

Scoil Mhuire na nGrást,
Béal Guala,
Co. Chorcaí.



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08/09/2021

Dear Parent/Guardian,

WELCOME

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back after the summer break with a special greeting to all our new pupils and families. We also welcome staff who are joining us this School Year (2021/2022) – Ms. Jessica O’Donovan (Second Class), Mr. Tiernan McKeown (Fifth Class), Ms. Sharon O’Leary (Junior Infants) & Mr. Patrick O’Flaherty (Fourth Class).

We have now been back to school for just over a week and we would like to thank everyone for their on-going support and vigilance. School life has resumed and everyone is enjoying reconnecting and engaging with work and activities after the summer break.

Further to previous school correspondence (25/08/2021), all existing arrangements will remain in place for the moment. In light of evolving COVID-19 developments and guideline updates, some adaptations may occur and families will be advised accordingly, in due course.

SUMMER WORKS 2021

Over the years, through various grants from the Department of Education & Skills, voluntary family contributions and Parents’ Association fundraising and the generous efforts of the local community, the school has been able to add to its physical infrastructure to meet growing needs. The school community has a strong historical commitment to maintaining the integrity of the fabric of the physical learning and working environment and it is encouraging that such a commitment is on-going.

In addition to an extensive deep cleaning throughout the school, other school improvement works undertaken during the summer break entailed necessary repair and maintenance works throughout the building and school grounds.

Having secured DES funding to facilitate an extension of three mainstream classrooms, a resource room and the conversion of an existing classroom to Special Education accommodation, the contractor has commenced works and the Board has been advised that the school will be in a position to take occupancy of its new rooms in April/May 2022. We look forward to this new development.

The school would like to acknowledge the successful efforts of the entire school community (Board of Management, Parents’ Association, School Families, Staff & Pupils) for their practical support, assistance and co-operation in all the related preparation works.

ANNUAL VOLUNTARY FAMILY CONTRIBUTION 2021/2022

While the Board of Management continues to exhaust every possible avenue in terms of available funding, the **Annual Voluntary Family Contribution of €50** plays a very significant role in bringing about such improvements, as outlined above. In the interest of safety, ease of payment and to assist with administration, the school is facilitating e-payment in respect of this voluntary collection - families will receive a text tomorrow, Thursday, with related payment advice details. Please refer to *page 5* of this letter for further details on this payment type. The payment of this voluntary contribution is facilitated in a number of ways: a once off payment of €50; at the start of each term – Term1/Term 2 €20 & Term 3 €10; €10 every other month. Your on-going generosity and support is much appreciated.

Over....

STAFF MEETING & EARLY CLOSURE (Tuesday, 05 October)

In order to facilitate a staff meeting, pupils will finish and leave on **Tuesday, 05 October** in the following series:

- 'Junior Infants' – 12.50 – 1.00pm
- 'Senior Infants' – 1.00 – 1.10pm
- 'Walkers' (1st & 2nd Classes) – 1.10 – 1.20pm
- 'Walkers' (3rd to 6th Classes) – 1.20 – 1.30pm
- School Buses – 1.30 – 1.40pm

Should you have a child in Junior or Senior Infants who is to depart school in the company of an older sibling as a 'Walker' or 'Bus', arrangements will be made by the relevant staff for these pupils to join their older siblings at the relevant times in respect of school departure, as outlined above.

PUPIL PERSONAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE 2021/2022 (Allianz)

The Allianz Pupil Personal Accident 24 hour cover is operational for all pupils again this year and the fee is €8 for 24 hour cover. **Friday, 01 October** is designated date for final collection of money. In the interest of safety, for ease of payment and to assist with administration, the school is facilitating e-payment in respect of this collection - families will receive a text tomorrow, Thursday, with related payment advice details. Related details attached which provide further information on this scheme. **(Please note that VHI Swiftcare in Mahon is dedicated only to VHI customers)**

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS (2021/2022)

Parents are requested to inform the Board, through the Principal, of any allergies or any *Specific Requirements* of their child. The Board will then inform all parents of a food allergy within the school. Without identifying any individual pupils, the teachers will make their pupils aware of food allergies. This, the Board hopes will provide a safe environment and invites parents, staff, pupils and school visitors for their co-operation.

Because the consequences of a child having an allergic reaction can be serious, the Board assumes that the whole school community will assist in making the school as safe as is reasonably possible for each child.

Regarding School Year 2021/2022, please note we have pupils in the following sections who have particular allergies (Junior Infants, First, Second, Third, Fourth & Fifth Classes – hazelnut, peanut, cashew, walnut, pecan and pistachio nut allergies) and who have been advised to avoid all foods containing same. We ask for your co-operation in this respect.

BOOK RENTAL SCHEME (BRS) 2021/2022)

Further to previous Home/School correspondence last month (25/08/2021), the school wishes to congratulate and express their gratitude to the Parents' Association Book Rental Scheme (BRS) working group - together with Ms. Hurley, Mrs. Ryan, Mr. Hayes-Curtin & Ms. O'Donovan - who kindly volunteered so much of their time to facilitate the preparation and distribution of books to pupils partaking in the scheme. This has been a worthwhile initiative with significant levels of uptake again this school year among school families. As previously outlined, the scheme will be reviewed annually. Going forward, the continuation, scope and expansion of the scheme is subject to available funding and the practical assistance and support of a related working group to assist with the administration of the scheme.

If your child is not availing of the Book Rental Scheme for 2021/2022, please note that a charge will apply for the use of Supplementary English Readers and the interactive aspect of the Irish Scheme and related materials (Junior Infant to Second Classes) and the Hire of Novels, use of Supplementary Irish Readers and the interactive aspect of the Irish Scheme and related materials (Third to Sixth Classes). This charge amounts to €5 per/child for all classes and we request that payment is forwarded to your child's class teacher no later than **Friday 01 October** (please place €5.00 in an envelope labelled with your child's name and marked 'Non-BRS 2021/2022 Charge')

WEAVING WELL-BEING PROGRAMME (SECOND TO SIXTH CLASSES)

Pupils from **Second to Sixth Class** will be using the **Weaving Well-Being Programme** in school again this year. *Weaving Well-Being* is an Irish-designed *Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE)* programme which teaches children evidence-based skills and strategies to develop positive mental health and well-being. It is based on Positive Psychology, which is the science of well-being. The aim of the programme is to empower children to become active participants in creating, maintaining and boosting positive mental health throughout their lives.

Key Features

- The programme is multi-level, with a specific age-appropriate pupil book for children from **Second to Sixth Class**
- There is a pull-out parent guide at the centre of each pupil book
- Each lesson has a homework activity designed to encourage parental involvement and help to embed the concepts in the children's daily lives
- After the 10 lessons have been completed, parents should encourage their children to use the skills and Strategies, wherever possible
- Each level explores a particular concept from Positive Psychology
- The programme is ideally designed to build skills and strategies incrementally over a five-year period by providing children with the opportunity to revise and deepen their understanding of concepts year-on-year

Additional information on the programme can be found on the publisher's website *Outside the Box Learning Resources* www.otb.ie/WWB

The price of the pupil book is **€5.00 per pupil** and is available to purchase from the school. **Friday, 24 September** is designated date for final collection of money. In the interest of safety, ease of payment and to assist with administration, families of pupils from second to sixth class will receive a text tomorrow, Thursday, with related e-payment advice details.

'BUG BUSTING' NIGHT (THURSDAY 09 SEPTEMBER)

While the prevalence of head lice is a community dilemma, the school, for its part, requests that all parents/guardians engage with a 'Bug Busting' night at home tomorrow evening, Thursday 09 September. It is hoped that such a whole school approach – at the start of a new school year - will assist detection and, should the need arise, provide families with the opportunity to engage with head louse treatment measures over the coming weekend. To assist, there will be no homework assigned for tomorrow night and please find attached a HSE information sheet on the matter. Your local pharmacist will also be in a position to advise. It is important that all families co-operate and support this initiative and engage with frequent checks throughout the school year in this regard.

GAA FOOTBALL TRAINING & MOUTH GUARD REMINDER (initially Fourth to Sixth Classes)

Gavin Webb, GAA coach, will return to the school on Friday, 17 September. Pupils from 4th to 6th classes will avail of football training for the next few weeks, followed by pupils from 1st to 3rd classes and then finally the infant classes. When availing of this training, all pupils need to remember to bring in their gum shields each Friday. Hurling training will then take place in the spring. The school would like to thank our local GAA Clubs for facilitating these sessions for the pupils.

COMMUNIONS – Mrs. Clancy's Second Class (2020/2021) on Saturday 11 September

CONFIRMATIONS - Mr. Lane's Sixth Class (2020/2021) on Friday 10 September & Ms. Tracey Cronin's Sixth Class (2020/2021) on Friday 17 September

Further to previous correspondence from Fr. Michael Regan PP, the parish sacramental celebrations will take place over the next couple of weeks (as outlined above). We look forward to meeting the children and their families at the various ceremonies.

Over....

SEESAW (ALL CLASSES)

Class teachers will be providing pupils with their Seesaw *Home Learning Codes* over the coming week. To maintain everyone's familiarity with this online learning platform, some elements of homework will be assigned via Seesaw.

ROAD SAFETY

The school's Board of Management is constantly mindful of the issue of Traffic Safety outside the school. In the interest of safety, and in order to accommodate bus parking, staff parking and pupil set-down/collection by parents, it is important that traffic congestion is avoided, thus ensuring available space for everyone. The school wishes to remind parents of the need for continuing vigilance by everyone at the school entrance area. In the interest of safety it makes the following recommendations:

- ***Please park on the Belgooly side of the school entrance in the morning and afternoon (9.20am & 2.45pm), leaving the Riverstick side available for school buses.***
- ***To avoid parking in the yellow-boxed areas***
- ***Parking facilities around the school are limited so it is preferable to avoid double parking and a build-up of a large volume of traffic. Parents/guardians might, therefore, endeavour to make space for other cars and buses once children are dropped off and collected***
- ***To park perpendicular to hedge***
- ***The pedestrian pathway marking on the approach road to the school is an essential safety measure for all walking to and from school on a daily basis. Please keep the pathway clear for all walkers. All families have previously received a Garda Síochána & Cork County Council 'Park Safely at School' leaflet, Be Visible Look & Listen (and requested to retain same) which outlined safety measures for all road users in respect of road safety within the school environs***

The initial few weeks of a new school year can be particularly busy and so commands a greater sense of road safety vigilance by everyone outside the school at all times. ***Please bring these recommendations to the attention of child-minders/others.*** We look forward to your continued support and co-operation.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS (Update – 08 September 2021)

Further to recent communication, just an update for families of the following requirements regarding the school uniform.

The uniform consists of:

- wine jumper/cardigan with school crest
- grey trousers/pinafore/skirt
- wine tie
- blue shirt
- regular school shoes
- Pupils wear school tracksuits for sporting and PE related activities, **class teachers will inform you of these days over the coming days**
- A white polo shirt is to be worn under school tracksuit and pupils may wear runners with tracksuit

During the months of **May, June & September**, in addition to the main school uniform or the school tracksuit on designated days (as above), pupils may also wear a white polo t-shirt, an up-cycled short version of the existing school tracksuit or wine-coloured shorts (the latter being available from the school's uniform supplier – *Cahill's Clothing Carrigaline*).

To assist with returning lost uniform items, **please label all clothing** (i.e. track-suit tops, jumpers, cardigans).

SHERPA KIDS (Before & After-School Childcare Programme)

The school is currently liaising with Sherpa Kids with a view to establishing the above-mentioned service at the school. In the first instance, families will receive an email from Sherpa Kids at some stage over the next couple of weeks to ascertain both the scope and the level of interest among school families in availing of such a service. Given the level of preparatory work involved, it is anticipated, where feasibility and need is established, that this service will be operational from November/December 2021.

HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION & ALADDIN 'CONNECT'

During the course of the school year, your child will receive various notice board updates (*via Aladdin 'Connect'*) informing you of different aspects of general school information and events. In addition, our school website hosts school information and educational links you may find useful e.g. School Calendar 2021/2022, Parents' section, previous Home/School notes, Parental Complaints Procedure, Booklists 2021/2022, Child Safeguarding Statement, RSE Policy....

Aladdin 'Connect', an online school communication/organisation/administration facility, assists parents in relation to advising the school in respect of pupil absences, allows parents to update family contact details, provide various permissions in relation to certain activities, regular school news via notice-board message updates and furnishes families with the annual school report card.

This facility also supports the school by reducing paper usage, reducing printing costs, facilitating enhanced school communication and, at this time, reducing the unnecessary handling, where possible, of papers/notes/money....

Thank you to families who have **1) registered 2) downloaded the related app and 3) validated mobile phone number (please complete all 3 steps, the attached information sheets 'Parent Signup for Connect' & 'Set Up App Parents' will assist).**

Given the significant pupil numbers in the school, digital communication will be key in the facilitation of school organisation and arrangements for 2021/2022. The school now urges one or both parents from each family to sign-up for *Aladdin 'Connect'* as this will be used increasingly as the school's main communication means.

For parents who wish to sign-up for 'Connect', another unique access code will be forwarded by text on Monday next.

Please remember to refresh your *Aladdin 'Connect'* app page on a regular basis.

We look forward to another successful school year ahead.

Yours faithfully,
Diarmuid Hennessy
School Principal

ePayment Facility Details

The school uses the *Aladdin* software service for administrative purposes and the *ePayment* system will give you access from an internet browser on your computer, phone or tablet to make secure payments to the school using your credit or debit card. The purpose of the *ePayment* system is to facilitate the easier payment of school money collections for parent/guardians and to reduce the amount of cash and cheques being sent into our school in line with recent Central Bank directives.

Aladdin uses state of the art security to safeguard information entered by you and the school and data is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish data protection laws. Normal debit and credit card usage costs will apply.

On receiving a text containing your **payment access link**, you will be brought to a parent payment page which will contain payment details requested for your child's/family's money collection. You will require a phone with internet access or, alternatively, you can type the related link in an internet browser on a computer to make an *ePayment*. Once you have completed your payment, you will be issued with a reference number. Please quote this reference number in any queries you may have regarding this payment with the school.
