**Principal’s Report to Parents**

**Following the Board of Management Meeting on February 1st, 2023**

**School Opening/Closing**

At the previous Board of Management meeting, the Board agreed that the staggered opening/closing was no longer necessary. The Board made the decision that the school revert to the normal opening hours early in 2023. **Accordingly, from February 20th there will be no staggered opening/closing times. The school will open at 8:50 and close at 1:30 for infant classes and 2:30 for first to sixth classes.** This means that after the February mid-term:

* The front door will open at 8:40 for children to start coming into the school and will be closed at 8:50.
* All pupils must be in school by 8:50 - our official opening time.
* Junior and senior infants will go home at 1:30
* First to sixth classes will go home at 2:30.

It is essential that pupils are in school on time to maximise their learning and to partake in the various school activities. We have also noticed that having the school door open from 8:40 to 9:00 means that a lot of the heat is escaping and the school can get cold very quickly.

**We request that all parents adhere to the school opening and closing times and ensure that pupils are in school by 8:50** from February 20th.

The Board of Management note that pupils should not be outside the school before 8:40 as there is no supervision before this time. **At home time, all pupils must walk down the steps and walk out the school gate. Children may not walk across the grass or through the car parks and we ask parents to remind children of this.**

The Board also note that parents are not allowed to park in the staff car parks either in the mornings or at home times. Parents are also requested not to block footpaths or the entrance to housing estates in the interests of pupil safety.

**New Maths Initiative: Buddy Maths**

SNI are planning to implement an exciting new initiative called ‘Buddy Maths’. Senior pupils will lead junior pupils in ‘hands-on’ maths activities using concrete materials and games. The senior pupils will be working on questioning and explanation skills. The junior pupils will be extending and consolidating their learning from maths class with their teacher by engaging in the Buddy Maths activities. Initially, the junior children will work in groups with their senior buddies on the topics of time, money, length, and number. A Buddy Maths pilot starts on February 2nd between Ms. Hannafin’s fourth class and Ms. Gibbons’s senior infants.

**Barnardos Online Safety Workshops**

Barnados Ireland are providing workshops for third to sixth class on online/internet safety. Kendra Seale presented the workshops to the third and fourth classes on January 12th and will present to fifth and sixth classes in early February. Barnados will also facilitate an information session for parents in the school hall – date to be confirmed. Barnardos also provide free webinars for parents – login to [www.barnardos.ie/osp](http://www.barnardos.ie/osp) to book the next available parent webinar on online safety.

**Parent Association Update**

The Board of Management would like to sincerely thank the Parents Association for all their hard work in fundraising for the school playground and for school events such as a bus to the Peace Proms, Selection Boxes for Christmas, Easter Eggs etc. To date, the PA have raised €24,000 towards our school playground which is a fantastic achievement and greatly appreciated by the Board. The Board would also like to acknowledge and commend the PA for the many events that they organise including, Hot Dog Day, Cake Sales, School Discos, Clothes Recycling, Non-Uniform days and much more. The Board noted that Scoil Naomh Iósaf is very lucky to have such a wonderful, dedicated group of parents supporting the school.

**Catholic Schools Week**

Catholic Schools Week took place from Sunday, January 22nd to 29th. The theme for the week was ‘Walking Together in Faith and Love’. It was lovely to have Fr. Ger visit the school to talk to all the classes over the intercom and to visit the children in their classrooms during the week.

**Admissions Process and Admissions Policy**

The admissions process is currently underway and we will be delighted to welcome all our new pupils in September. There will be two junior infant classes in September with approximately 23 pupils in each class. Families who have applied, will receive the letter of offer, enrolment form and relevant documents in the post next week. The Board also formally ratified the Admissions policy which was amended on November 30th 2022. An email with the amended wording was sent too all parents at that time and the amended Admissions Policy is on our school website.

**Olena Iegoriva Leaving**

The staff of SNI would like to acknowledge the wonderful contribution that Olena has made to the pupils and staff as a Ukrainian teacher in SNI since September. Olena helped to organise our morning ‘Hub in the Hall’ for Ukrainian Pupils and also provided EAL support for Ukrainian pupils. Olena was a tremendous assistance to pupils, teachers and parents as she attended meetings and support groups to act as translator. We wish Olena every success in her new job and home in Blessington.

**Concern Debating**

Huge congratulations to our debating team who have made to the final of the Concern Debating Shield competition. Everyone in SNI is super proud of the team who will be debating the motion ‘The voting age should be lowered to 16 in ROI/NI’ in Kildare Education Centre on Friday February 3rd. Thanks to Ms. Maeve Phelan and Ms. Audrey Murphy for the dedication to preparing the teams. Previous motions that the team won included ‘Fines should be implemented for households wasting food’, ‘If we really care about climate change, we should all fly less’ and ‘The SDGs are a waste of time’. Best of luck to the Debating Team on Friday.

**Credit Union Quiz**

Congratulations to both the Junior and Senior Quiz teams who won the Credit Union Quiz competition last Friday, January 28th. This is a fantastic achievement and all in SNI are extremely proud of each and every team member. Their hard work and dedication has paid off – lunch time practice four days a week in addition to work at home. Sincere thanks to Mr. Ciarán Walshe for all his hard work in preparing the teams. They are now preparing for the Leinster Finals and we wish them the very best of luck in the next round.

**Peace Proms**

Our wonderful choir are attending the Peace Proms next Sunday, February 5th in the RDS. They have practiced every Tuesday for the past few months and are now ‘pitch perfect’ and ready to sing their hearts out on Sunday. Thanks to Ms. Gibbons, Ms. Owens and Ms. Carr for their commitment to the choir and their hard work in preparing the children for the Peace Proms.

**Leinster Badminton Tournament**

Two teams from SNI are attending the Leinster Badminton Tournament today, February 2nd in Baldoyle, Dublin. Thanks to Ms. Maeve Phelan for organising the trip and preparing the children for the day. News Just in: Both teams played brilliantly and had a great day. Congratulations to the girl’s team who have qualified for the Leinster semi-final.

**Ficheall Chess Tournament**

Two fifth-class teams of eight chess players attended the Féile Fichille Tournament in Crookstown on Tuesday, January 31st. The children played brilliant chess and greatly enjoyed the tournament. A Fourth class chess team will attend the Féile Fichille

have a wonderful day. Sincere thanks to Mr. Tom Hannafin for his hard work in teaching chess to the senior classes and for his help in organising the tournament.

**Movie Day - Dec 19th**

Children in all classes greatly enjoyed ‘Movie Day’ in Fatima Hall on December 19th. Mark Caplice (Cappy) ensured the hall looked magical and had a bag of treats ready for every child. The movie experience was a lovely Christmas treat for the children.

**ILSA Spring Conference: Principal, Deputy and AON**

The Principal, Deputy Principal and a member of the SET team will attend the Irish Learning Support Association (ILSA) Spring Conference in the Clayton Hotel, Dublin Airport on Friday March 24th. This year’s theme is Passport to Success: Aligning Teaching and Learning.

**Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying**

The Principal informed the Board of the recent Government publication called Cineáltas (Kindness). This is the Government Action Plan on Bullying - Ireland’s Whole Education Approach to preventing and addressing bullying in school. SNI will review this document as part of our School Self Evaualtion Process and include ideas relevant to our school in our Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Pat Hunt**

Heritage expert, Patrick Hunt will visit the school in April, May and October this year to talk to the classes about nature and biodiversity in our school environment.