

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

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**Newsletter
Issue 51 – Christmas 2017**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With Christmas holidays fast approaching on Friday 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 we survived Hurricane Ophelia and disruption was kept to a minimum. We are especially proud of all our Junior Infant pupils. They have now completed their first term in National School!

A close link between home and school is essential 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 and procedures. Please remember teaching staff are available by appointment. Arrangements can be made through Anne Quealy our school secretary on 051 878388 between 8.45am and 3pm daily.

Sincere thanks to our Parents Association. They have been very active this term working to support pupils and staff. Tickets for our Christmas Raffle sold well with funds raised going towards maths resources, playground game markings and ipads for pupils.

I wish to extend a special word of thanks to parents who work tirelessly to organise our school

libraries. We all continue to work to improve our school libraries. It is regrettable we don't currently have a room to accommodate our senior library, books are on shelves along our main link corridor. However, moving across to an electronic scanning system for all books is a positive step.

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 Maths and P.E. Staff also conducted a review of our Homework Policy with co-operation from our Parents' Association and teachers attended a seminar on TUSLA support services.

I'm pleased to inform you that a constant internet speed of 15 to 20Mbps is now available in all classrooms and that new playground equipment has been ordered for pupils with ASD attending our special classes.

There has been great excitement in so many classrooms 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. Indeed some classes visited Havenwood and Killure Bridge to sing carols for residents, a lovely way to link-up with older people in our community.

Huge congratulations to our pupils on all their achievements this term. A special mention goes to our Girls Gaelic Football Team who won the Cumann na mBunscol Port Láirge County Final for the **first time**

Finally, I wish to inform you there will be no school for pupils on Thursday 11th January 2018 as teachers will be attending Primary Language Curriculum In-Service.

If you are travelling over the holidays please drive carefully and allow plenty of time for journeys.

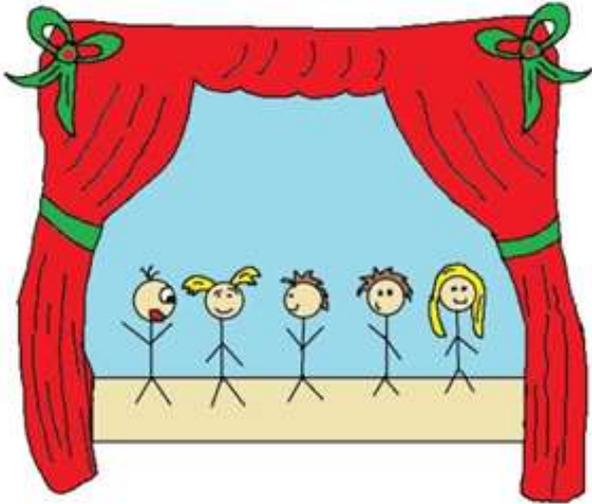
Happy Christmas and Best Wishes to you all in 2018

Killian O'Reilly
Principal Teacher

What's going on at School...

* Christmas Plays 2017

Our Christmas plays this year took place on 14th and 15th of December. Congratulations and well done to all our Infants, 1st class, and Mr. Breheny's 4th class. They performed wonderfully at their Christmas shows. It was great to see parents, grandparents and friends here to support our pupils! Thanks to all the staff too.



* Shoe Box Appeal

"Mile Buiochas daoibh" from Team Hope Shoe Box Appeal, 2017. You have made many children and parents very, very happy!

Sports

* Gaelic Football

-Boys Mini 7s

Following on from last year's historic first ever victory in the competition, boys from 5th and 6th successfully defended the Eastern Mini 7s Football title over two days of matches. The qualifying group stage took place on October 3rd in Ballygunner, where victories over Gaelscoil Phort Láirge and Scoil Lorcáin saw us qualify for the final stage in Carriganore.

On November 11th we took part in four consecutive matches on a bright fresh day in the Sports Campus of WIT. Early wins against Rathgormack and Glór na Mara got the ball rolling, after which a Titanic battle against St. Declan's took place. Trailing by 3 points with less than 5 minutes to play, David Leavy put in a

Roy Keane-like performance from midfield to blitz the St. Declan's defence repeatedly, leaving a final score line of 2-4 to 1-3.

The final game against Mount Sion was a winner-takes-all game. After a slow start, Ballygunner gained the upper hand and eventually won out by 3-4 to 1-1; victory being assured by a late Dylan Phelan goal. Jason Healy collected the trophy and we now look forward to a County Final next April.

Panel: Jason Healy (c), Philip Power, Alan Grant, Cian O'Reilly, Cathal O'Sullivan, Dylan Coady, David Leavy, Mark Hartley, Niall Curham, Dylan Phelan, Daniel Purcell, Dylan Delahunty.

-U13Boys

Our U13 boys are Eastern champions after defeating Gaelscoil Phort Láirge in a thrilling game. Our boys were very unlucky to miss out on a county title when we were defeated after extra time by 2 points to Ballymacarbry. This was an excellent encounter and we are very proud of our boys on their efforts and achievements. Keep the heads up boys and we'll do our best to take the hurling title home!

- Girl's Gaelic football county final

It was all systems go on the 29th November as we headed down to Fraher Field after grasping a good victory over Holycross a few weeks beforehand.

We knew what we had to do and were very focused in the warm up. Instructions were given out to each of the girls and they knew they were up against a very talented and skillful side facing Lismore.

In the opening minute Lily Kavanagh dived into the net bringing the ball with her to give us a good head start in the game, the Lismore girls came back with a beautiful point and a goal and going into the second half it was anybody's game.

The girls dug deep in the second half and great heroic displays by some girls really sealed the deal. Kelsey Obanya was on fire from start to finish, Faye Murphy, a true captain led the team and had a no give up attitude throughout the whole game. Abby Byrne, our amazing goalkeeper put her life on the line in the last few minutes clearing a ball which was far out from goal. Holly O Sullivan calmly put over some essential free kicks and fought till the bitter end and marked her girl all over the pitch ensuring

enough pressure was on her girl for her to force an error. Alex Healy was solid as a rock as our full back and nobody was going to get through with her spectacular blocks and tight tackling. As the final whistle blew history was made in Ballygunner as we brought the shield back to the school.

Huge congratulations to all the girls on the panel who worked so hard all year to get those medals, Ye all should be very proud of yourselves!

Abby Byrne, Ciara Sherlock, Alex Healy, Grace Geraghty, Faye Murphy (captain), Lucy Murphy, Holly O Sullivan, Kelsey Obanya, Ava Peelo Whelan, Ali Ferguson, Lily Kavanagh, Luda Mooney, Sarah Abullo, Emma Berry, Moilli Goff, Rachel Flynn, Alannah Dunne, Avril McSweeney, Niamh Heffernan, Caoimhe Walsh, Aoife Ryan,

E. Tallon

* Camogie

Phase 1 of this year's 3rd/4th Class Camogie League has just been completed. With 8 teams and almost 80 girls involved, it has been a great tournament so far. The second phase of matches has just begun and medals will be presented during the final week of this term. Well done to everyone who is playing and thanks to the 6th Class girls who assist with refereeing at lunch times.

Well done to all the girls in 2nd Class playing their league also. Great enthusiasm has been shown during their indoor games in the PE Hall – the future is bright!

After the Christmas Holidays we look forward to the local Indoor Camogie tournament followed by Mini 7s and 13 aside.



Parents Association

* Book Sale – “Hold on to those books”

If Santa is bringing books to the kids for Christmas please consider holding on to the old ones for the book sale in the new year. Many thanks to those families who already donated books for the library during the year.



* Thank You

Thank you to all those who kindly sponsored prizes and to the Parents Association for all their help in organising the Christmas Raffle. Many thanks to everyone who donated towards the St. Vincent de Paul and Men's Hostel Appeal. All are welcome to our next meeting in January (the date will be displayed on the notice board at the school gate in January.) Can I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

Ruth Curran Chairperson.

* Refection

We are thinking about and praying for people, especially children, who are sick at Christmas time and wishing them improved health in 2018.

Dates For Your Diary

Fri 22 Dec	School closes from 12:00 for Christmas Holidays
Mon 8 Jan	School re-opens
Thu 11 Jan	School Closed
Thu 15/Fri 16 Feb	Spring Mid-Term Break





Kids Corner

Q: What's a child's favorite king at Christmas?

A: *A stoc King !!!*

Q: What's an ig?

A: *An Eskimo's house without a loo !!!*

Q: Why don't reindeer like penguins?

A: *Because they can't take the wrapper off!!*

Q: How does a cow say Merry Christmas?

A: *Moowy Christmas !!*

Q: What do you call Santa Claus when he doesn't move?

A: *Santa Pause!*

Q: What do the elves call it when Father Christmas claps his hands at the end of a play?

A: *Santaplause!*

Q: What do you say to Santa when he's taking attendance at school?

A: *Present*

Q: What did Mrs. Claus say to Santa Claus when she looked up in the sky?

A: *Looks like rain, dear!*

Q: What did the sea say to Santa?

A: *Nothing! It just waved!*

Q: What says Oh Oh Oh?

A: *Santa walking backwards!*

Q: What do Santa's little helpers learn at school?

A: *The elf-abet!*

Q: Who is the king of Santa's rock and roll helpers?

A: *Elfis! (Thank you, thank you very much!)*

Q: Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?

A: *A mince spy!*

Q: What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?

A: *Claustrophobia!*

Q: Why was the snowman looking through the bag of carrots?

A: *He was picking his nose!*



Merry Christmas

