

**Parents Association
St. Mary's National School,
Ballygunner.**

Telephone: 051-878388
E-mail: [office @ballygunner.ie](mailto:office@ballygunner.ie)
www.ballygunner.ie



Newsletter
Issue 38 – Halloween, 2014.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we approach the Halloween mid-term break I wish to update you on important school news. This year our Parents Association AGM took place on Wednesday 8th October. There was a good attendance and current issues were discussed. Sincere thanks to all committee members who stepped down after their three year term.

Our updated school website is www.ballygunner.ie. On it you will find general information about our school and it is a convenient reference for school calendar, policies and procedures. Also, we are on twitter @BallygunnerNS. If you have a smart phone please 'follow us' to pick up on important school news!

The Board of Management has completed and ratified the annual review checklists for our Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policies. The Board is extremely satisfied with the extensive work

completed to produce a School Self-Evaluation Report 2013-2014 and a School Improvement Plan 2014-2015. These will be available to view on our website after Halloween.

The Department of Education and Skills Summer Works Grant Scheme 2014 allowed our Board of Management to fund an extensive electrical upgrade to the older areas of our school building and replace carpet with marmoleum flooring in our three junior infant classrooms. These improvements will further enhance the learning environment for all.

Cllr. Lola O' Sullivan Mayor of Waterford visited our school on Tuesday 21st October. In line with our Green School Programme the Mayor encouraged all pupils to keep their school and locality tidy. Seventy five certificates for full attendance were presented. I wish to acknowledge ALL our pupils' attendance here at St. Mary's. We had a 97% rate recorded for 2013/14 school year which is exceptional!

On the sports fields St. Mary's N.S. continues to excel. Our gaelic football team played in the Allianz Cumann an mBunscol Easter Final on Wednesday.

Finally, I wish to extend a special welcome to all new families who have joined us in St. Mary's. I hope all pupils have settled in and please remember that class teachers are available by appointment to discuss your child progress. This year our parent teacher meetings are scheduled for Wednesday 19th November.

Enjoy the holiday.

Mr O'Reilly
Principal Teacher

Ballygunner Parents Association:

The Parents Association AGM took place at the school on 8th October last. The following officers were elected for the coming year:

Chairperson: Catherine Rogers
Vice Chair: Deirdre Spillane
Secretary: Bernie Murphy
Treasurer: Joanne Crowley
Teachers Rep: Sandra Rellis

The New Constitution was voted on and formally adopted by the Parents Association.

A huge thank you to our outgoing committee members who have now retired from the association, in particular last year's Chairperson, Sinead Nevins, and Maura Upton our teachers Rep.

New Parents Coffee Morning

A coffee morning took place on Friday 26th September for parents of new pupils to the school. This was a nice informal way for new parents to meet up and get to know one another.

Library

Huge thanks to all those parents who gave of their time to assist teachers in sorting and clearing the Junior Library this September. New novels suitable for 1st to 4th classes are currently being labelled and placed in the library. Thanks to the Parents Association for purchasing and covering these books. They will be well loved and many a bookworm will be delighted with these additions. Many thanks to all parents who support the reading of library books. Lastly, Halloween decorations have given the library a lift and the new cushions (that were kindly donated) are proving very popular.

School Show

The Ballygunner School Drama Club are very excited to announce that this year will see the

return of our school show! 'Shrek the Musical' will be staged at our school during the week of 23rd March 2015. All boys and girls from 5th and 6th class are encouraged to participate. Auditions will be held on 25th and 26th November. The first rehearsal will begin on Thursday 4th December.

Dates for Communion and Confirmation

An information night for parents of pupils receiving First Holy Communion will be held in school on Wednesday 21st January 2015 at 7.30pm.

The Penance Service will be on Tuesday 17th February 2015.

First Holy Communion will be on Saturday 30th May 2015.

Confirmation mass will be held on Friday 15th May 2015.

Senior Infants

The Senior Infants went on a trip to Lady Lane Library to see a show called "The Tall Circus". They also availed of a library tour, which provided a great opportunity for them to become familiar with the books in the library.

5th Class Projects

Some of the children in 5th class completed projects highlighting the functions of the various systems within the body. A lot of work was put into preparing these projects and they provide for interesting reading. The projects are on display in the senior corridors. Well done to 5th Class!

Dates for your Diary:

24th Oct	School closes from 12.00pm – 12.30pm for Mid Term Break.
3rd Nov	School reopens at 9.00am
19th Dec	School closes for Christmas Holidays
5th Jan	School Reopens for Start of New Term

SPORTS NEWS



GAA

Congratulations to the Boys Under 10 Gaelic Football Team who are Roinn A Champions! They beat St. Stephens, Ferrybank and Scoil Lorcáin in a thrilling final blitz in Gracedieu last week. Well done to all boys involved! Many thanks to Mr. O' Leary and Mr. Kirwan for their support.

Best of Luck to our Girls Gaelic Football Team who are playing in the Cumann na mBunscol Roinn A Eastern County Final in Walsh Park Wednesday 22nd. The team have been dedicated to their training since early September and were successful in matches against Presentation, St.Saviours and Holy Cross. This year has seen an increase in girls from 4th, 5th and 6th class wanting to play gaelic football.

The Under 13 Boys Gaelic Football Team reached the Roinn A Semi Final but lost by two points to Scoil Lorcain in a very close match.

Lunchtime hurling training for boys in 1st and 2nd class who are interested in playing will begin shortly after the Halloween break.

Swimming

A number of pupils from 2nd and 4th class were awarded certificates for a series of school swimming races which were held recently in Splashworld. Well done to all who participated!

Active Flag

The school is implementing an improved PE plan starting in November with a view to achieving an Active School Flag. The initiative will see an increase in physical activity among the children. There will be many activities organised which will suit a variety of interests. We would ask all parents to support this programme. We hope to have all plans on our school website.

County Senior Hurling Champions

Congratulations to the Ballygunner senior hurlers for winning the County Final.

We had a visit from the team with the Cup on the Monday after the game much to the delight of the students. Best wishes to them in their Munster campaign.

Lost and Found

Items not retrieved from the lost and found bin will be donated to various charities.

School Garden

The school garden has seen further developments since the last newsletter. We are delighted that the family of Pied Wagtails vacated their nest in July with all but one egg hatched. The parents selected the most unlikely of places to build their nest, a grow bag of potatoes! Ms Kearney's class, who were anticipating the harvest of potatoes, kindly left them undisturbed so that the fledglings could mature, learn to fly and leave home in peace. It is a great tribute to the children in our school that this tiny family survived, well done.



By the summer holidays most foods had been sampled but right through July the garden was tended by the teachers, SNAs and pupils availing of the July Provision Programme. They harvested crops as they were ready and planted more. They saw the sunflowers grow to heights of almost 2 metres. The colourful display of cornflowers and sweetpea were really beautiful and brought many insects into the garden.

In September we returned to a still flourishing garden. We have harvested carrots, beans, tomatoes and beetroot. The cauliflower and cabbages sadly were eaten by caterpillars but the butterflies had helped in pollination so it we'll consider it payment! In the last few weeks we have harvested apples from our three trees, they were delicious.

Some bulb planting has taken place inside the school wall, thanks to all who did a great job. We look forward to “a host of golden daffodils” in the spring. Further bulb planting will take place in the school garden in the coming weeks.

A special thanks to Liz Kearney for her continued support and time given to maintaining our garden. We recently spent an early weekend morning doing a tidy up.

We were successful in acquiring €500 from the GIY Grow Fund, this money has recently been spent on a set of gloves, enough for a class, and 16 raised bed frames. Most of the beds will be located at the rear of the school close to the fifth class rooms. Help would be greatly appreciated in getting this new garden underway.

The school has also bought a shed to store our tools and pots etc. which will make it easier for classes to access equipment. We are also very grateful to the Parents Association for the allocation of €500 to our garden fund. We hope to continue to build on the success of the school garden to date. Thanks to all for your help.

Parking

Just a reminder not to park on yellow lines outside the school and spaces in front of school wall are for drop off only. This helps greatly with traffic flow. As we rely on the goodwill of Havenwood Nursing Home to use their parking facilities please respect their property by not walking through the shrubbery in front of car park.

Green Schools Initiative



Biodiversity is all about plants and animals, habitats and ecosystems all around us. We are continuing to work on the theme of “Biodiversity” this year and hope to apply for our fifth Green Flag in the coming months. Well done to our hardworking, enthusiastic Green Schools committee members and the classes throughout the school who are doing great work in developing biodiversity in our school grounds.

New Habitats

Already we have created many new habitats in our school grounds by increasing our log piles and bark mulch and even making a bug hotel! Our bird feeders and nesting boxes attracted many new birds to our school grounds as was evident in the continuous chirping to be heard in the school environs before the summer holidays! We have greatly increased the numbers of chaffinches, gold finches, blue tits, great tits and sparrows now frequenting our school grounds. Our window boxes attracted many butterflies, bees and moths - by day and by night.

Volunteers Needed Please!

After Hallowe'en we will be planting lots of native shrubs and trees along the periphery of the playground to replace the trees which were damaged in the storms earlier this year. **If anyone is interested in helping** to dig holes and plant, we would really appreciate it. Please leave your contact details in the office and a Green Schools committee member will be in touch with you to make arrangements.

Keep Up the Great Work!

Well done and thank you to all the pupils, parents and staff who continuously promote the Green Schools themes of litter and waste management, water and energy conservation and sustainable travel. Don't forget to carpool, walk, take the bus or park 'n' stride to and from school. Recycle your used batteries, stamps and ink cartridges in the collection boxes in the main entrance hall.

Fionn Smith

Kids corner

Q. What do you get if you cross a snowman with a Vampire?

A. Frostbite!



Q. Why did the Cyclops give up teaching?

A. Because he had only one pupil !

Q. What do you call a witch at the beach?

A. A sandwich!

Happy Halloween Everybody!