

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

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**Newsletter
Issue 47 – Christmas 2016**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With Christmas holidays fast approaching on Thursday 22nd December I wish to thank you all for your continuing support since September. It has been an extremely busy first term here at St. Mary's National School, thankfully the weather was very favourable until recently. We are especially proud of all our Junior Infant pupils. They have completed their first term in national school!

A close link between home and school is important for the academic progress of your children. Thank you for attending your child's parent/teacher meeting in November. I encourage you to keep up to date on school news via Twitter @BallygunnerNS. Also, our school website is an excellent reference on general school policies, procedures and school improvement planning. Please remember teaching staff are available by appointment. Arrangements can be made through Anne Quealy our school secretary on 878388 between 8.45am and 3pm daily.

Sincere thanks to our hard working Parents Association. They have been very active this term working to support pupils and staff. Tickets for our Christmas Raffle are selling well with funds raised going towards enhancing music, reading and science resources for pupils. Also, raffle funding for

I.C.T. maintenance will ensure classroom whiteboards and projectors are working effectively. I wish to extend a special word of thanks to parents who work tirelessly to organise and enhance our library on a weekly basis and parents who assisted with the recent 'Autumn Clean-Up' in our school garden. Our pupils continue to benefit hugely from their work.

I wish to acknowledge all our school staff. Their commitment and hard work ensures that our pupils are always striving towards their full potential. We continue to evaluate and review our work here at St. Mary's N.S. This term as part of school improvement planning teachers reviewed curriculum content plans in History and Geography, conducted a review of our school Code of Behaviour and attended a special education support seminar facilitated by The National Education Psychology Service (NEPS).

There has been great excitement in so many classrooms and our school hall with Christmas plays and concerts in full swing. It was wonderful to see so many parents, grandparents, families and friends arriving to see the various performances. It gives us all a great lift at this time of year. A special word of thanks to Pepe Pageot, a parent of past pupils, who decorated the hall so beautifully again this Christmas.

Huge congratulations to our pupils on all their achievements this term. A special mention goes to our 6th class pupils who took part in *The Service of Light* in St. Mary's Church, in preparation for their Confirmation. Also 4th and 5th class pupils who made it to R.T.E. in Donnybrook, Dublin. Ye were all superb on the telly!

Finally, just to confirm we return to school on Monday 9th January 2017

Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir!
Killian O'Reilly

Christmas Charity Collection

Shoebox Appeal

November came in with the generous donations of Team Hope Christmas Appeal Shoeboxes. Roughly 400 boxes were collected in St. Mary's Ballygunner.

A huge míle buíochas to all of our school community, who so kindly contributed to the vast array of Christmas gifts.

There will be happy hearts and joyful exclamations when these Christmas boxes are opened in faraway lands.

Thank you for your continued goodwill.

Áine Barrett

St. Vincent de Paul & Men's Hostel

St. Vincent de Paul and the Men's hostel were very grateful for your generosity. The contributions made will be shared locally, and will help many in need this Christmas.

Sincerest thanks to all who helped make this possible, and thanks to the teachers who kindly waived their Christmas presents for these good causes.

Garden News

The school garden has been transformed to our own little winter wonderland. It has been wonderful to see the Christmas trees in the garden. Many thanks to Derek Walsh near Londis, on the Dunmore Road, who donated the big tree and Errol Flynn who made a fantastic stand for it. The Living tree was donated by Bronagh Peelo-Whelan and The Harvest Christmas Tree was made by Martina Rafter. They have all added to the lovely Christmas atmosphere in our school.

Sincere thanks to those parents who helped on Saturday November 5th who cleaned almost all of the junior garden area.

A garden committee has now been formed under the umbrella of The Parent's Association to help maintain our garden. The garden committee consists of Carol Chapman, Vincent and Martina Rafter and

Errol Flynn. Also thanks to Ned Grant who again gave his time and energy to the garden. If you have any time to spare and would like to help out in the garden you are welcome to join us. The work done by everyone to date is very much appreciated. Looking forward to getting things growing in the garden in early 2017.

Don't forget to feed the birds during the harsh weather, they depend on us.

Maura Upton

Christmas Concerts

Thursday the 15th of December was a big day in St. Mary's N.S. as many children took to the stage around the school.

Congratulations to all teachers and children involved, you should be very proud.

In addition 3rd classes performed a Carol Service for the pupils of the school and their parents on Friday the 16th of December. The festive spirit was really brought to life in the school. Finally a special word of thanks to Pepe Pageot for her work decorating the school hall and creating a magical Christmas atmosphere.

Library News

The library is in the process of buying books requested by the children and teachers, some are already on the shelves.

Huge thanks to Derek O'Neill and the Parents' Association for arranging the visit of renowned storyteller, Niall de Búrca. The Children attended his storytelling sessions in their class groupings. He told stories to them ensuring that they were age appropriate, it was a HUGE success!

Jumping from bench to bench, chanting and creating imaginary crocodiles and ducks, each group were enthralled as he brought them from his West of Ireland home and his 'Irish Mammy' to France where they were fighting alongside the Scarlet Pimpernel! He was extremely entertaining to watch and his message to the children to read more books and experience adventure and mystery was not missed.

Thanks again to all who helped in the organisation and preparation around this event.

Therese O'Shea

Visit to Central Library

Two of the fifth classes, Ms Kennedy's and Ms Kearney's class went to visit the Central Library on Friday 2nd December. They attended a workshop by Stephen Barrett (WIT) on the benefit of nutrition and development both in terms of sport and health specifically designed for kids.

Stephen is a former elite track cyclist having won 3 national titles and also competed at European and World Championship level for Ireland in both Cycling and Triathlon. He has worked as a coach and sport scientist with amateur and professional athletes from a range of sports, including English Premier League Football, Rugby, Boxing, Rowing, Formula 1, Athletics, Basketball, Triathlon and Cycling. He is currently Performance Nutritionist and Rehabilitation Coach with the Waterford Senior Hurling Team and Director of Athletic Performance with Ireland first UCI Professional Cycling Team Aqua Blue Sport.

The children really enjoyed his presentation and were able to ask him many questions afterwards.

Visit to RTE

Congratulations to Grace Sheils and all the girls in Ms Frewen's 4th class who met author Judi Curtin on RTE's TV programme Swipe TV on 3 November.

Also, three children from Ms Kearney's class, Ciara Sherlock, George Lyons and Emily O'Mahony successfully applied to take part in RTE's Swipe TV for kids. They attended RTE for a day and were filmed for the programme which went on air on December 12th. Congratulations on their winning the contest and they came away with lots of prizes as well as being gunged!!

Liz Kearney

Sports News

Camogie

Well done to all girls in 3rd and 4th Class who played a camogie tournament in school throughout November and December. It was great to see so many interested in playing... more than 60 girls took part!"

Conor O'Neill

Swimming

Well done to Kelsie Obanya who represented St. Mary's N.S. in The Munster Schools Swimming Gala in November, where she won two silver medals.

Ballygunner Parents Association:

Officers update

Co Chairpersons:	Catherine Power Bronagh Peelo
Vice-Chairperson:	Ruth Curran
Secretary:	Theresa Jacques
Teachers Rep:	Therese O'Shea

Volunteers required

We welcome any parents interested in getting involved in the Parent's Association. Next meeting is Wed 25th Jan.

Lost and found

Please ensure all items of clothing bags etc. are labelled coming to school. Label everything bar your child. Items misplaced can be retrieved from the "lost and found" bin located at the school. Please check if your child has lost any items before the Christmas holidays, as unclaimed items will be donated to charity.

School musical

Preparations are already underway for this year's musical - 'Charlie's Chocolatey Adventure'. It will be performed on our school stage, from 3rd-6th April. Fifth and sixth class children will all be involved, from playing main characters and being members of the chorus, to helping out with set design and writing programmes. The Musical Committee were amazed by the talent displayed during drama, music and dance auditions. Well done to all those who auditioned, and

congratulations to Eoin Furlong (5th class) for winning the 'Name the Musical' Competition! Any parents who would like to get involved with making costumes/sets, please let Ms. Piper know. Exciting updates coming soon!

Aoife Piper

Christmas Raffle Winners

Many thanks to all our sponsors for generously donating such great prizes for our Christmas raffle. The raffle will take place Tuesday 20th December in the school and the results will be displayed on the school notice board and website.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

School will be closed on Thursday 12th January 2017 due to a staff in-service day.



Kids' Corner

What is the best Christmas present in the world?

-A broken drum, you just can't beat it!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?

- A Christmas Quacker!

Why is it so cold at Christmas?

- Because it is in DecemBrrrr

What does the Turkey eat at Christmas?

- Nothing cos he's stuffed!

Why does Santa have three gardens?

- So he can Ho Ho Ho

What do you call an old snowman ?

- Water

