasting impression on our pupils.

**Parental Involvement**

* Our Parents’ Association held their first meeting of the year on Monday, 3rd October. A few gentle reminders based on items discussed:
  + The school bell rings at 9:10am signalling the start of the school day. Gates are open at 9am and staff are available to supervise for this 10 minute period ahead of the official start time. For insurance reasons, the Board of Management cannot allow pupils to be on the school grounds before 9am.
  + **Please use the door beside the staffroom (red building) if you are dropping a child to school late or collecting a child early**. Teresa’s office is located across from this door and she will be able to help you, walk a child to their class, drop a lunch to a child etc.
  + We have a **Healthy Eating Policy** in the school. Treats are for Friday only. Please ensure that your child brings a **small** treat only, e.g. a fun-size bar of chocolate, two biscuits, a few jellies/sweets etc.
  + **Parent/Teacher Meetings** will be held on Wednesday, 22nd November and Thursday, 23rd November. Appointments will be arranged via Aladdin Connect after Halloween.
* Thank you to all of the parents/guardians who attended our **Jolly Phonics** evening recently. Thanks to Lisa McGill, Occupational Therapist, for speaking on the night also. We hope that you all got something useful from the evening.

**Christmas Card Fundraiser**

It’s hard to believe that it is that time of year already – time to get the Christmas Cards ready! Organised by our wonderful Parents’ Association, this is one of the biggest fundraisers every year for our school and we greatly appreciate your support.

Your child is working on designing his/her Christmas Card. The template will be sent home on Monday, 23rd October. Please check the spelling of your child's name on the template and indicate how many packs you wish to order. €10 per pack (10 cards). **The template must be returned to the school on Tuesday, 24th October.**

Payment can be made on Aladdin. Please enter the amount that you wish to pay, and, in the note, indicate how many packs you wish to order. You will receive a receipt via email once you place an order. Please note that the payment link for the Christmas Cards will remain active on Aladdin for the next few weeks (even after you have made a payment). The link will expire closer to Christmas.

Thank you for supporting our Parents’ Association Fundraiser.

**Molaise Abú!**

There is an incredible, vibrant atmosphere in the community for the last few weeks. We have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the excitement in the build up to the Senior County Final on Sunday. Windows have been decorated, signs erected, the bit of glas (green) has been adorned and cameras were at the ready earlier this week as a good luck message was recorded for Naomh Molaise Gaels. We could not be prouder of our Club, and, wish the management and the senior men the very best of luck on Sunday – you are a wonderful inspiration for our young sportspeople. Míle buíochas agus go n-éirí an t-ádh libh go léir!

**Congratulations**

Finally, on behalf of our school community, I would like to wish Ms Gloria Gallagher and her fiancé, Damien, the very best of luck ahead of their wedding next week. Congratulations to you both. In Ms Gallagher’s absence, Ms Foran, Ms N. Gallagher and Ms O’Connor will be covering in Senior Infants next week.

Have a lovely weekend.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

*Louise O’Connor*

Príomhoide