



Scoil Thomáis

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NUACHTLITIR

Dated 17th February 2021

Dear Everyone. Some updates from school as we approach this short February mid-term break.

Pupils, parents, and staff will have a break from remote schooling this Thursday 18th & Friday 19th February. We hope that everyone will take a rest from screens over these few days and get outdoors to enjoy some much needed springtime air. School will resume remotely next Monday 22nd February when teachers will be back working online supporting pupils learning. After midterm please restart school work again and keep up the great standard of work that so many of you have been doing over the past six weeks. We hope that there will be some definite news from the Department of Education soon about the plan for the return to school for primary schools - perhaps in early March we can look forward to seeing everyone in school, if public health advice allows this. Meanwhile the advancement of the Covid vaccination programme gives us all hope that there are better days ahead. For now we must all keep to the current restrictions to make sure that the virus cases continue to decline. This is so important to allow for the reopening of schools which is a priority for school families and staff.



Junior Infants September 2021: Applications for Junior Infants Class for September 2021 have been processed by the school in accordance with the School Admission Policy. Letters offering places will be posted this week to successful applicants and parents have until 3pm on Monday 1st March to complete and return acceptance forms etc to the school. Applications for Junior Infant places received after 5th February will only be considered under the Late Applications category. (see school website for admission information)

Adjustment to the planned 2020/21 school calendar. The BOM and school staff have agreed to an adjustment

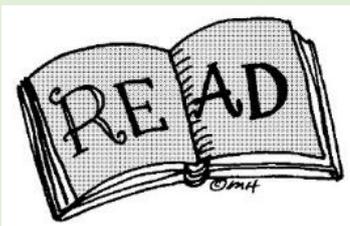


to the school calendar for this year's Term 3. The school will not take the planned weeklong break after Monday 3rd May Bank Holiday. School will now be operational from Tuesday 4th to Friday 7th May for pupils. Instead Friday 4th June will be a school holiday along with Monday 7th June Bank Holiday and the school year will finish on Friday 25th June 2021. Given the disruption to the school year since January the change of dates will give more continuity of in-school time during the month of May. Parents should note the revised dates. The 2020/2021 school calendar will be updated shortly on the website.

Log onto www.scoilthomais.ie ABOUT US /CALENDAR

Congratulations to teacher Ms Victory on the birth of a baby boy named Jack last weekend. This is great news to share, most especially for the boys and girls in First Class Room 10.

Retirement News: Teacher Ms McMahon has informed the BOM of her retirement effective mid- January 2021. Pupils and parents will remember Ms McMahon as a teacher who was always very patient and kind and helped every child she taught to achieve their best. Ms McMahon taught in Scoil Thomáis for the past 24 years and was a very valued member of our school staff. She will be missed by her pupils and many friends and colleagues in the school. We wish Ms McMahon a long and happy retirement.



Congratulations to 4th class pupils Sarah and Enya from Ms Moran's Class R.17 who took up their teacher's challenge to read for 20mins daily. Both girls connect online each afternoon and read for each other - they have already read Roald Dahl's *Matilda* and are now reading *The BFG*. Well done girls - what a great idea. Lockdown and school closure can be a challenging time but technology can help everyone to enjoy learning together.

School Books to Collect: In early February class teachers arranged for school books to be available for collection by parents as pupils need to have all their relevant books at home for remote learning. There are still quite a number of books packs which remain uncollected, especially at senior classes. Parents who wish to collect books should contact the school office @ 8201022 (next week 22nd Feb) to arrange a suitable time to come to the school hall. Please note that parents/adult guardians only are permitted to collect the books - not pupils.



Supplementary In-Person Programme for pupils. The Dept of Education recently announced a special home based teaching and care initiative for some categories of primary school pupils with additional needs to run from late February to early April. The school has made this programme available to eligible pupils and many parents have taken up the offer for their child. Thank you to Ms Ryan, Deputy Principal for her hard work in coordinating this provision and to the teachers who have agreed to staff the programme.

Confirmation and First Communion Preparation. The newly appointed Archbishop of Dublin, Dermot Farrell recently informed Fr Brendan, Parish Priest that there can be no definite plans made by the parish at this stage for the holding of Confirmation and First Penance/First Communion ceremonies during this school year. Please log onto the school website to see a video message from the Archbishop on this matter. The school will keep parents and pupils updated with any further information from the Church authorities on sacramental preparation, which will be dependent on public health advice.

BOM Report: The Board of Management held its most recent meeting (via Zoom) on 9th February 2021. At this meeting, the BOM dealt with relevant school matters including overseeing the admissions process for September 2021 Junior Infants and ratifying school staffing matters. It also approved funding for the Soft Play project which has been given the green light to go ahead. The BOM also approved the purchase of a new lawnmower for the school caretakers for school grass cutting. The BOM also acknowledged the work of school staff in supporting remote learning to date this term. The next meeting of the BOM will be on Monday 12th April 2021.

Soft Play Project: Thanks to the hard work of a project committee of PA and school staff, a contract for the provision of a wetpour play surface and child friendly play equipment is agreed with Kompan, an Irish based company specialising in playgrounds. This project will now be completed in one phase ie surfacing and installation of equipment with BOM and school fundraising money allocated to complete the job. Some additional fundraising events over the coming term will be directed to this project. The lead time on the project is approx 12 weeks so it will be near the end of the school year before the works can be undertaken in the Infant Courtyard. When completed the new courtyard area will greatly enhance the play facilities for pupils in the school.



Bike Racks and Path Widening Works at the school. Progress on the provision of bike racks for 5th class pupils at Castleknock Rise Gate and for 6th Class pupils at Castleknock Vale Gate is almost complete. When onsite school returns the school will inform pupils and parents of the arrangements for pupils in these senior classes to park their bikes on the school grounds. Again thank you to Fingal CoCo for supplying the bike racks under their Cycle to School scheme and to Bonfill Construction who undertook the installation works. Some path widening works are also being done on the school grounds to allow more space for pupils as they walk to and from classrooms.

Road Safety at the School: The school have been informed by the Fingal CoCo Road Safty Officer that the roadways surrounding the school will be assessed over the coming months for designation as a School Safety Zone. This would be a welcome development to further alert car drivers and pedestrion traffic to be extra careful in the vicinity of the school especially for morning entry and hometifetime exit of pupils and parents.

That's all the school news for this time, wishing you all a restful and relaxing midterm break.

M. McGarry, Principal and M. Ryan, Deputy Principal
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