

# Scoil Naomh Iósaf, Baltinglass



## Board of Management Report to Parents Following their Meeting dated April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021.

**School Reopening:** The Board are very pleased to report that school reopening since March 1<sup>st</sup> has been very successful. The children and staff are delighted to be back in school. Everyone is working very hard, the behaviour of the pupils is excellent and there is a happy and relaxed atmosphere in the school.

**School Calendar:** As per the school calendar, the school is closed for the week of the May Bank Holiday (May 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> inclusive), June 7<sup>th</sup> (Bank Holiday) and will close for the summer on June 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:00. Sixth Class Graduation is on June 25<sup>th</sup> – further details on this to follow.

**Finance:** The school Accountant, Eamonn O’Keeffe, presented the completed financial accounts for the school year 2019/2020 to the Board. The accounts were ratified by the Board and will now be presented to the Patron and the Financial Support Services Unit (FSSU) for approval and verification.

**Staffing Schedule:** The Department of Education published the latest Staffing Schedule. There have been no changes for Scoil Naomh Iosaf who continue to have 24 teaching staff – Principal, 14 mainstream class teachers, 2 special class teachers and 7 special educational needs teachers.

**Policy on Remote Working in the Event of a School Closure due to an Outbreak of Covid-19 in a Class or lack of Availability of Substitute Teachers:** The Board agreed that in the event that a class is closed due to a covid-19 outbreak, the class will continue their education via remote learning. If the teacher is medically well and fit to teach, the teacher will continue to teach his/her class on Seesaw. If the teacher is not available, work will be posted by teachers currently working remotely. In the unlikely event of a Covid-19 outbreak in the school where a number of classes/staff are affected and a replacement teacher is not available (either a substitute teacher or a member of the school SET team), the class(es) affected will remain at home and will continue their education remotely. The Board have requested that all parents ensure that they or an alternative contact person are available by phone during the school day in case of an emergency whereby a class has to close at short notice and pupils need to be collected. Parents should also ensure that the school has their most up-to-date phone number and email address.

**GAA Coaching:** The Board have agreed that GAA coaching can recommence in the school. The GAA Schedule is now organised for all classes. Junior and Senior will have three sessions with Paul Garrigan while each class from first to sixth will have five sessions between now and June 30<sup>th</sup> with coach Patsy Barrett.

**School Tours:** The school is organising a school tour for all pupils from third to sixth classes in the outdoor education centre. Tours are organised for the 18<sup>th</sup> (third class), 22<sup>nd</sup> (fourth class), 23<sup>rd</sup> (fifth class) and 24<sup>th</sup> of June (sixth class). The cost is €40 and includes kayaking, abseiling/climbing and orienteering. A hot lunch is included and the tour runs from 9:30 to 16:30. Children will be brought to and from the venue by bus in pods of fifteen. Tours/Events will also be organised for infant to second classes (in line with Public health advice) and parents informed when these are organised.

**Extension of Buy-A-Brick:** The PA have decided to extend the Buy-A-Brick initiative until Halloween with the agreement of the Board.

**Teaching and Learning:** The focus this term is on literacy, numeracy, physical activity and wellbeing. Each class has two playground slots each week, participate in the run around Ireland challenge and have GAA coaching. The Mindful Heart wellbeing curriculum had been taught to first classes and the programme is now being presented to the two second classes. The Gaeilge Plan has been updated by the Gaeilge Team in the school. The plan is predicated on the Primary Language Curriculum. A planning grid that mirrors the Literacy Grid, outlines the writing genres, comprehension strategies, oral language, grammar etc. to be taught at each class level. The plan also outlines the briathra to be taught at each class level and includes songs and poems. The plan will be implemented from September 2021.

**Swift Boxes:** Brian O'Reilly in conjunction with the Baltinglass Tidy Towns, have installed two swift boxes on the North face of the school water tower.

**Picker Pals:** First classes are getting involved with the Picker Pal initiative which involves clearing litter from the local environment. Angela Kenny from Voice Ireland working with WCC contacted the school in relation to this.

**Run Around Ireland Challenge:** All classes are taking part in the *Run Around Ireland Challenge* as part of active schools. They will run/walk laps of the yard and class laps will be combined to match the distance from Baltinglass famous landmarks around the country.

**School Raffle:** takes place after the May Bank Holiday week.

**Bee Aware Workshops:** Fifth classes will attend an online workshop 'Bee Aware' presented by Amanda McKnight from Green Sod Ireland (an ecological education and land trust charity). Plants will be forwarded to the school prior to the workshop and the children will plant these following the presentation.

Sixth classes will attend a fully funded workshop on environmental awareness as part of **Leave No Trace Champions** organised by WCC.

All classes have been encouraged to take part in the **Grow It Forward** initiative organised by Kildare County Library.

**Promoting Mental Health:** The Principal emailed information from Wicklow County Library Service to parents in relation to parenting talks on promoting children's mental health and parenting amidst a global pandemic and providing support to parents on how best to support children with this. Topics include managing behaviour at home, effective communication between parents and children, return to school following lockdown and how to promote a positive mind set.

**Parental Declaration/Return to Education Form:** The Department of Education have requested that parents complete this form after any period of absence due to sickness or holidays. Parents were also reminded that their child should not attend school if she/he or anyone in the family is feeling unwell, have been in contact with someone who may have Covid or if anyone in the household is self-isolating. A precautionary approach is best.