

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

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**Newsletter
Issue 54 – Halloween 2018**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we approach the Halloween mid-term break I wish to update you on School News! Firstly and most importantly I'm sure you will join me in wishing Mr. Joe Kelly the very best in his retirement from teaching. Joe taught in our school since January 1984. I wish him a long and happy retirement from teaching.

This year our Parents Association AGM took place on Wednesday 17th October. There was a good attendance and current issues were discussed. On behalf of the Board of Management I wish to express sincere thanks to all committee members who stepped down after their three year term. I look forward to working with the new committee for 2018/19 school year. Also, a special mention to Our School Library Committee who volunteer weekly to ensure all pupils are using this superb facility.

Our 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, please follow us to keep up to date on school news.

Curricular focus this year will be across 4 key areas; Primary Language Curriculum, School Self Evaluation, Team Teaching and I.C.T.

This is the final year of current Board of Management term. We are hopeful that Department of Education and Skills Summer Works Scheme 2019 will provide much needed funding to level and re-surface our school playground.

I wish to acknowledge our pupils excellent attendance rate of 97%. It highlights the importance families place on education here at St. Mary's N.S. as we all continue to work collectively to give our pupils every opportunity to reach their full potential.

As is tradition The Mayor of Waterford will be here before Halloween to present full attendance certificates to our pupils who did not miss a day during the 2017/18 school year. I wish to extend a special welcome to all new families who have joined us in St. Mary's N.S. I hope all pupils have settled in and please remember that class teachers are available by appointment to discuss your child's progress. This year our parent teacher meetings are scheduled for Tuesday 20th and Wednesday 21st November.

Finally, on behalf of everyone in St. Mary's N.S. I wish to acknowledge the excellent cooperation we have received from parents/guardians re; new access arrangement to our school building.

Enjoy the mid-term and **please drive safely on the roads.**

Killian O'Reilly
Principal Teacher

What's going on at School...

* **Library and RTE Visit**

Mr. O'Sullivan's 3rd class was delighted to greet RTE television to the classroom. The children were presented with medals and certificates for their huge efforts in the Summer Reading Stars initiative, where children read numerous books throughout the summer from the local library. In total the school received a massive 181 medals and certificates in which Mr. O'Sullivan's 3rd class received 15 medals and certificates. The children were extra lucky to appear on the News2Day show on RTE 2. The class was thankful to Damien Tiernan to allow them appear on television. Well done to all those involved!



---Did you miss it?---

You can still watch it at RTE player or Waterford library's website.

<http://waterfordlibraries.ie/news2day-visits-summer-stars-presentation/>

* **Visit by Irish Times Journalist to 5th class**

Understanding and looking at media forms part of the English curriculum in fifth class. Hence on Friday October 5th we were delighted to have Irish Times journalist, Jennifer O Connell visit each of the fifth classes to talk to the children about writing and about being a journalist in general.

Her talk was really interesting and fun while really inspiring the children to write their own articles. She will return again just before the mid-term break to present prizes to the children for their writing. We were also delighted to know that she is a past pupil of St Mary's school!

* **Visit to Havenwood**

On Monday October 8th, the children in Ms Kearney's fifth class went across to Havenwood Retirement Home to join the residents for some song singing. From 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' to 'Doe a deer' by the children to 'I'll take you home again Kathleen' and 'The town I loved so well' sung by some of the residents it was a very enjoyable musical hour!

* **4th Class Visit to Ardkeen Library**

A very enjoyable hour was spent in Ardkeen Library by Fourth Class on 4th October when all three classes paid a visit to meet the author E.R. Murray. She has written the "Nine Lives Trilogy" and has been shortlisted for the Irish Literacy Association Children's Book Awards 2017. She

read the opening chapter of her first book to a rapt audience with the children responding by asking questions, identifying with emotions and actions and sharing their own stories. She spoke about her inspiration as a writer and encouraged the children to write down their thoughts, feeling and ideas in a notebook. This may well be the inspiration for our many Ballygunner Writers!

* **Garden**

This year we had an exceptional summer and the school garden looked amazing heading into the holidays. Thanks to all the staff and pupils for their hard work and support. Children availing of July Provision did a great job watering the garden and looking after the wormery. Due to extreme temperatures we did lose some plants and a few apple trees in pots.

Since September many classes have visited the garden enjoying the flowers and discovering mini-beasts. Some potatoes were harvested along with lettuce and onions. Many birds have been feasting on sunflower seed heads and caterpillars and are welcome visitors in the garden.

The efforts to create our own compost are paying off. A big thank you to our students in Mr. O'Leary's 6th Class who collect the food discarded in the white compost bucket each lunchtime and put it in the Big Pig for composting. After a few weeks the compost from the "Pig" is then transferred to the wormery to be finished off, suitable for use in the garden. Our experienced vermiculturists, now in 6th, have done a fantastic job of looking after the wormery. Well done to you all! Our 4th classes are now taking over the care of the tiger worms and I am confident they will become experts in vermiculture too. Our composting has reduced the amount of waste going to landfill from our school and we have wonderful compost for the garden! We also have a leaf compost container and thanks to Storm Callum we have plenty of leaves to fill it.

We are so lucky to have supportive parents who help in the garden, thank you for your on-going work and creativity. If there are more parents interested in helping out, you would be most welcome, just let a member of the Parents Association know. We are currently in need of some help to give the garden a general tidy before the winter sets in.... many hands make light work!



* **Library**

It has been a very busy start to the year in our school Libraries. The Junior Library is currently closed to the children as all books are currently being catalogued. This can be very time consuming and I would like to acknowledge both Derek and Conor O'Neill for the many hours that they have put into this project so far.



Huge thanks also to the Library Committee of the Parents' Association who come into our school and assist the children each week with selecting their books from the Senior Library. We would be lost without this help. Even in their 'downtime' between classes, these volunteers can be found replacing books on shelves, repairing torn covers and ensuring that the Library is well presented to the children.

Sports

* **GAA**

- **Gaelic Football News**

--Boys Mini 7's Gaelic Football

The boys beat Gaelscoil Port Lairge in the preliminary round and qualified for the eastern finals in Carriganore on Tuesday, Oct 16. In the final tournament we beat Gaelscoil Pilib Baruin, St Stephen's, Rathgormack and Mount Sion. This is the third year in a row that we have won this competition.

--Boys Under 13 Football

In the group stage the boys beat Gaelscoil na nDeise, Mount Sion and St Stephen's. In the semifinal we beat Holy Cross. We have qualified for the final in Walsh Park on Tuesday, Oct 23.

-**Girl's Gaelic News**

The girl's gaelic football got off to a great start this year with record numbers of girls across 4th, 5th and 6th class girls showing an interest in the sport. They have shown great dedication and commitment to training and this has paid off in matches. So far, our team has played three matches in the Roinn A league. We played a tough game against Holy Cross and were beaten.



Following that, we met the local Gaelscoil in a very close game where we got the win. We also won the match against Portlaw in a great display of football up in the Ballygunner Pitch. We will meet Holy Cross again in the Roinn A Eastern County Final on 24th October.

* **Athletics**

On Tuesday 18th September, the Waterford Schools cross country was held at the RSC pitches.



Our athletes from Ballygunner had a very successful day bringing home a large number of medals from every category. Our boys came out on top with the highest points bringing back the cup again. The girls also had a fantastic result and were placed 2nd overall, only a few points behind St Ursula's.

We also had a great team of helpers on the day. Thanks to Sonya Butler, Tanya Abullo, Catherine Power, Edwin Flynn, Eilish Coady Caitriona Kennedy, Ms McSweeney and Ms Hayes for organising the children.

Dates For Your Diary

Thu 25 Oct School closes from 12:00
for Halloween Mid-term break
(School is closed on 26th Oct for Presidential Election)

Mon 5 Nov School re-opens

Fri 21 Dec School closes from 12:00
for Christmas break

Sat 11 May 2nd Class First Communion

Fri 17 May 6th Class Confirmation



Parents Association Activities

* AGM and New Officers

The AGM of the Parents Association took place at school on 17th of October last. The following officers were elected for the coming year:

Chairperson: Angela Jackman
Vice-Chairperson: TBC
Secretary: TBC
Treasurer: Sinead Donohue
Teachers Rep: Emma Tallon

St. Mary's Ballygunner has a wonderful group of parents that support our fabulous National School. There are many behind the scenes projects that we embrace to make the children's learning more fun! Recently we have helped to fund improvements to our school garden and library. But like all things, keeping the wheels turning is vital for the continuation of our schools success. We can never have enough help and would warmly welcome your support at our meetings! We hope you will join us at our meetings over the coming school year - in the school staff room. Keep an eye to school notice board for our upcoming meetings.

* Message from outgoing Chairperson:

Thank you to the committee for all their support and hard work throughout a great year. The Parents Association is a great way to meet new people and make new friends. Thank you to those who attended our AGM on Wednesday 17th. Finally, I would like to wish Angela all the best in her new role as Chairperson and I hope she has as enjoyable a year as I did as Chairperson.

Ruth Curran

* Message from incoming Chairperson:

Welcome to all our new (and old) Ballygunner parents/guardians! We are looking forward to an easy and fun year ahead!

Our Parents Association needs some help so we will start the ball rolling by asking for donations for prizes for the Christmas Raffle! Please let us know if you can help by contacting Anne in the office or come along to our first Parents Association meeting of the year, which will be held in the school staff room on Wednesday 14th November 2018, 7.30p.m.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Angela Jackman



Kids Corner

Q: Who has fangs and webbed feet?

A: Count Quackula.

Q: How do you fix a damaged jack-o-lantern?

A: You use a pumpkin patch.

Q: What has hundreds of ears but can't hear a thing?

A: A cornfield.

Q: What do Italian ghosts have for dinner?

A: Spook-hetti.

Q: What type of dog does Dracula have for a pet?

A: A bloodhound.

Q: What do ghosts use to do their make-up?

A: Vanishing cream.

Q: What do witches ask for at hotels?

A: Broom Service.

Q: Why is a cemetery a good place to write a story?

A: Because there are so many plots there.

Q: What did the mummy ghost say to the young noisy ghost who kept interrupting?

A: Spook when you're spooked to.

Q: What is the name of the witch who lives in the desert?

A: A Sand-witch.

Q: What do ghosts use to wash their hair?

A: Sham – BOO!.

Q: Why did the skeleton climb up the tree?

A: Because a dog was after his bones.

Q: What kind of music did the mummies play at the Halloween party?

A: Wrap
