

Bennekerry N.S. Newsletter

September 9th 2019

Fáilte Ar Ais Ar Scoil: We are delighted to welcome back our pupils after the long summer break. We extend a very special welcome to our Junior Infants, who are settling in well, and several other new pupils who have joined various classes throughout the school. We now have a total of 427 pupils and 276 families are represented. We sincerely hope all our pupils will have a wonderful school year with plenty of opportunities for learning, friendship and fun.

Comhbhrón: Our return to school was tinged with sadness as we learned of the death of Sharon Dowling, mother of Darragh Dowling in 2nd class on August 20th. We were deeply upset and shocked at her sudden and unexpected passing. We remember Sharon as a good-humoured, kind person who always had a smile on her face. Her devotion to her family was unwavering and our sincere condolences go to her husband Brendan, her children Darragh, Derabhla and Neil and her brothers, sisters and extended family. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.

Am Oscailt: A reminder that official school times are from 9:20am – 2:00pm for the Infant Classes, with all other classes finishing at 3pm. The Junior Infants will continue to leave at 12 noon until Thursday 12th September, by which time they will be well settled and more able for the 2pm finish. Gates will open to allow for assembly at 9:10am. Please ensure that children are in time for school each morning and are collected promptly at home time, unless participating in afterschool activities, as the school does not take responsibility for them outside of these times. Pupils should **stay behind the barriers** at the school gate when waiting to be picked up after school. They **should not enter the Churchyard /graveyard** as this area is not the property of the school and children should be reminded to treat it with respect. As we are obliged to report school nonattendance to TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency, it is very important to **inform your child's teacher if he/she is absent from school**. Your child has School Absence Management Slips in his/her Homework Diary and these should be used to report absences and provide details of the reasons for these absences. If your child is unavoidably late for school for whatever reason, please send him/her in for the remainder of the day so that a full day is not missed. Regular attendance is essential if your child is to make good progress, both socially and academically.

Carrchlós Nua: The new car park across the road is providing some alleviation to the problem of finding car parking spaces outside the school. We are told that with careful use of space, up to 34 cars can be accommodated here. This is a welcome development and we are most appreciative of all the hard work done by our local councillor, Fergal Browne, in securing this amenity for the community. He assures me that extra work will be carried out shortly and he has many ideas which could further improve the facility in the future. We still encourage parents/minders of the older children to drop and go whenever it is safe to do so as this is the best way to ensure traffic flows more smoothly.

Foirmeacha Eolais/Information Forms: All contact numbers etc. need to be kept up to date for school records. This is especially vital if a child becomes ill or has an accident. **Please let Deirdre know in the office if you have changed address, phone number or have a new contact person** other than yourselves. In the case where family circumstances may have changed, please let us know in confidence. Such situations can affect children hugely and we would like to help and support them where possible.

Éide Scoile: School uniform should be worn every day, either the navy and grey uniform for general wear or the PE uniform on designated days. When consulted, there was overwhelming support among parents for school uniform. The idea of uniform is just that; that all will be dressed the same, thus eliminating competition between pupils relating to style and fashion. Therefore, remember that uniform includes **footwear** which should be **dark** in colour. **Tracksuit bottoms** should be **plain without stripes and logos**. Please ensure that all of your child's clothing is labelled clearly in indelible ink with his/her name so that lost property can easily be reunited with its owner.

Ailléirgí agus Asma: Please ensure that the school is made aware of any allergies, asthma or medical conditions which may necessitate careful monitoring or administration of medication during the school day. Inhalers, epi-pens or other medication should be stored in the cabinet in the office. Pupils may obtain this medication if necessary, but only under supervision by Deirdre or another member of staff.

Lón Folláin: Remember that, in line with our Healthy Lunch Policy, your child should bring a nutritious lunch to school every day. All wrappings and uneaten lunch should be brought home by pupils daily so that you can monitor what has been eaten and what your child likes to eat. **Sharing lunch is not permitted.** A **small treat** such as a funsize chocolate bar, biscuit bar or home-baked treat may be brought to school on **Fridays only.** **Nuts, foods with nut traces and nut-based products such as peanut butter or Nutella are forbidden** in school because some of our pupils are highly allergic to nuts. All pupils are asked to bring reusable drinks bottles as our Green Schools Committee (**Lauren O'Reilly and Neil Connolly Devoy (3rd class), Jim Foley and Milly Rice (4th class), Lily O'Connor (5th class) and Dylan Farrell and Chloe Ryan (6th class)**) are working hard to ensure that we eradicate single-use plastic bottles completely this year. This is our first and perhaps most easily achievable target on our Green School's Action Plan. The committee hope to steer us towards our 7th Green Flag based on the theme of "Global Citizenship- Litter and Waste".

Bainistiú Tráchtá/Traffic Management: The following guidelines are contained in our Health and Safety Statement. This may be a good time to refresh our memories on the procedures which are in place to help keep us all, and especially our young pupils, safe. The staff and pupils have already revised the measures which are most relevant to them.

- Please exercise extreme caution at all times when dropping off and collecting pupils.
- Consider carpooling with friends or neighbours to reduce traffic.
- Parents should stand outside the pupil's designated waiting area at 3pm to leave ample room for the children coming out of school i.e. the area inside the bollards is intended for pupils only.
- Always reverse into a parking space rather than driving in and reversing out.
- Do not park close to the pedestrian crossing.
- Use the designated drop off areas for set down only.
- Do not use the pedestrian area around the bus parking space for parking or set-down at any time as moving vehicles in this area pose a serious risk to all students as they enter and exit the school premises, whether they travel by bus or by car. This applies even when the bus is not in situ.
- Avoid doing a U-turn anywhere in the vicinity of the school.
- The staff car park is strictly for the use of staff.
- Please show consideration to other parents by exiting the car park promptly in the mornings as soon as you have dropped off your child. This will ensure that there will be spaces available for others to do likewise.
- Be mindful of our neighbours living close to the school and ensure that the access to their homes remains unobstructed by school traffic at all times.
- Mini-buses collecting a number of pupils for after-school care may be driven into the school grounds and may be parked in the area at the back of the old school building. This is to facilitate safer collection of a group of pupils. The driver is responsible for opening and closing the school gate and for driving cautiously while on the school grounds. The mini-bus should be in place before the pupils are released from the building and the driver should collect the pupils from the classrooms or main school doors.
- Designated parking spots nearest to the front door may be used in the event of a person with a disability or reduced mobility, due to an illness, accident or injury, wishing to gain access to the building.
- Pupils should be made aware of who is likely to collect them each day. If there is a change of plan and a different person will now collect, the parents/guardians should ring the school informing us of this change of plan. The secretary will pass this information on to the class teacher and pupil(s) in question.
- If, due to a court order or protection order, access to a particular pupil or pupils is denied to another person, the school must be informed of this situation and furnished with a copy of the court order or protection order.

It is important to pass on this information to childminders or anybody else who collects your child.

Eachtaí/Achievements: Well done to **Zara Clarke** (2nd class) who won 1st prize in the U8 Art and Handwriting categories and 3rd prize in the “Design a Scarecrow” competition in the Tullow Show recently and also her brother **Adam** (1st class) who won 1st prize in the U6 Art and 3rd in the U6 Handwriting. The **Webb family** were also among the prize-winners as **Eoghan** (1st class) won 2nd prize in both the Poster competition and the Art competition while **Tara** (5th class) won 1st prize in three of the Art competitions and 2nd prize in the “Design a Greeting Card” competition. The results of the Schools Categories have not reached us yet, so we expect that there may be more good news to follow.

Congratulations to **Keira Doyle** (6th class) who was announced as the winner of the Beat 102/103 Fairytale Festival Art Competition just before the summer holidays. The Beat FM crew visited her house for breakfast and then popped in here to meet her class. Her prize was a family pass to the Fairytale Festival in Kilkenny and a laptop for the school. We are grateful to Keira as this laptop will be put to good use by many of our pupils.

Ranganna Iarscoile/Afterschool Activities:

Cór: Our school choir meets to practice most Mondays from 3-4pm in the school hall. Pupils from 3rd-6th class are welcome, and any child from these classes who wishes to, may take part on a trial basis before being asked to commit after Halloween. The first choir session for this year will be on **Monday 23rd September**.

Trumpa agus Trombón: Lessons for 6th class pupils who played these instruments last year will take place on Thursdays from 3-4pm beginning on **September 26th**. Beginner classes will be offered to 5th class pupils shortly. Gavin gave taster sessions on Thursday 5th so your child got a chance to try out the trumpets and trombones. If they enjoyed it and want to take weekly lessons, details about dates and costs will be given soon and places will then be allocated on a “first come first served” basis.

Táiplis: Draughts continue with Mairéad and Pat Breen on Tuesday afternoons in Seomra 4. The first six weeks, beginning on **10th September**, will be specifically for pupils in 2nd class. Later in the year the sessions are aimed at pupils in the Bennekerry/Tinryland Community Games area.

Ealaín: After school Art Classes with Jean Robertson will be on Thursdays from 2pm-3pm for Junior and Senior Infants and 3pm-4pm for 1st to 6th classes. The **term will start on October 3rd**. Please contact Jean at 086 8686783 for details or to book places.

Rince Gaelach: Irish Dancing lessons with Adeline Dargan will resume in the school hall on Fridays, **beginning on October 4th** from 2-3pm for children in Infant Classes and from 3-4pm for older children. Contact Adeline at 085-7259865.

These afterschool activities are run privately by the facilitators who hire the school premises for the purpose of delivering the classes. All communication regarding time schedules, fees, programme content etc. should be made directly to/by the organisers and is not the responsibility of the school. If your child chooses to partake in any of these activities, please ensure that you have the contact details of the person in charge and that they also have yours.

Cursaí Spóirt:

Cluichí Poiblí: The Community Games National finals took place in Limerick on the 17th-18th August. We were absolutely delighted to hear the fantastic news that Ava Broderick won gold in the U8 80m sprint. Ava’s particular talent for running is hardly surprising as her Mum Lorraine won the exact same race some years ago! The local U10 mixed-relay team which included **Maiyah O’Dwyer, Emily Long and Owen Fitzharris** (all from 3rd Class) finished in third place and brought home bronze medals. Comhghairdeas libh go léir.

Luthcleasaíocht: Congratulations to **Ben Nolan** (3rd class) who won two silver medals in the AAI Children’s Games which were held at the end of June. Ben’s medals were for the U10 60m sprint and long jump. He, along with classmate **Danny Mc Mahon** was also on the relay team which finished in 5th place while **Chloe Ryan** (6th class) finished a very creditable 6th in the U13 Shot Putt.

Sraith Peile an Fhómhair: Our very popular Autumn League will start shortly for boys and girls in 4th-6th classes. Ms. Tomlinson is busy taking names of those who are interested and will arrange the teams when the lists are complete.

Snámh: Pupils from Seomra 7 (Ms. Dempsey's class) and Seomra 11 (Ms. Lyttleton's class) have begun their 8 week block of swimming lessons. All seem most enthusiastic and we are pleased that our pupils have this opportunity to learn to swim at a young age in the company of their friends.

Dea-scéal: We are so pleased that **Callie Kavanagh** (2nd class) has returned to school having battled her illness for much of last year. In acknowledgement of her extreme bravery, Callie was invited to lead out the Irish Rugby team in their game against Wales on Saturday last. She, along with big brother **Rían** (5th class) and Mum and Dad, got to meet the players and then watched the game from the presidential box. What a lovely treat for this family who have been through so much and we sincerely hope that this will be just one of very many happy occasions during the coming year.

Ceardlanna Tíreolaíochta/Geography Workshops: As part of our Green School initiative on Global Citizenship, and also relating to our SPHE and SSE curriculum, the 4th, 5th and 6th classes will take part in workshops on October 15th and 16th entitled "Drought and Migration in Ethiopia" and "Spotlight on South Sudan". These are facilitated by Mura Tierney from the NGO "GOAL". Workshops delivered by Mura in previous years proved to be both enjoyable and informative, so we are looking forward eagerly to her latest presentations.

Caranachtaí/Charities: Thanks to money raised by the 6th class "Fun Day" at the end of last year, and also donations given by the sacramental classes, we were able to give €1,500 to both the Gavin Glynn Foundation and St. Clare's Hospitality Food Kitchen CLG as well as the €300 we give each year to "World Vision" so as to sponsor Dominico, a young boy in Tanzania. The charities were delighted with the extra funding and we are very proud of our pupils and past pupils who showed such generosity in helping these very worthwhile causes.

Clarú/Enrolments: To help with planning for the future, schools in or close to Carlow town have agreed on a **deadline for enrolments for the academic year 2020-21** which is **October 31st 2019**. Enrolment forms will be sent out to all those who have already submitted the "Intention to Enrol" forms. **If there are little brothers or sisters of our present pupils who plan to come in 2020 and who have not yet let us know, please do so as soon as possible so that we can reserve places for them.** Places will be offered before the end of November and once these places have been accepted, we may not be in a position to take any further pupils, even if they are siblings of present pupils or are in our catchment area. Spread the word to family and friends if you think there is anyone who plans to enrol.

Polasaí: In line with DES guidelines and procedures, the Child Safeguarding Statement was reviewed at the meeting of the Board of Management in April and the annual checklist was completed. The Statement was ratified for use in the coming year and may be viewed on the school website. The Designated Liaison Person is Ms. Tonia Cleary and the Deputy Designated Liaison person is Ms. Lourda Griffin. The checklist for our Anti-Bullying Policy was completed at our meeting on June 10th.

Táillí: Many thanks to those of you who have paid the fees for arts, crafts, photocopying & personal accident insurance. We understand that the beginning of the year can be a very expensive time and so we do not expect immediate payment from everybody. If there are any difficulties regarding these or other payments, please contact me in full confidence as arrangements can be put in place for deferred payments or payments over time.

Dea-Bhéasa: During the last academic year we did a lot of work in the areas of Healthy Eating, Being More Active and Developing a Growth Mindset. While we will continue to foster these ideals, we will also place **great emphasis on manners**. Our plan is to consult with our pupils, through the Student Council, to elicit their views and ideas as to how good manners can be promoted. We are asking you to support us in this work by encouraging the use of good manners at all times. I would go a step further and say we should **expect the use of good manners at all times** because, as Calvin Loyd says, "nobody rises to low expectations" and we hope to see a significant improvement in this area.

Dúnadh Faoi Leith: A reminder that the school will be closed from 17th-19th September due to traffic restrictions caused by the Ploughing Championships

Gairdín na Scoile: The pupils from 6th class recently harvested the potatoes, carrots and onions which they sowed in the spring. They then used the fresh produce to make delicious vegetable soup. All agreed that it was a worthwhile project and many are eager to try out similar recipes at home. We are grateful to our caretaker Kevin who ensured that the vegetables survived during the summer.

Grúpa Tacaíochta: Carlow Rainbows offer a nine session Peer Support Programme for children aged 7-13 who have experienced loss through the death of a close relative or separation of their parents. These programmes are run separately. They have asked us to let you know that their next sessions will begin on Monday October 7th in Askea Parish Community Centre at 4:30pm. If you feel your child could benefit from such a programme, you may contact Anne at 087 6636499 or Norah at 087 1269709.

The Carlow Primary Care and Child Psychology Service also offer free workshops for parents/caregivers which are aimed at helping parents to help their children with common issues they encounter such as anxiety, behavioural, emotional issues etc. A list of these workshops which will take place during September and October was given to you last week. If you have any further queries you may contact the Psychology Administrator at 076-1082018.

Cumann na dTuismitheoirí: Our Parents' Association gathered for their first meeting of the year on 2nd September and it was great to see several new faces amongst the group. The committee are very busy arranging the **"Family Fun Day"** which is scheduled for **Sunday, September 29th from 2-5pm**. In times past, the P.A. ran a similar "Field Day" and it was always one of the highlights of the social calendar for our pupils. It was a time when they could meet their friends and classmates outside of the school environment to have fun in a safe, yet relatively unrestricted setting. We are delighted that the Family Fun Day is going ahead this year but are mindful of the fact that it takes a lot of organisation to bring such things to fruition. Attached you will find a poster outlining some of the activities which will be on offer and also a form which explains that **volunteers** will be needed for specific functions. There are empty spaces where you can add your name if you have a couple of hours to spare. It would be great to have as many of you as possible volunteer, as without lots of help, events like this cannot happen. While we acknowledge that it may entail some hard work, becoming involved is a wonderful way of getting to know others in the school community and since you will be helping the children to have a good time, it is a win-win situation for all. Please note the date for your diary and even if you cannot be of assistance, your attendance would be most welcome.

Nuachtliú: Bennekerry N.S. prides itself on being an environmentally friendly school and was one of the first in the country to become involved in the "Green Schools" initiative some years back. Modern technology enables us to communicate in so many ways and I did mention last year that it may be time for us to move away from hard copy newsletters in favour of communications on our website. Our "Twitter" account is proving very popular and if you want to keep regular touch with activities in the school, this is probably the best way to do so. The content of our "tweets" transfers automatically to our website, so if you do not have access to "Twitter", you can log on to the website to keep yourself up to date. This particular newsletter is already on the website under the "Our School" tab and the "Newsletters" sub heading. If you can manage to access it, perhaps you might be happy to read the newsletters online from now on. In this way we could cut down on paper waste and printing costs. Young people are becoming very conscious of the damage which is being done to our planet due to deforestation and waste. We, as adults, would do well to heed the old Native American Indian proverb that says "The Earth was not given to us by our parents. It was loaned to us by our children. "

Thank you for your continued support and I'm sure that, if we all work together, we will have another happy and successful year here in Bennekerry N.S.

Tonia Cleary (Principal)