

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

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**Newsletter
Issue 56 – Easter 2019**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we approach Easter Holidays on Friday 12th April, isn't it great to see the sunshine and the long evenings....

Firstly and most importantly I'm sure you will join me in wishing Mrs. Maura Upton the very best in her retirement from teaching. Maura taught in our school since September 1998. I wish her a long and happy retirement from teaching.

It has been an extremely busy term here at St. Mary's National School and I wish to thank you all for your continuing support. I wish to acknowledge our school staff. They are the single most important asset to our school. Their commitment and hard work ensures that our pupils are always striving to reach their full potential. I wish to specifically acknowledge time teachers give to extra-curricular activities outside school hours.

I wish to compliment our pupils on all their hard work and achievements this term. There were many notable successes. Special mention goes to all involved in Grandparents Day last February it was SUPERB! Also, our schools girls and boys athletic teams who won 2 cups for best large school in Waterford recently.

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 and events.

This is the final year of current Board of Management Term. The Board has recently sanctioned a review of Teaching Staff Posts of Responsibility and awaits news of our application for increased Broadband Speed. The Board is currently reviewing the following policies: Enrolment, Anti-Bullying and Digital Learning Plan.

Our 2nd and 6th class pupils and their teachers continue to prepare for the sacraments of Communion (11th May) and Confirmation (17th May). I wish to extend a sincere thank you to Fr. Liam Power P.P., Fr. John Treacy and Olive Ruane Parish Catechist for their support. Both ceremonies will take place in St. Mary's Church Ballygunner.

Finally, on behalf of everyone in St. Mary's N.S. I wish you all a very Happy Easter. We return to school on Monday 29th April. ***If travelling, please drive safely on the roads.***

Principal Teacher
Killian O'Reilly

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2019

School Calendar

	CLOSE	RE OPEN
Easter Holidays	Fri 12th Apr *	Mon 29th Apr
May BH Weekend	Fri 3rd May	Tue 7th May
June BH Weekend	Fri 31st May	Tue 4th Jun
Summer Holidays	Fri 28th Jun*	-

*** Half Day: School closes at 12:00 noon.**

Local & European Elections – School closed Friday 24th May.

Wellbeing Week – Starts Monday 27th May.

School sports evening at the RSC – will take place Wednesday 5th June.

6th Class Disco –Friday 14th June.

What's going on at School...

* Seachtain na Gaeilge

Bhí Seachtain na Gaeilge ar siúl sa scoil seo againne ón 11ú lá go dtí an 17ú lá de Mhí Márta. Bhí comórtais, ceol traidisiúnta, tráth na gceist, am scéalaíochta, drámaíocht, céilí agus ceolchoirm ar siúl i rith na seachtaine. Bronnadh gradam “Gaeilgeoir na Bliana” do dhalta amháin i ngach rang. Tá súil againn gur bhain na páistí sár-thaithneamh as na h-imeachtaí go léir. Maith sibh!

* 2nd class First Penance – 14th March

The 2nd class children celebrated their First Penance in St Mary's church Ballygunner.

The mass was co-celebrated by our own Fr. John, Fr Liam and other priests, from neighbouring parishes. It was a very special occasion for the children and their families, as it marked another important milestone in the 2nd class year.

As always Fr John's thoughtful contribution to the ceremony added to the occasion. The choir performed fantastically on the night, supported by the talented musician Declan Foley with the very special choral version of Ar n-Athair being particularly memorable.

The 2nd class children now continue with their preparations for their First Holy Communion which takes place on Saturday 11th May 2019.

* World Book Day/Book Character Day

World Book Character Dress Up Day took place on 7th March. It is always a very enjoyable day for the school community and a great way to showcase some of their favourite books and characters.



* Creative Writing Workshops with Anna Jordan

Earlier this term, our 2nd class pupils participated in a series of Creative Writing workshops, with local Waterford writer and past pupil of our school, Anna Jordan. Over the course of three workshops Anna inspired, encouraged and guided our budding authors, as they undertook the 'Write A Book' project. Anna's enthusiasm and passion for creative expression through writing was infectious, and the children readily took to the task of allowing their imaginations run free and creating their own works of fiction. On completion, they took great pride and pleasure in having their books read and enjoyed by classmates.

Many thanks to Anna for giving of her time to this project and to Mr. Derek O' Neill for organising it.

* 6th Class Cake Sale

In February, 6th Class organised their annual charity cake sale. This year's three chosen charities were Pieta House, Solas Centre and WASSA (Waterford Autism Social and Sports Action). Sixth class had a very busy week organising and preparing the hall for the big day. On Friday of that week, 6th class took turns throughout

the day serving and selling cakes and buns that were very generously donated by parents and students from all classes. The Cake Sale was a resounding success and 6th class raised a total of €883.78 for each of their three chosen charities. The three cheques were presented to a representative of the three charities as part of the 6th Class Service of Commitment ceremony later that month. Well done to all involved!

6th Class Confirmation takes place on Friday 17th May.

* Grandparent's Day

As part of Catholic Schools Week, we celebrated Grandparent's Day on the 30th of January. The grandparents of the children in Ms. Fitzpatrick's Senior Infants, Mrs. Ogle's 2nd Class and Mrs. Whittle's 4th Class came to visit the classrooms. There was much excitement for both children and grandparents. Fr. Liam Power celebrated Mass in the school hall with a tea reception afterwards. Ms. Phelan organised a beautiful Remembrance Tree for children to acknowledge their grandparents who are sadly no longer with us. All classes were involved in a range of activities to celebrate the day. Grandparent's Day was a great success!

* Hatching Chicks!

To kick start our Springtime learning we took part in the Nore Valley Park Incubator Hatching Project. Brian, the farmer, came and spoke to all pupils about the 4 week project and outlined what to expect.

We started out with 7 eggs in the incubator. After one week Brian returned to school to do the "candling" process where he discovered that only 6 eggs had chicks developing inside.

After 21 days, these chicks hatched. Three were healthy and strong. One didn't hatch and two chicks hatched but unfortunately were not strong enough to survive. A true reflection of life on the farm and in nature, and all part of the learning process for our pupils.

We had a Name-a-Chick competition which proved to be very popular! The winners were Milly Cummins 5th class with "Michael D Chickens", Mary Duggan 4th Class with "Tyrannosaurus Pecks" and John Duggan 1st Class with "Sir Cheeps A Lot".

The chicks spent one week here in their Brood Box and then returned the Nore Valley Farm.

Senior Infants are due to visit there on their annual school trip in the summer.

They will get to see how much our Ballygunner chicks have grown!

Each pupil in the school also received a voucher to visit Nore Valley Park with their families.



* Tráth na gCeist

Three teams from the 4th classes went to the Gael Choláiste during Irish week to take part in a Tráth na gCeist. They had great success coming in 2nd, 3rd and 4th place and winning Easter eggs. Well done to all involved. A great day was had by all!

* Hurling News

-U11 Indoor Hurling Champions 2019.

Our U11 hurlers had a wonderful time at the recent Indoor hurling blitz. The blitz was held over two days, in the Gaelscoil na nDéise hall. The boys put in excellent performances all round to win out the competition. Along the way they beat St. Declans, St. Stephens & Mt. Sion. Conor Sherlock the team captain brought the Shield back to St Mary's with great delight. The outdoor competition will take place in the coming weeks.

-7 a side hurling

The finals of the boys eastern hurling 7 a side took place in Walsh Park on 20th March. The school played and beat Crehana, Ferrybank, Holy Cross and St Pauls. Ewan Tynan received the cup on behalf of the school. It is the fourth year in a row that we have won this competition and the sixth occasion overall. There was a panel of 15 boys who all played at some stage and represented the school very well. The county final took place in Dungarvan on Tuesday, April 2, we played Lismore and after a tough match we emerged victorious. A wonderful achievement, well done to all the panel and of course the teachers who train and support the team.

* Football News

The Boys' Mini 7s Football team who secured the Eastern title before Christmas, also played their county final on April 2. Unfortunately on this occasion Tallow came out on top. Well done to a dedicated panel who having played the hurling earlier had to compete in their second tough match in a row!

* Camogie News

-Indoor Camogie Champions 2019

Well done to our Indoor Camogie team who won the Cumann na mBunscol Indoor Title for the sixth year in succession in February. Captained by Eva Finan, the team recorded wins over Gaelscoil Phort Láirge, St Saviour's, Glór na Mara, Dunhill, Newtown and Portlaw to once again bring the shield back to Ballygunner. Indoor Team: Team: Kim Sheehan, Lily Fives, Caoimhe O'Regan, Eva Finan (Capt.), Zoe Raethorne, Cara Toomey, Leah Obanya, Heather O'Sullivan, Saoirse Phelan, Aoife Power.

Our Mini 7s Team have also done the 5-in-a-row of Eastern Titles and qualified for the county final which took place in Dungarvan on April 2. Lilly Kavanagh captained this dedicated group of players, but unfortunately the victory wasn't to be theirs on this occasion.

Mini 7s Team: Caoimhe O'Regan; Leah Obanya, Aoife Ryan; Holly O'Sullivan, Aoife Power; Lily Kavanagh,

* Green Schools

A big welcome to the pupil representatives from all the 4th and 5th Classes who have joined our new Green Schools committee. They are enthusiastic and are doing lots of great work in promoting environmental issues in school by:-

- Making weekly announcements on the intercom
- Encouraging the use of beakers and reusable drinks containers
- Encouraging the use of Tupperware instead of tinfoil, wrappers and clingfilm
- Encouraging pupils not to bring wrappers to our yard
- Organising Waterford City Council Dog Fouling Awareness Programme

* Keep Up the Great Work!

A big 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, sustainable travel and biodiversity. Don't forget to carpool, walk, take the bus or park 'n' stride to and from school to lower your carbon footprint. Remember to recycle your used batteries and stamps in the collection boxes in the main entrance hall.

* "The Greatest Gunner"

The official launch of "The Greatest Gunner" talent show happened on Wednesday the 20th March. We are busy here in school looking for the next big thing! Auditions for 5th and 6th class pupils will take place the first week of April with successful candidates being chosen before the Easter holidays. All talents will be considered from music, sports skills, dance, gymnastics, comedy and magic to name but a few. We will be putting forward the strongest ten acts to a final in June. While rumours continue to circulate about guest teachers appearances, this has yet to be confirmed!!!! With some celebrity judges and a few other surprises thrown in for good measure this is sure to be an entertaining evening for all! More information to follow soon

* Ocean Projects

The three fifth classes took part in an ocean literacy course during March. Each class was given an aquarium in their classrooms and a number of Tramore rock pool sea creatures. They learned about taking care of our native creatures and had to feed, monitor, care and observe them over the month. Thankfully they all survived! Our thanks to Paul and Glen for their very interesting an enlightening programme.

* Sanofi visit

Ms. Kearney's Fifth class completed a very enjoyable six week Junior Achievement programme called One World. Our thanks to Liam Ryan (Sorcha's Dad) who did the programme with the class. At the end of the programme, Liam arranged for the class to visit Sanofi

in Waterford on February 1st. The class were brought on a guided tour of the factory and got to talk to many people who work there. We were all amazed at the size and scale of the factory. I think all the children saw science at a whole new level seeing how the process of manufacturing certain medicines is achieved. Lots of budding scientists on the way!

* Ukulele Programme

The three fifth classes have been learning the ukulele over the course of six Thursdays with Cathy Desmond. She has been spotted wheeling her bright pink wheelbarrow full of ukuleles with which the children have really enjoyed learning. The children will perform for a few classes. It has been a fun and worthwhile musical experience for the children. Our thanks to Cathy Desmond.

* 4th Class Community and European Links

Our community links with Havenwood continued on Tuesday 19th March when the three 4th Classes had a visit from Chiara, an Italian nurse working in Havenwood. She spoke to all the classes about her home city of Cuvio and its environs, about Italy and about Italian life. She had prepared a lovely slideshow of beautiful photographs. The children were fascinated with talks of snakes, Italian cuisine and Italian festivals. The children taught Chiara how to count in Irish and she taught them how to count in Italian! She gave recipes for 2 Italian desserts - yummy!! Thank you Chiara!

* Ballygunner Party Box

As we are a Green School, we are hoping to put together a party box to prevent so much single use plastic waste from parties. For example, in one class alone, if every child has a birthday party and invites all the children in the class, 841 cups, plates and bowls will be used and then thrown out. In one class level that is 2,523! This is a HUGE amount of single use plastic and we'd like to help to reduce that number. If you have any old plastic cups, bowls, plates or cutlery please bring them in to Ms. Dennehy. We will put them together in a box and this can be borrowed from the school at no cost.

* Assemblies

Mr. O'Reilly visits classes every month for Assembly. Assembly themes this term are as follows; Being Polite, Special Talents, Good Manners and Friendship. Assemblies are a great opportunity for our School Principal to get to know pupils a little more.

A typical format for Assembly is

- Welcome/Prayer
- Short Presentation
- Discussion on a theme
- News from Classrooms
- Principal Awards
- Song/Poem

P.S. Theme for May will be Families!

Parent's Association

Thank you all for supporting the school table quiz night! Whilst numbers were down the banter and craic were certainly not! A huge thank you to the Parent's Association team, Flash/Keith and the gang at Oskars for pulling together and raising well over €1,700! Flash's impromptu Auctioning of some of the prizes really boosted the funds and an even bigger thank you to those that dug deep to contribute to our school. There are lots of exciting things being planned and all the funds that have been raised (including the coin collection that is currently being counted) are all going towards Well Being Week starting 27th May. We are busy planning some great things for our students, any ideas/offers of help are most welcome. We still don't have a PA Vice Chairperson and so I urge you to have a think about how you could assist - it is lots of fun helping our school and a fantastic team to work with.

Wishing you all a Happy Easter.

Best wishes

Angela Jackman – PA Chairperson

Kids Corner

Q: Why shouldn't you tell an Easter egg a good joke?

A: It might crack up!

Q: How does the Easter Bunny stay in shape?

A: Lots of eggs-ercise!

Q: What is a rabbit's favourite dance?

A: The bunny hop!

Q: What do you get when you cross a bunny with an onion?

A: A bunion!

Q: What type of bunny can't hop?

A: A chocolate one!

Q: How can you tell where the Easter Bunny has been?

A: Eggs mark the spot!

Q: Why did the Easter Bunny have to fire the duck?

A: Because it kept quacking the eggs!

Knock, knock!Who's there?

Sherwood.

Sherwood who?

Sherwood like to eat my Easter Egg.

