



BREAFFY NATIONAL SCHOOL

Newsletter

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2018

Nuacht an Téarma Samhain go Nollaig 2018



CONTENTS

- Staffing Changes
- Achievements
- News for School Extension
- Internet Safety
- Christmas Bake Sale
- Erasmus Projects
- Christmas Plays & Concerts & Nativity Play
- Science Week
- Swimming
- Athletics Literacy & Numeracy Priorities
- Touch Type read & Spell initiative
- Attendance
- Parents Association
- Board of Management
- Policy Review Updates
Stay Safe & RSE Mid-February
- Child Protection Safeguarding
Statement Review

STAFFING CHANGES

Mr Scott has been appointed by the BOM to cover Ms Mannion's maternity leave from January 7th in Second Class. Ms Mahon has returned from her maternity leave and we welcome her back. We congratulate Ms Mahon and her husband on the birth of their baby daughter Bonnie. Ms Mahon plans on resuming her after-school craft club in the New Year. Ms Orla Egan has been appointed by the BOM to replace Ms Sinead Commons for her maternity leave. We welcome Geraldine Lunn who commenced with us in September as an SNA in our school.

SCHOOL CHURCH CHOIR

Ms Nestor and Ms Gallen provide us with a wonderful school liturgical choir. This greatly adds to school life and is always a treat to hear. It is the pupils of fifth class who participate in this. We also had a lovely school ceremony following Mission Sunday. Our choir also performed in our local nursing home at Christmas which was appreciated very much by the residents there. Pupils from our school choir visited Cuan Chaitriona and Abbey Breaffy to sing carols and play music for the residents there. This is always a special opportunity for the residents and indeed our pupils to show care for others. Both nursing homes appreciate greatly the annual visit.

NATIONAL CHILDRENS' CHOIR

Ms Fergus leads the preparation of this project with both Ms Thornton and Ms Gallen in fourth Class. They are currently preparing an extensive repertoire of songs along with other schools in Mayo. They will perform in the TF Royal in May and some pupils will perform in the National Concert Hall later. This Deis Project is fantastic for memory training and musical literacy.

MUSIC GENERATION

This project continued with the pupils in both 5th classes (Mr Duggan & Mr Moran). They gave a recital for the Darts league competition that added greatly to the atmosphere on the occasion.

CAROL SERVICE

Our Infant Classes gave a super recital of Christmas songs in December. They were a credit to their teachers Ms Commons, Ms Mc Cormack, Mr Scott & Mr Minogue. Our own Ms Gallen accompanied them for practice and recital . We also got to use our own new sound equipment costing €3100 for the first time. It all went very well.

FOOD HAMPERS

Both second classes of Ms Yvonne Nestor and Ms Deirdre Mannion collected food for hampers for St Vincent De Paul. This is a lovely gesture at christmas for those in need.

NATIVITY PLAY

Mr Derek Duffy & Mr Sean Grealis produced the Christmas Nativity Play. They had two productions, one for the pupils and one at night for the parents. Ms Mags Gallen shared her talents once again for this production.

FOURTH CLASS CHRISTMAS PLAYS

Ms Gallen & Ms Thornton put on two separate productions for the Christmas. These were well attended by parents and went down very well.



AFTER -SCHOOL GOLF

Mr Duffy organised after- school golf for pupils in 6th Class in our local driving range. This is another Deis project to promote attendance and other sporting interests of wellbeing for our pupils. They finished up just before Christmas and will have a day playing in Balla Golf Club before Summer.

AFTER -SCHOOL CRAFT CLUB

Last year Ms Mahon organised this for pupils from 3rd to 6th class. They classes were very imaginative and made lots of skillful creations which involved designing, sewing, painting and upcycling. Ms Mahon who has a great interest in crafts, displays and art plans to resume this shortly.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB GAEILGE

It is a very open secret that Mrs Mary Mc Nea has a great passion for Gaeilge. Ms McNea organised after school Club Gaeilge on Wednesday afternoons with Mr Ed Scott and Mr James Minogue. Maith Sibh!

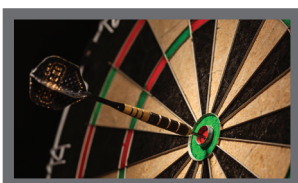
AFTER SCHOOL READING CLUB

Mrs Mc Nea Plans to do an after school reading club in the coming term. By giving a child a love and interest in reading you give them the best present ever.

AFTER SCHOOL SWIMMING

Ms Maura Thorntom organises after-school swimming in Castlebar Swimming Pool on Wednesday and Thursday after school. The treasurer of our BOM, Christina Curran collects the money with her from parents. Up to 90 pupils from beginners, improvers and advanced avail of this service.

DARTS LEAGUE



Mr John Moran, himself a renowned darts player organised a darts league with the senior classes and their teachers. This received media coverage last year and is proving to be a great numeracy success.



ATHLETICS

Our school participated in Mayo Schools Cross Country Athletics . We had great participation as school level for the trials and success in the next stages of the competition.

Ms Brid Tuohy trains the athletes and Mr John Moran who also has an interest in athletics travelled with her to the competitions.

AQUATICS/ IN-SCHOOL SWIMMING

Mr Grealis organises in school swimming classes for pupils in 3rd and 4th class. These took place during school hours in Breaffy House Swimming Pool.

AFTER SCHOOL FOOTBALL TRAINING

Up to 12 of our teachers give of their time to after school football training from 3rd class to 6th class. It is a pleasant sight to see so many with their high-vis jackets crossing to our local GAA pitch. The Principal on behalf of the BOM recently signed a licence agreement for use of the pitch with our local GAA Club.

In the absence of All Ireland fever this year it was not undone by the excitement of Breaffy Club in the County Final especially with Mr Minogue playing on the senior team . This excitement and its colour were captivated very well on our twitter account.

Mr Seán Grealis & Ms Sheila O'Shea work with a team of teachers delivering afterschool football for all pupils from 3rd to 6th. Ms Deirdre Mannion, Ms Sinead Commons, Ms Claire Mahon, Ms Michelle Mc Cormack, Ms Orla Egan, Mr John Moran, Mr Kevin Duggan, Mr Derek Duffy, Mr Ciaran Hennelly, Mr Alan Canny, Mr James Minogue & Mr Ed Scott.

AFTER SCHOOL BASKETBALL

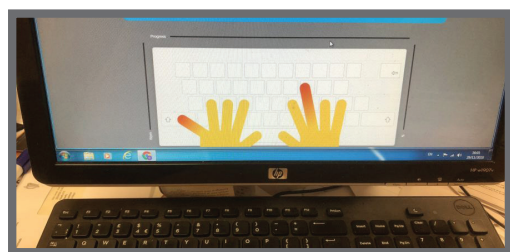
Having introduced afterschool basketball this last year Ms Egan plans to resume this again this term.

Once again it exposes our pupils to an extra positive dimension to school life and our staff and also exposes pupils to possible wellbeing interests.

OTHER WELLBEING, SPORT, & QUIZ EVENTS

- Selection and training of Boys' and Girls' Teams for Castlebar Area Mini-Sevens Gaelic Football Tournament at end of September.
- 'Be Active School Week' during September- a programme of sporting events for all classes. Emphasis on participation and fun.
- Selection and training of Boys' and Girls' Teams for Futsal Tournaments (Fourth Class)
- Breaffy Blue Week in the lead up to this year's County Senior Club Football Final. (Teacher, Mr. James Minogue involved)
- Daily Mile initiative continuing.
- Selection and training of our School's Sport's Quiz Teams for participation in Quiz early January
- Tennis Coaching for Fifth Classes at Castlebar Tennis Club.
- Spikeball Coaching for Senior Classes in conjunction with local Secondary Schools.
- Booster Station Walk for Fifth Classes.

ICT



Our Staff & BOM are very anxious to promote and develop ICT use and access in our school. To this end and as part of its ICT Plan the BOM has invested significantly in ICT resources in our school to advance Literacy and Numeracy. New initiatives last year were robotics, programming with I pads and this year Scratch has been introduced in 2nd Class. We are looking at building on this in the near future with our new library which we plan will have a computer room in it. Our vision for this room is a primarily a literacy, numeracy & project resource room for all classes along with exploring the

possibility for parent classes in the evening to upskill parents.

This year, as a Deis initiative we purchased Touch Type Read & Spell (TTRS) a typing and spelling programme for all pu-



pils from 1st class to 6th class. This is a web based programme and is proving very effective. In this age it would be remiss of us as a school not to equip your child with typing skill literacy for the future.

This was introduced in December and all pupils should have a user-name and password. Pupils that are using it like it and are benefitting from it. This package cost the school €3100 so it is important that it is used to its best advantage.

Our BOM invested in PC stations in all classes from 1st to 6th (18 computers). This allows teachers to roster pupils for IXL, Lexia, TTRS, PC Skills, Presentations, Project work and work for pupils who are exempted from Irish.

In December, we had the official launch of our new website www.breaffyns.ie with a parent and child competition that generated much interest.

Since its introduction parents are now able to pay for books, school swimming and school tours online. 85% of our parents are using this this method now.

Our new website has our school calendar, school policies including Child Protection, Code of Behaviour, Anti Bullying, SPHE & RSE, Newsletters from BOM & Parents Assoc. It also has very useful information for parents on Internet Safety and Health along with many useful links to educational sites to assist you with your role as the primary educator at home. You can also see our school SSE priorities in literacy and numeracy for each term.



SCHOOL BAND

In mid- February we will commence practice with our school band to participate in Castlebar St Patrick's Day Parade.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Parents are reminded of the importance of school attendance. Parents must submit a note to the teacher explaining the absence. Our BOM has noted that attendance is up this year on this time last year and it is important to maintain that improvement.

Pupils with full attendance will be awarded certificated on recognition at the end of the year. Like last year any pupil with an unbroken record will be awarded a watch for their excellent attendance record. Parents are obliged under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to send in a written explanation of absence. We cannot stress highly enough the importance of good attendance.

POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE

Last year our BOM reviewed the following policies and these are posted on our website. They are also listed on last year's end of year BOM report/ newsletter in your child's homework diary. It is important that parents are familiar with our Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Internet Safety pledge, Child Safeguarding Statement SPHE & RSE.

Our Policy review schedule for this year includes Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Enrolment, Acceptable Use Policy, Assessment Policy, Attendance Policy, GDPR, Gaeilge, English, Maths, Drama, Child Protection Audit review.

Your suggestions for any of these policies on our website are welcome. Email any suggestion, point of information to info@breaffyns.ie so that we may give it consideration when reviewing policies.

GRANTS RECEIVED FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In the current year these are the grants that we will receive. The grants we received last year and a summary of our expenditure are posted on our school accounts on display in our school foyer.

Minor Works(Repairs)	€13,233
Capitation & Ancillary Grant	€140,132
Book Grant	€8,568

Testing Grant	€2,100
Computer Grant (ICT)	€11,736
Deis	€34,643
Erasmus / Leargas	€23,500

*Note: Our Deis grant is a grant we receive to alleviate disadvantage by supporting literacy, numeracy, attendance, inclusion, parents, partners & other agency initiatives planned by our school for that purpose.

*Our Erasmus/ Léargas projects are exchange projects funded by the EU.

The first Project is an art and wellbeing project for senior Infant classes with Ms Michelle Mc Cormack, Mr James Minogue and Mr George Moran.

This involves collaboration and sharing practice with Sweden, Italy, Spain and Germany over two years. Recently pupils in senior infants held a skype call to a school in Madrid sharing songs and greetings.

The second project is an ICT project organised by Maura Thornton to look at best ICT practice in Sweden. This will take place during the Easter Holidays. Up to five teachers on our staff including John Moran, John Murphy, Ciaran Hennelly, Alan Carney and Maura Thornton will attend this in Sweden.

As a registered Charity we are obliged to forward our accounts in an approved format to the FSSU (Financial Support Services Unit for Primary Schools). Our accounts are independently certified by Mellett Tyrell & Company annually. We will be forwarding our accounts to the FSSU at the end of this current school year.

We publish a summary of our income and expenditure in the school front hall and share with the Parents Assoc'.

RSE, STAY SAFE PROGRAMME & CHILD PROTECTION

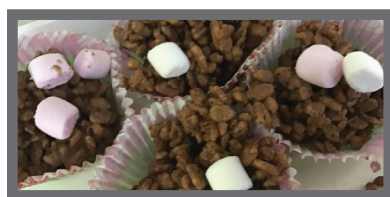
Our school teaches the Stay Safe programme to all classes. Our SPHE & RSE Policy is published on our website. Stay Safe/ RSE is obligatory and usually happens in Mid- February. Information letters are sent home by the class teacher. In 6th Class the sensitive parts are taught by an outside professional, Ms Yvonne Manning a secondary teacher with experience in this area. This happens over a number of weeks in May/June and parents will be informed in advance. Our Designated Liaison Person is Mary Mc Nea and our Deputy Designated Liaison Person in her absence is Mairead Murphy for child protection concerns.

PARENTS ASSOCIATION

Thanks to our Parents Assoc who support the work of our school. The new Chairperson following their AGM is Caroline Sweeney, Secretary Fergal Moran and Treasurer Claire Curry.

We appreciate and value their input. Recently our Parents Assoc organised a Free Movie Day in our school to facilitate parents to drop and go. On December 8th It was a great success.

Another non-uniform day was organised for the local disability charity Áirc and the Parents Assoc' organised a special visit from Santa to all classes.



SIXTH CLASS BAKE SALE

Mr Ciaran Hennelly & Mr Alan Canny organised a bake sale with their classes as part of their annual charity fundraising a record of €1200 was raised on the day. Special credit to all pupils in 6th for their effort and organisation.

INCREDIBLE YEARS INITIATIVE

As a school we are interested in any initiative that promotes best classroom practice from a behaviour point of view. This initiative will be rolled out in infant classes from January with a view to phasing it in through the whole school. We planned to introduce it in Junior and Senior Infants but were only given a limited number of places so we will introduce it in Junior Infants this year. This is a research based initiative that has been highly commended. It is being rolled out by the National Educational Psychologist Service (NEPS) in Mayo Education Centre.

READING RECOVERY

Ms Mairéad Murphy our Deputy Principal applied to get training in The Reading Recovery Programme for pupils struggling with reading. Mairead is doing course in Galway on Tuesdays over the current school year. This is a research based training programme for SEN teachers to work with pupils struggling with reading.

AISTEAR

In our school we have introduced the Aistear curriculum primarily in the infant classes. Aistear means 'journey' and you may often have heard your child say that they were in the 'Aistear Room'. Your child makes a physical journey to the Aistear Room where the learning journey continues with the class teacher and resource teachers in station teaching.

Our Aistear room is set up in the old school and our pupils love going there where they explore and develop language through a themed approach planned by the infant class teachers and their resource teachers. The language themes also link in well with pupils from other countries who may not have English as their first language.

The Aistear approach recognises different types of learning and there is a great emphasis on play in their learning and development. We see our dedicated Aistear room as an excellent resource in the delivery of the infant curriculum. We also deliver Aistear in the classroom. The Aistear programme is co-ordinated by Máiread Murphy, Deputy Principal along with teachers of first and infant classes.



SCIENCE WEEK / ENGINEERING COMPETITION

Science week took place last term with all classes taking part. We had explosive volcanoes, working model engines and science displays. 5th & 6th Class pupils entered the engineering competition organised by M.I.E.I.

SCHOOL EXTENSION

As you know our BOM is busy planning for a school extension. The funding has been sanctioned and approved by the Department of Education and we have received planning permission. As you know we have been approved €380,000 approximately, however we are currently looking for some additional funding before we get approval to go to tender. We expect this approval in the coming weeks and hope to proceed to tender shortly after that.

PRESCHOOL & AFTERSCHOOL CARE

Parents are very appreciative of the care given to pupils in Little V.I.P's preschool and afterschool care on our school premises. Afterschool care is open until 5 pm.

For anyone interested it is run independently by Tracey Keohane (087) 126 1998.

IMPROVEMENT IN TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PARKING IN FRONT OF SCHOOL

Well done to the community group lead by members of our BOM who got the necessary funding of €250,000 from Mayo County Council. This came by the way of a Village Enhancement Grant. It is a great improvement considering the limited space available. It is great that parents are parking in the church carpark and observing the one-way system and traffic calming measures.

A special thanks to the 25 parent volunteers who marshalled the traffic morning and evening in September. It was a great gesture of goodwill toward our school.

INTERNET SAFETY

Recent press reports highlight internet safety concerns for all as legislation is being considered in Dáil Éireann in to minimise unfettered access by children under 14 to internet access and smart phones. This is one of the most serious challenges facing parenting and schooling of young children at the moment.

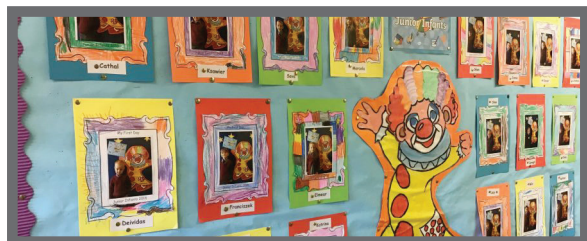
We, in our school are very pleased to announce that we have again this year hosted a talk on Cyber Bullying and Internet Safety for Parents on Tuesday 25th September. We also held workshops for pupils from 1st Class to 3rd class on the 25th of September and 4th to 6th class on the 19th of September such is the importance the BOM attaches to this. As parents and teachers we have a fundamental duty of care for our children, and unfortunately that means getting a grasp of the things that our children are experiencing on line. The talk was delivered to all pupils in 3rd to 6th class. This talk was arranged by the Principal and we had a very good attendance.

The talk was delivered by Trisha O Sullivan who as a parent had experience of cyber bullying to share with us. Trisha gave

a very informative talk to our parents on this ever changing topic. All parents are reminded of our Acceptable Use Policy on our website and the importance of being vigilant at all times. An Internet Safety Pledge was sent home to pupils from 1st Class to 6th in September to be returned to school. There is also a copy to be signed in your child's homework diary. Our Board of Management sees this as an important element in the implementation of our Acceptable Use Policy in our school. The talk and workshops in September provide a platform for informed discussion at home when discussing our Internet Safety Pledge with your child. Our BOM has included this Internet Safety Pledge as part of its Acceptable Use Policy for parents of 1st to 6th Class.

Parent Teacher Meetings took place in October, a little earlier than usual this year. This is a good opportunity for parents to meet the class teacher to review their child's progress early in the year.

School reports will issue in mid-June with an explanation of Sten scores for all parents as usual.



ART DISPLAYS

Our Art displays are frequently updated by all class teachers. Our rear foyer is also commented on frequently by visitors to our school. Ms Fergus is responsible for the creative themes on display here. The current creative theme is created by pupils from 4th 5th and 6th and is made entirely from recycled material.

SCHOOL SELF EVALUATION/DEIS LITERACY & NUMERACY PRIORITIES FOR THE CURRENT YEAR 18/19

These are on our website and give an overview to you as parents of our termly focus in Literacy and Numeracy.

2018/2019	LITERACY	NUMERACY
Term 1	Giving Instructions & Procedures	IXL & Problem Solving
Term 2	Subsequent to review /SSE focus the following have been decided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation and choice (Children will have a free writing copy where they will be given a choice to write. • Writing board displaying handwriting from any genre 	IXL /outdoor classroom/ maths eyes/maths environment/time/ 4th -6th (Robotics)
Term 3	Response and authors' intent (focus on children and visiting authors)	IXL /Scratch/Maths Week /Shape & Space.

Our other Planned SSE/Deis Initiatives are:

1. Garden/ Green ethos/ outdoor Classroom
2. Library Zone
3. Learning Zone in main foyer at extension
4. Learning Zone in infant yard
5. Incredible Years.
6. Educational Trips
7. Reading Recovery

Mise le meas,
Seoirse O Moráin (Príomh Oide)



BREAFFY NATIONAL SCHOOL

Breaffy Road, Castlebar, Co. Mayo, F23WF99

T: (094) 902 4699 E: info@breaffyns.ie

www.breaffyns.ie