

ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Christmas Newsletter 2020



Message from the Principal

Dear Parents,

I would like to wish you all a safe, healthy and very happy Christmas. Thank you for all your support and kindness throughout the term. I hope you all enjoy a well-earned break and have the opportunity to rest and re-charge after a challenging, busy and enjoyable term. What a term it was but we definitely made the most of it and have had many memorable moments.

Rachel Harper



Christmas Concert



This year, our Christmas Concert will be a little bit different. We are sorry we can't invite you into see your lovely children to perform due to Covid restrictions, so the next best thing we felt was to send the concert home to you.

Kyle O'Connell has kindly agreed to video each class perform one piece. This will be sent out over the coming days. The hope is that all the families in the school will watch it together at the same time to create a special St Patricks Christmas Concert Night.



The Lighthouse Christmas

Here at St Patrick's National School we are always trying to instil in the children the importance of thinking and helping other children. The children here have such kind hearts and inspires us all everyday. Our motto this year, during Covid times is:

"What CAN we do rather than what we can't do"

Wow, the children made us so proud on Sunday 13th December 2020. It is a memory that will last a long time. I strongly believe that we as adults can learn so much from the hearts of children. A huge thank to you all for supporting this with your kind donations and giving of valuable time.

News clip link: <https://www.tiglin.ie/news/st-patricks-greystones>



MS Readathon



Multiple Sclerosis (MS), is an illness that affects the nervous system (the brain, optic nerve and the spinal cord.) It prevents the messages going to the brain and spine, sometimes it can cause people who have MS to lose vision or feel weak in the arms and legs that can cause them to fall over.

In November, our school did the MS Readathon to help raise money for the MS society. A lot of students in school took part in doing it and raised a lot of money. It was really good that all of 3rd class took part. 2nd class (Ms Morgan's class) took part in a Zoom call with some Cork secondary school students who explained all about MS and the MS Society.

By giving money to the MS society, you are helping people with MS in Ireland to get the healthcare they need and for research to help find a cure. Which we all hope they find soon.

Thank you for participating in the 2020 Readathon and for all the money you have raised. Well done!

Amber Flag



We are taking on a new and exciting challenge this year. Following on from the success of our Active Flag initiative, we are now taking on the challenge of obtaining the Amber Flag.

The Pieta Amber Flag initiative, in line with the Department of Education and Skills guidelines for “Well –Being in Primary Schools Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion”, recognises the individual efforts of schools to create healthy and inclusive environments that support mental well-being. In St. Patrick’s, we have a wonderful school community, and we aim to bring this community together in order to create a safe, positive, and healthy attitude towards our mental health and wellbeing.

We are already doing so much within the school to promote positive mental well-being. This flag will recognise those efforts while encouraging us to actively explore ways/ areas we can improve. This year our students have faced massive upheaval and have had to adapt to the new and strange norms. As a school community we have shown great resilience and positivity and we wish to continue to encourage this through our Amber flag activities.

4th class will be the committee and have taken on the role with excitement and enthusiasm. Some of the ideas which we hope to put into action over the course of the year are as follows:

- Monthly birthday celebrations
- Amber Flag noticeboard with loads of positive news from across the school.
- Random acts of kindness chain in each classroom
- Feelings box in each classroom
- DEAR- Drop everything and relax
- More use of our wonderful school grounds for relaxation time.
- Wellbeing week/ friendship week



Active Week & Mini Marathon

As we didn't get to do our annual Mini Marathon fundraiser last year due to the school closure for Covid 19, we ran a week of Active Homework during the week of the 16th - 20th of November and families were asked to contribute. These funds were being raised to purchase more sports equipment for PE, as due to Covid 19 we can't share as easily so we are feeling the pinch on our PE resources.

This fundraiser was very successful and we raised €478.70 which will help us purchase some much needed equipment. We have also decided to donate 10% of this to the MS Readathon to add a little to the funds raised by the children taking part in the Readathon for this worthy cause. Along with this, to continue our push for more physical activity, the children are taking part in daily Active Breaks for the remainder of the term as part of our application to renew our Active Flag. This is being co-ordinated by Ms. Roper along with help from the rest of the staff.



Garden News

Following a wonderfully successful start to the school year by tending, harvesting, tasting and distributing a great variety of organically grown, pesticide-free fruit and vegetables, planting has already begun for next year. Tá gairleog curtha isteach ag Rang a Dó. Lots of flowering bulbs have been planted and great plans are afloat for progressing the sensory garden with the help of many individual pupils. The majority of "tidying" should be left

until spring to give insects and invertebrates leaves and fallen debris to hibernate safely in - thereby giving our native bird species a vital winter food source. However, it has been necessary to do some jobs, eg. pruning of raspberry canes to encourage NEXT YEAR'S crop, bottling our own nettle feed and clearing and covering of vegetable beds to prevent the spread of plant diseases.

Tremendous thanks to the whole team of (pupil and parent) workers who are taking an active part in and ownership of various parts of the school garden. It's really encouraging to see the blossoming interest!



- ✧ The garden committee are storing plants in the polytunnel that cannot survive in the cold weather.
- ✧ Both 3rd classes have planted allium bulbs in pots, which will flower in the Spring.
- ✧ We are planning to install a bee-home in the Sensory Garden, next to the pond (in this way no-one will get stung).
- ✧ Hollie Fenton from 6th class Ash has been working in the Sensory Garden with Anabel. Together they have weeded and trimmed back the old growth. Hollie has researched different sensory plants and is now designing a new layout. The plan includes flowers of different colours, varying heights, and ones that bloom throughout the year.



News from around the classes:

Junior Infants

Junior Infants have been exploring all kinds of transport this month. During Aistear we made vehicles from playdoh, went on adventures on the train and explored the effects of forces on our cars in small world. In Art we created our own hot air balloons with lots of different patterns!



Senior Infants

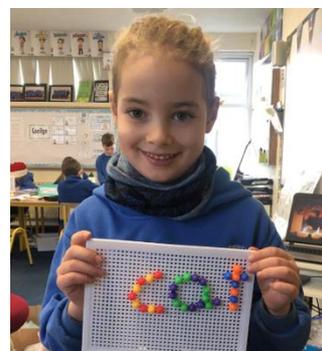
This month, Senior Infants have enjoyed our Outer Space theme in Aistear - we have had space station role play, and wonderful Lego rocket creations and have learnt about the planets in our solar system. As part of Science Week, we had some fun carrying our investigations to make our own rainbows - we 'grew a rainbow' using kitchen towels, markers and water, we made a rainbow in a jar using liquids of different densities and food colouring and we observed colour patterns using skittles and water.



1st Class



First Class really enjoyed celebrating Thanksgiving this November. Ms. Sheil very kindly prepared a Reader's Theatre of The First Thanksgiving and some of us performed for the class. We have also just begun working on Algebra...check out Zach's 'cat' pattern



2nd Class – Hazel



Rang a Dó (Coll) have been learning about native animals and hibernation, An Vaimpír ar Oíche Shamhna and writing about midterm break and colour mixing in painting.



We've also been choosing work we are proud of - Gold Star work! - and learning about and listening to Beethoven and Vivaldi.

2nd Class – Holly



We made some singing reindeer for the class while we can't sing in the room. We also made our class advent calendar and we have 15 minutes of Christmas themed activities for the last 15 minutes of the day.



We also wrote some letters to a Nursing Home and got some replies. Here is an example:

Dear John: **lama boy**
 My name is [redacted] I am 7 Years old.
 I like to play football.
 I don't like hockey.
 My Favourite Food is cake chocolate
 ice cream and sweets. My favourite movie is
 The Night Before Christmas. What is your Favourite
 Food. ~Something special about me is I am kind.
 A special talent I have is I can do
 Kickaputs Will you be My best Friends?
 If you could give me one
 piece of advice what would it be?

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR LETTER! IT
 REMINDS ME OF WHEN I WAS SIXT SEVEN OLD, AT
 THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WARE TWO, AS WE LIVED TO
 THE SOUTH EAST OF LONDON UNDER THE FLIGHT PATH
 OF GERMAN BOMBERS, WE WERE FORCED OUT OUR HOME
 ONCE - MY PARENTS SENT ME AND MY BROTHER TO
 STAY WITH AN AUNT IN A COUNTRY COTTAGE UP
 SUSSEX, WHERE WE STAYED FOR TWO YEARS. THE LAST
 TWO YEARS (DURING) I CONTRACTED SCARLET FEVER AND
 WAS IN ISOLATION HOSPITAL.
 THAT MEANT WORKING VERY HARD STUDYING BACK
 AT SCHOOL WHEN I DID START BACK AT HOME.
 YOU ASK FOR ONE PIECE OF ADVICE, THIS IS
 TO WORK HARD BY YOUR STEPS AS I HAD TO
 SO. I MANAGED TO DO WELL IN EDUCATIONAL
 ENGLISH, EVENTUALLY CHIEF ENGINEER
 AND ELECTRICAL DESIGNER IN AUTOMATION IN
 PACKAGING AND BOTTLING MACHINES.
 I DO LIKE HARDY PAPER BOOKS AND FILMS
 AND MY GOOD FRIENDS

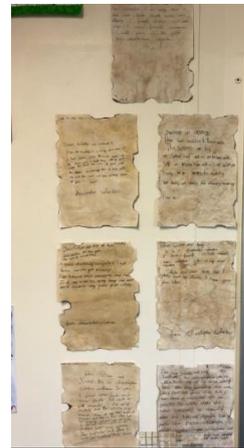
We have a Elf and He is very happy.
 When is your Birthdays _____
 In school we are getting ready for Christmas.
 We are doing a school video song.
 We have a Christmas classroom advent calendar.
 I have a Elf called gumdrop He is mysterious.
 My Birthday is the 5th of September 2012.
 What is your favourite holiday.
 What are you doing for the Christmas holidays. From _____ P.S. I am
 have Northing Ireland. ❤️

Thank you for your lovely note. I like the pictures you drew especially the fox. That's a good hobby to have Sewing and gymnastics. My favourite colour is purple.
 I am so glad you told me about the films you watched. I have read all the Harry Potter books and seen all the films.
 My other hobby is reading. There is lovely children books. Read as many as you can. That would be my advice for you!

3rd Class – Birch



3rd Class Birch have been learning all about the life of Christopher Columbus and had lots of fun writing letters from Christopher Columbus to the King and Queen of Spain. They even made their letters look old by staining the letters with tea.



They have also been learning about Advent and discovering what each of the Advent candles represents.



3rd Class – Willow

To celebrate science week the children prepared experiments at home to show us all in class. We had a huge variety, from moving pictures to explosive elephant toothpaste and everything in between! Thank you to all the parents and children who took the time to investigate science and we are very excited here in St Patrick's, as the future in science is bright with all our extraordinary, budding scientists in third!



Both 3rd classes (Willow & Birch) have undertaken a Christmas project this month where they created some dioramas which are displayed on our windows for senior infants to see at their break time.



4th Class – Rowan



In 4th Class Rowan we have been learning about angles – check out our visual displays! →

We were also learning about Picasso and did some great artwork ourselves.



4th Class – Larch

Last month we worked very hard creating projects about The Rainforest. We did lots of research in our groups and presented our projects to the class. We are very proud of them and have learned so many new things about rainforests.



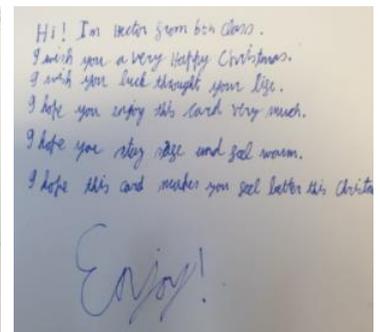
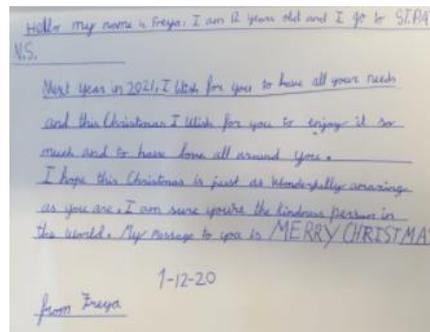
5th Class

5th class have been very busy practicing their torch performance in preparation for the Christmas video.



6th Class – Ash

We have been busy preparing some Christmas Cards to go along with our donations for the Lighthouse Christmas. We really enjoyed making them and hope they bring a smile and a positive message to the people that receive them. It helped us to remember to be grateful for what we have.



6th Class – Oak



6th Oak have helped to create a piece of art for the Nativity trail that is a collaboration between all the churches in Greystones. It represents the masses of people that descended on Bethlehem for the census - the reason why there was no room at the Inn!



Additional school news.....

This term, Ms Bedell have been reading the novel 'Matilda' with 6th Class and also learning all about the maths topic 'Fractions'. In order to practice some real-life fraction problem-solving skills which also related to our novel 'Matilda', the children in the group baked some chocolate cupcakes. They all had a fantastic time!



Staff News.



We would like to wish Rosie O'Neill, Janet Roper & Sorcha Ryan the very best as they begin their Maternity Leave. We look forward to hearing news of their new arrivals.

We would like to welcome to the team;



Emma Hickey who is in 5th Class and Michelle O'Connor who will be in 6th Class Ash from January.



Mhairi Nicoll who is in SEN



Safety concern

Could we please ask you to remind your children to be careful when coming through the staff car park and to stay to the right (on the footpath) and not to run behind cars.

Message from the Board of Management

"It's hard to believe that it is already the festive season! Congratulations to all the school staff who have done an incredible job keeping everyone well and safe this term. And a big welcome to the new members of the PTA - Annette, Nick and Jackie. The PTA plays a very important part in our school life and the volunteers put enormous time and effort into all the activities they support. We are very grateful to them. We wish everyone in our school community a safe, peaceful and happy Christmas". *Susan Hayden, Parent Rep.*



Message from the PTA



The PTA would like to take this opportunity to wish all the wonderful families of St. Patrick's National School a very Happy Christmas and sending every good wish for 2021.

We thank you for all your support over the last year and we are so grateful to you all for continuing to support our initiatives this year. Our promise to you is to continue to look for new ways to fundraise for our wonderful school. In times of change it can be challenging to think of new ways of working but we have a truly dedicated team who are working behind the scenes with some great fundraising ideas for 2021. All we ask of you is to continue to support us in whatever way you can. Please always feel free to contact any member of the team if you have any ideas that you would like to discuss or if there is anything we can help with in our roles as PTA members. We are here to represent you.

We would also like to acknowledge all the hard work carried out by the class representatives. Your time, enthusiasm and effort is greatly appreciated by us all and we thank you for that.

Our last fundraiser of 2020 were the Christmas cards and the elves were busy making sure these got to you all. I am sure all your families and friends will appreciate the lovely artwork created by the children.

Nollaig Shona agus ath bhlian faoi mhaise daoibh
From the PTA Committee.



Message from Canon David Mungavin & Rev. Rebecca Guildea

Well done Ms Harper and all the staff - our school has been a happy place of dedication, learning and care in spite of all the restrictions .

As Christmas approaches, we're thinking of reasons to celebrate. It's been a tough year for many, and now more than ever it seems important to focus on all the good we've seen this year.

It's been a joy to see our community working together in so many ways. We were overjoyed by the church leaders, artists and school children who came together to make our Christmas Quest trail happen. Look out for the amazing artwork from 6th class on the front and side gate of the school.

We were also bowled over by the generosity and kindness of the school community in supporting the Lighthouse appeal. To see the table in the church piled high with toiletries, scarves, gloves and boxes of chocolates was a beautiful and humbling experience.

In the darkest of times, human kindness shines brightly, and points us to the presence of God among us. Our prayer is that the absence of all the festivities this year might give us time and wisdom to draw closer to the God who made Himself known to us on that first Christmas when Jesus was born in simplicity and poverty. Happy Christmas & God be with you all in your hearts and homes.

Covid 19

As we finish up our first term, we are very grateful to have done so in a safe, yet enjoyable, manner. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to staff, parents & children for adhering to the new practices we have in place.

Just a reminder of a few things when returning in January:

- Any bag brought in must fit in the box under the table
- There is to be no sharing of personal items & please bring in school necessities only
- Individual sanitiser
- No items to move from school to home and vice versa unless under direct instruction from the teacher.
- We ask that when you collect your children, you move on promptly to refrain from gathering and to lead by example regarding social distancing.
- Continue to advise your children on the importance of good hygiene



Passengers travelling from an “orange” or “red” or “grey” region over the holidays are to restrict their movements for 14 days. This period of restricted movement can end if you receive a negative/’not detected’ result of a PCR test that has been taken a minimum of five days after your arrival in Ireland. You should wait for your negative test result to be returned before ending the period of restricted movements. (<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b4020-travelling-to-ireland-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/#covid-19-tests-for-international-travel>)



School closes for the Christmas Holidays at 12pm on Tuesday 22nd December 2020 and re-opens at 8.20am on Wednesday 6th January 2021.



We would like to wish everyone a very enjoyable and peaceful Christmas

