

Weekly Update

18th December 2020

Closing for Holidays

Please note that we will close for the holidays at 12.00 next Tuesday, 22 December. School reopens on Wednesday, 6 January 2021.

Sending Books Home

Books will be sent home for all classes Friday 18th. This is purely a precautionary measure as we fully expect to be at school next Monday and Tuesday and to be back in school on Wednesday, 6 January. All books should be left in school bags and if books are in a plastic bag, please do not open the bag so that all books can be used immediately on your child's return to school.

This week in RETNS

This morning, there was much excitement when Junior Infants, Senior Infants, 1st and 2nd stood outside the school to greet Santa who arrived in a Garda car.

6th class held a live Zoom Q&A from London with Hazel Reynolds founder of Gamely Games www.gamelygames.com

Hazel describes herself as a "Momtrepreneur" and answered questions about designing board games. Hazel appeared on Dragons Den UK and now runs a successful games business. She has sent 6th class some free samples of her games. 6th class have been designing their own board games and having fun with Hazel's games.

Our Core Value for December is Freedom. The poster competition for this month was run in 6th class and was won by George. Congratulations to George whose poster featured on the website.

This week, we welcomed Niamh ní Chochláin to RETNS. Niamh will teach Senior Infants until the end of the school year. We bid farewell to Sarah Graham who did fantastic work as a support teacher this term and also to Niamh Fenton who also worked as a support teacher for a number of weeks.

Cosy Day – Monday, 21 December

On Monday, December 21st the Student Council will hold a Cosy Day in aid of Laura Lynn. For a €2 donation, children are invited to come into school dressed in their cosiest clothes (fluffy jumpers, hats, scarves, etc.). In the afternoon, each class will mark the occasion with a cosy and relaxing activity in their classrooms.

Children must be dressed appropriately for school on the day (**no pyjamas or onesies**) and no extra items such as cushions or blankets should be brought in. However, if they wish, the children may bring their slippers to school on the day, to be worn within their classrooms only. Any slippers being brought in should fit in the child's school bag and be clearly labelled with their name.

Changes to Staggered Departures at End of School Day – January 2021

From 6 January, 3rd and 5th classes will no longer leave school at 14.20 but will come out their respective doors just before 4th and 6th classes. There will be no change to the arrangements for Junior Infants and 1st class.

1.30 Club

The 1.30 Club is full from 6 January. Any applicants will be placed on a waiting list.

Christmas tree

Well done to all who participated in the recycled Christmas tree decoration competition this year. We had lots of entries of a very high standard. The winners were:

Junior Infants: Arlo Keegan

Senior Infants: Ciara Dowling

1st: Lyra Bolster

2nd: Juno Packham

3rd: Jake McPartling

4th: Donagh Monaghan

5th: Harriet Lynch

6th: Amelia Mooney Browne

We will be sending home the decorations today and tomorrow. **IF ANYONE WOULD LIKE THE TREE, IT WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM FRIDAY AFTERNOON – PLEASE CONTACT CAROL IN THE OFFICE.**

Winter Solstice

We will celebrate the Winter Solstice - Meán Geimhridh (Midwinter) or Grianstad an Gheimhridh- with an assembly on Monday. RTE will also celebrate the solstice this Sunday evening at 20.30

<https://www.rte.ie/culture/2020/1130/1181433-shine-your-light-for-the-2020-winter-solstice/>

- For stargazers, the winter solstice this year brings the alignment of Jupiter and Saturn – see article below

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2020/dec/15/how-to-watch-the-jupiter-and-saturn-great-conjunction-of-2020>

Active Walkway Video

Well done to our Active Team, who are all members of 3rd class, for producing this video on our school's Active Walkway. Thank you to Darren and Ciara for working with the Active Team on this project.

<https://retns.ie/blog/active-schools-team-giving-you-a-tour-of-our-active-walkway/>

Voluntary Contributions

Thank you so much to all parents and guardians who have made voluntary contributions to our school this year. The Voluntary Contribution participation rate for the last 5 complete school years has been consistently in the range 65-70% and it has already reached that level for 2020/21, only a few months into the school year. Your contributions are always appreciated but especially so this year when due to COVID, we are unable to rent out our premises outside of school hours.

If you received a CHY certificate from Carol this week, we would be grateful if you could return it as soon as possible. Parents and guardians also opted to donate €3,624 in extracurricular refunds to the school (€2,406.5 received in 2019/20 and €1,217.50 received in 2020/21). Once again, we thank you for your generosity.

Board Games

Please see attached two board games produced by the European Commission on the themes of biodiversity and climate action.

Quad Bikes and Scramblers

Please see attached two messages from our Community Garda Padraic on the dangers and legal issues related to children's use of quad bikes and scramblers.

Greeting from the Parents' Association Committee

With help from the tutorial put on by the Coder Dojo team, please find a greeting from the Parents Association Committee below.

<https://bitsbox.com/run.html?2f6t2>

We look ahead to a brighter New Year. Enjoy the break

Message from John Brosnan, Chairperson of our Board of Management

On behalf of the Board of Management I would like to wish everyone in our school community a very Happy Christmas.

This has been the strangest of years for everyone. We may all need to be patient and vigilant for some time yet but thankfully the future is looking brighter.

The year brought unprecedented challenges for schools and families. The response of our school community to these challenges has been exceptional. The fun and ingenuity of the children, the professional dedication of all of the staff and the selfless volunteering of so many parents and families has been inspiring.

Through the lens of our school experience we see the best of people. Thank you all so much.

Have a great break and all the best for 2021.

September 2020 – December 2020

What a busy, and sometimes challenging, term we have all had. It has been a time for new routines for children and staff, with a major focus on hand hygiene and respecting the now-familiar bubbles and pods. In spite of all the changes to which children were required to become accustomed, what has been most striking is how happy our children are to be at school and how engaged they are in their learning.

Many things were different this term but in so many ways, it has been business as usual for RETNS. We continue to have our weekly assemblies with Frásaí na Seachtaine from 3rd & 4th classes, we have had lots of activities such as baking and pottery and while we have had no visitors to our school, we have had workshops on zoom. Our pupil committees, the Student Council, the Green Team and the Active Team are all busy and all classes are keeping active

and doing lots of P.E. outdoors. We've also been making use of our new outdoor teaching area by the vegetable garden. The only thing we had to stop is singing but we look forward to better times when music will return to our school.

Our Parents' Association committee and Board of Management continue to meet regularly. I would like to thank them for their skills, expertise and time which they give so willingly to the school. A special mention goes to the Development Committee who organised the wonderful Family Quiz at a time when we really did need to come together as a school community. The Development Committee have spent the last couple of weeks organising the raffles which will take place Friday 18th.

Sincere thanks go to our parents and guardians who have cooperated with us to keep our school community safe this term. I am particularly grateful to our school staff, especially for the support they have offered Anna and me when I have been working from home and also for the continued high level of commitment and dedication they show to our pupils in these challenging times. And of course, I would like to thank the children of RETNS – they make our job such a joy.

I am so looking forward to seeing all of you on 6 January. In the meantime, have a happy, healthy and peaceful holiday.

Nollaig faoi shéan agus faoi mhaise daoibh go léir!

Le dea-ghuí

Maeve