**Principal’s Report to Parents**

**Following the Board of Management Meeting on November 24th, 2022**

**Incidental Visit from Mr. John Mescal**

Scoil Naomh Iosaf had an unexpected ‘incidental’ visit from Department of Education Inspectors on October 19th, 2022. The inspectors received a warm welcome and were very pleased with the teaching and learning in the school and the warm and welcoming environment for the pupils. Feedback was provided after the inspection to the Principal and Deputy Principal. As the inspectorate only provide oral feedback after an incidental visit (no written feedback) the Deputy Principal, Ms. Larkin put together a summary report of the visit – see attached. The inspectors visited the classrooms of Ms. Síle Carr, Ms. Clare Owens, and Mr. Ciarán Walshe.

**Opening Times**

The Board discussed the merit of the current staggered opening times. Covid-19 is no longer an issue for the school – although we continue to have a number of flu and stomach viruses pervading the classrooms. The Board agreed that the school should now revert to the original opening times instead of the staggered opening/closing. It would be more clearcut for parents and maximise teaching and learning in the school. The staff also noted that the school gets cold very quickly in the morning as the front door and corridor doors are open for 20/25 minutes. As the school has only one entrance/exit point, the staggered opening was initiated to ensure that children were not all arriving at the one time during the covid pandemic. The Board decided that the school should revert to the official opening time of 8:50 and closing times of 1:30 for infants and 2:30 for all other classes early in the New Year. The Board also asked the Principal to remind parents that children should not arrive to school prior to 8:40 as there is no supervision before that time.

**Rainbows**

The Board is delighted that the school is planning to have Rainbows up and running in the school in 2023. Ten staff members have done the facilitator training and the Principal and Ms. Sarah Delaney have undertaken coordinator training. Ms. Sarah Delaney has agreed to coordinate the training alongside the Principal and will organise the Rainbows programme for parents and facilitators. Rainbows is for children who have suffered bereavement/loss and family separation. Contact Sarah Delaney at [rainbowssnibaltinglass@gmail.com](mailto:rainbowssnibaltinglass@gmail.com) if you feel your child would benefit from Rainbows.

**Admissions Notice**

Maeve Mahon from the Patron’s office has confirmed the dates for the commencement of the admissions process for the 2023-2024 School Year. This notice will be published on the school website for the parents’ information.

**Hospital Visit with Blessington Library**

Blessington Library has organised for the first classes to visit Baltinglass Hospital to sing songs with the residents and to facilitate an intergenerational meeting between the children in Scoil Naomh Iósaf and the residents of Baltinglass Hospital. The children had a wonderful experience as did the hospital residents. Thanks to Ms. Clare Owens and Ms. Ruth Hedderman for bringing their first classes to the hospital and for ensuring they had a lovely day.

**Cois Céim**

Ms. Hannafin/Ms. Butler’s fourth classes had a fabulous experience with the Cois Céim Dance Theatre. They came to the school on two occasions and the children experienced a virtual theatre performance from the Ark in Dublin.

**Primary Debating**

Congratulations to the school debating team who have won two of the three debates that have taken place so far in the Concern Debating competition. Ms. Audrey Murphy and Ms. Maeve Phelan have put huge work into assisting the children to write the debates and work on their presentation skills – their hard work is paying off!

**Barnardos –Online/Internet safety**

The Principal has booked Barnardos to present online safety workshops to the third to sixth classes in January. Workshops will also be provided in the school hall for Parents.

**Retreat Day in St. Dominic’s Retreat Centre Montenotte**

Our Religious coordinator, Ms. Marie Fitzpatrick will attend the Diocesan retreat in Cork.

**Anti-Bullying/Friendship Fortnight**

Anti-bullying/Friendship fortnight was a great success. Ms. Joan Murtagh organised ideas and activities for friendship in a folder for each class. All classes engaged in Buddy reading. Posters and artwork were created by the children and displayed across the school. The sixth class created a wonderful poster encouraging everyone to be ‘upstanding’ and not ‘bystanders’ when they notice someone being bullied, excluded, upset, etc.

**Art for Ukrainian Pupils.**

The Lions Club received money to use for the Ukrainian pupils and has organised for one of the Ukrainian parents who is an artist, to give art lessons to the children once a week after school. Mr. Tom Hannafin will coordinate this – including the organisation of materials and public liability.

**Concert in Church**

All classes will sing two songs in the Christmas Carol Service in the church on December 12th.