



## Monastery NS - Cinntínte 167 Samhain 2020

Dear Parents,

It's hard to believe that we have been back in school for eight weeks and that all our school Covid planning has gone so well. Our boys are happy and many of you have expressed your satisfaction at the way our school has managed the Covid-19 crisis to date. We are most fortunate to have a large modern school campus with numerous entry / exit points and the largest playing facilities of any primary school in Louth. Successive school Boards of Management and Parents' Associations have invested considerably in our school's facilities over the years. We also continue to invest in modern IT hardware and software including new interactive classroom panels, iPads and 15 new classroom webcams for class video conferencing. We were one of the first schools in Ireland to introduce student management software with Databiz NS Admin. They will soon introduce an all in one App for parents that will include our existing online school payments, school calendar etc all available on your smartphone. And we also have our own virtual learning environments MNS Seesaw and MNS Google Classroom for digital learning in school and in the home.

We are also blessed with an excellent staff including teachers, SNAs, Secretary Anne, Caretaker Philip, Cleaners Margaret, Brendan and James. They have worked over and beyond the call of duty during the last eight months to look after the education, health, safety and welfare of our boys. I sincerely thank them for their work in the face of considerable duress on the pandemic frontline. And finally I wish to thank you our parents and our pupils for helping us to keep our school open. As we enter our second national lockdown I ask you to continue to support my staff and to continue to show the patience and understanding you have shown to date. Relax and enjoy your Halloween break with your family.

**Ní Neart go cur le chéile - There is no strength without unity - Nie ma siły bez jedności - Без единства нет силы**

Yours sincerely,

Jim McGee, Principal.

### **Halloween Covid Safety**

**At the time of writing we have not had a positive case of Covid-19 among our pupils or staff.** We want to make our return to school after Halloween safe for everyone and we ask you to help us to stop the spread of this virus in the following ways; *Over the holiday break please abide by Government Covid regulations and in particular avoid "play dates", "sleep overs", Halloween house parties with other households, "trick or treating" to other households or any activity that poses a serious infection risk to you, your family and our school community.*

### **School Books**

We are all working hard to keep our school open. However in an ever changing pandemic situation we have made contingency arrangements for any possible Government closure and move to remote learning. In light of this we have prepared our VLEs, MNS Seesaw and MNS Google Classroom, and we have used them in class with our pupils. **We have also sent home key school books that may be required if our school is forced to close.** These books should only be used if our school is closed by the Government after Halloween break – for the time being do not allow you son to write into workbooks during the holidays. We hope and expect our school to resume after Halloween break so please look after your son's books while they are in your home and return them to his class teacher.

**HALLOWEEN MESSAGE – "ENJOY YOUR HALLOWEEN BREAK BUT DON'T GIVE YOURSELF A COVID SCARE!"**

### **Winter Time**

Its winter time and our boys need to be prepared for the cold and damp winter weather ahead. Please ensure your son has a warm rainproof winter coat in school each day as we are also engaged in many outdoor activities. Parents of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils may also consider buying a pair of wellies for use at break times in the school field. The mornings can also be quite dark and if your son walks or cycles to school you may consider getting him a high visibility vest.

### **Covid Pack for Parents**

For all questions regarding your son's welfare in our school in relation to Covid consult the *Covid Pack for Parents* recently sent home to you and other Covid updates available on our school website.

### **Free Flu Vaccine for all Children aged 2 to 12 years old**

For more information please read the following important HSE leaflet at <https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/pubinfo/flu-vaccination/engleafletflu.pdf>

### **Pupil Health and Wellbeing**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown can affect our family's wellbeing. So our teachers have emphasised the positive aspects of life under lockdown and they have focussed in class on the wellbeing of our pupils. As a result of the lockdown we may have more quality family time together. In the home try to focus on what things we ARE permitted to do. We will still have school and our friends and we look forward to Christmas. Check out the *Wellbeing* section on our website over the Halloween Holidays.

### **Holy Communion**

Congratulations to all our boys in 3<sup>rd</sup> class who made their First Holy Communion on September 20<sup>th</sup>. I would like to express a word of thanks to teachers Ms Cusack, Ms McCreanor and to our Parish Priest Canon Peter Murphy.

### **November 2020 – The Month of the Holy Souls**

November is the month of the Holy Souls and teachers and their classes will remember those who have gone before us in the hope of the resurrection promised by Jesus. More than most years, this November will be especially poignant as we remember all those who have died during this Covid-19 pandemic. In light of this, the November Moment for Catholic Schools recalls us to God's love for us, a love that conquers all things, even death. *"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" (Isaiah 25:8).*

### **A Virtual Halloween Assembly!**

On the last day of school before Halloween Break we hosted a whole school virtual Halloween Assembly using Google Meets video conferencing with each classroom. Our staff and boys dressed up also which made it a really enjoyable and fun event. Master McGee put on his scary Dracula costume as usual! We presented attendance awards for the last school year, Student of the Year 2019-2020, Student of the Year Monthly nominations for September and October 2020-21 and 30 Halloween Competition prizes. Thanks to our Parents' Association who provided a sealed packet of jellies for each pupil in our school. Check out our school website over Halloween for Assembly news, photographs and samples of our wonderful pupil competition entries.

## Important Reminders

**Attendance & Absences** - **Attendance** is recorded electronically daily in each class before 10am. **Please note that pupils arriving after 10am are marked absent** and entered in the “latecomers / early leavers” section. **We are required to report absences of 20 school days or more in a school year to Túsla in accordance with the Education Welfare Act 2002.**

**Travelling Abroad** - Parents seeking to take their son(s) abroad during the school year must inform the Board of Management in advance and **complete the relevant form prior to leaving the country.** This form is available by contacting the school office. Please note that if you visited a non-green list country you and your family are required to restrict your movements for 14 days from the day you arrive back. Please inform the school office accordingly. There are no exceptions to this Government directive. For up to date Government information see [www.gov.ie/en/publication/8868e-view-the-covid-19-travel-advice-list/](http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/8868e-view-the-covid-19-travel-advice-list/)

**Inhalers / Adrenalin pens / Medication** - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) who have any of the above stored in school for their son **should contact the school office after Halloween to check that they are full and in date.** Inhalers cannot be kept in school bags and at the moment they are being kept in class by teacher. **All parents must complete an “inhaler form” available from the office as soon as their son requires inhaler intervention in school.**

**Allergies / Medical Conditions** – If your child has developed an allergy or medical condition since initial enrolment please inform Monastery NS as soon as possible. **Reminder – all classes are nut / peanuts / Nutella / fish / eggs / beans free zones.**

**Head Lice** are a common problem during the school year. For more information visit <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/child-health/head-lice-in-young-children.html>

**Healthy Eating in School** - We are a “*Health Promoting School*” and encourage healthy eating at all times. Please note the following;

- Fizzy drinks, chocolate, crisps, sweets, cereal bars and chewing gum are not permitted in the school.
- Friday is a “**One Small Treat Day**” where pupils must have and eat their normal healthy lunch but are allowed one treat in their lunchboxes i.e. one bag of crisps, one small bar of chocolate, one cereal bar, one small packet of sweets.
- We strongly discourage the buying and eating of fried deli foods \ sweets before school.
- **A healthy lunchbox should contain;**
  - **Bread** - 2 slices / medium roll / tortilla wrap / pitta / crackers/breadsticks / 1 small bagel.
  - A savoury filling which provides **protein** – 2 slices of cooked meat / 4 tablespoons of chickpea spread as a dip with carrots or celery / etc.
  - **At least one portion of fruit per day** – 1 medium apple, orange, banana, pear or similar sized fruit / 2 small fruits – kiwis, plums (seedless) etc / small box of raisins or sultanas, small bunch of grapes (seedless), 3-4 dessertspoons of vegetables – chopped or grated carrots or a small salad.
  - **A suitable drink** (unsweetened juice / water /milk (low fat or semi-skimmed) / diluted sugar free.
  - **One portion of dairy products** – a pot of natural or low fat yogurt, 2 triangles of spreadable cheese, 2 processed cheese slices, a matchbox size of cheese such as cheddar, edam or gouda varieties.
  - See healthy eating in school advice and brochure at [www.monasterynsardee.ie/infant\\_info.html](http://www.monasterynsardee.ie/infant_info.html)

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Can I call into the school?** *No. All parents must stay outside the school grounds. Parents of Junior and Senior Infants and some parents who have the consent of the Principal may drop off / collect their child in the school campus. However they must not enter the school corridors or any other entry point of the school. We also advise that these parents wear a mask when dropping off / collecting pupils. If others are dropping / collecting your son ensure that they are aware of all of the above.*

**How do I contact the school?** *It's best to contact the school office by telephone. Make sure our number **041-6853641** is in your phonebook. The line is often busy but voicemail is monitored. You can also contact the school office by email, [officeardeemns@gmail.com](mailto:officeardeemns@gmail.com) with less immediate matters.*

**What if I have forgotten to give something to my son?** *Remain outside the front school gates and contact the school office by phone. The office will arrange for the item to be collected by your son at the front gate.*

**What if I need to pick up my son during the school day?** *Remain outside the school gates and phone the school office. The office will arrange for your son to meet you at the front gate.*

**Does my son go out to the yard / field when it is raining or snowing?** *We never send the children out at break times in poor weather. This has always been and remains the case. Occasionally bad weather can occur when we are out on break and our teachers take the pupils back to class immediately. Pupils stay in for break when we have inclement weather but they are also benefitting from additional ventilation breaks as recommended by the Department of Education and Skills.*

**Why are classroom windows being kept open all time?** *Government advice states that classroom ventilation, a constant exchange of room air is a vital control measure that must be put in place to combat the spread of Covid-19. Achieving fresh air via a number of windows partially opened as required rather than one window fully open can help to maximise the use of window driven natural ventilation distribution across the room without causing discomfort to our pupils. Internal doors are kept open all day and external classroom windows and Velux windows are also opened. We heat our classrooms as necessary and modify window openings in accordance with weather conditions. At break times all rooms are fully ventilated by opening all doors and windows. After breaks we re-heat every classroom accordingly. We are fortunate to have a modern natural gas heating system with thermostatic controls in each classroom. Please view the following video with Professor Luke O'Neill of TCD about "managing Covid19 in the classroom" at <https://youtu.be/HAlJcZTz4aE>*

**Can my son bring a mobile phone to school?** ***Mobile Phones should not be brought to school unless absolutely necessary.** Please remind your son that if a phone is brought into school it must be off before entering the school grounds and then handed up to teacher. Phones may not be turned on again until pupils have **exited** the school grounds. Our school Code of Behaviour sanctions regarding mobile phones are as follows; for a 1<sup>st</sup> offence in a school year, a one week confiscation by the school will ensue. For a 2<sup>nd</sup> offence in a school year, the pupil cannot take a phone to school for the remainder of the school year.*

**My son has been absent but it is non-covid related. Do I still need to complete a declaration form?** *Yes you need to complete the **Return to Educational Facility Parental Declaration Form** for all absences and return to your son's class teacher as soon as possible. It was sent home in your Covid Pack (5 copies) and is also available to download from our school website.*