

# Scoil Mhuire gan Smál

## Newsletter, Sept. 2015

Dear Parents/Guardians,

*A warm welcome back to you and your daughters and a special welcome to our new pupils and families!*

**New Junior Infants:** Our new Junior Infants are settling beautifully and are quite independent already! They will start their first full day next Mon., Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>, finishing at 1.40pm. Please remember to expect your daughter to be extra tired for a few days as she adjusts to her new timetable. A photographer from *The Nationalist* visited the classes. The photos featured in a special supplement this week. They are worth a view!

**School Opening Hours:** A reminder that school starts at 9.00am. Infants finish at 1.40pm. 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Classes finish at 2.40pm.

*Please note that the Board of Management does not accept responsibility for pupils before 9am.*

**Staff Changes:** We welcome Mr. Peter Madden who is on a Teacher Exchange with Mrs Healy. We congratulate Ms. Shore on her appointment as a permanent member of staff, following the retirement of Mrs. Fitzgerald. We welcome Ms. Kirwin who is on a Teacher Exchange with Ms. McDonald for the year. We also welcome back Ms. Watchorn who joins us as temporary EAL teacher. Congratulations to Ms. Darcy and Mrs. Rowan on the births of their new babies and welcome to Ms. McDermott and Ms. Behan who will cover their maternity leaves. Mrs. McCormack will take Parental leave for the month of September and Ms. Pender will cover for her during this time.

**Éist Cancer Support:** The Éist Centre in Carlow is now offering a group support programme called CLIMB (Children's Lives Includes Moments of Bravery) for children between the ages of 5 and 12 years who are coping with cancer diagnosis within the family unit in October 2015. The programme helps children cope with, sadness, fear, anxiety, fear and anger. The groups are creative, using drama, art and play. They are also based on having fun and meeting new friends. . The programme is run over 6 weeks ( 2 hrs per week) in the evenings, so as not to disturb school attendance.

*Contact Éist Cancer Support Centre on 059 9139684 for further details.*

**Book Scheme:** The school has again received €11 per pupil from the Department towards the scheme. *Unfortunately, because we had already taken the initiative to set up a Book Rental Scheme, we do not now receive the significant funding other schools stand to receive (€100 per pupil!) This is grossly unfair to you and to us.*

*(Thank you to all who have made the payment for the new school year. Parents who have not yet done so are asked to forward payment as soon as possible.)*

Should you find that any of your daughter's rental books are not in an acceptable condition please let her teacher know and the book will be replaced.

**Art & Craft money now due. €40 per pupil. Reduced rate for two or more sisters of €30 each.**

**School Calendar:** A copy of the school calendar has been distributed to both Junior and Senior Infant classes. Classes from 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> pupils have a copy of this calendar in their school journals. Please take note of the dates of holidays and school closures.

**Collecting Infants:** From Mon., 14<sup>th</sup> September the Junior Infant classes will line up outside the main *front door* when being collected in the afternoon. In order to ensure the *safe hand-over* of our infants to their parents/guardians, we respectfully ask that the teachers be allowed to line up the classes and to hand over the infants on a one-to-one basis.

**Barrier:** In the interest of Health and Safety, we ask that all pupils and parents/guardians use the footpaths when entering and leaving the school grounds.

***PLEASE DO NOT WALK UNDER THE BARRIER!***

**Security-**Pupils are not allowed to open school doors at any time. If calling to the school, please do not ask children to open the front door for access to our school. Also, if visiting the school, please do not allow access to other visitors. This is for the safety of all pupils and staff and their property.

**Parking:** A reminder that, again in the interest of Health and Safety, parents cannot drive into the school grounds when dropping off or collecting pupils. Also, please do not park in front of the gate or barrier.

**Birthdays:** It is our policy that birthday party invitations are not given out in class or in the school yard. We are also asking parents not to send in birthday cakes, etc. While it is a lovely idea, it impacts significantly on teaching and learning time. It also puts pressure on other parents. Please be assured that your daughter's birthday will be marked by her teacher, e.g. wearing a special "Birthday Girl" badge /special mention over the intercom/singing/night off homework, etc.

**Rainbows:** *Rainbows* is a support group for children aged 5-12 years who have experienced a significant loss in their lives, e.g. death of a close relative, separation or other painful change in family life. The programme usually consists of 10-12 sessions with trained facilitators in a safe, confidential setting. It is due to begin in late September in Askea Parish Centre. Please contact the school if you are interested in your daughter availing of the programme.

**Gentle reminder re. the Following:**

- Remember to notify the office with changes of address and telephone number. It is important we have correct contact details in case of illness or emergency.
- Please remember to bring and collect children promptly. Please remind your daughter to come back into school if she is not collected.
- ***In the interest of Health & Safety please use the footpaths provided at all times and do not walk under the barrier.***
- Please continue to support our Healthy Lunches Policy. A small treat may be given on Friday.
- We again ask your support for our school's Healthy Eating Policy. One small treat may be given on Fridays.

**Homework/Schoolwork:** We ask you to encourage your daughter to have a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. If homework is taking too long, please make an appointment to discuss the matter with the class teacher.

How much time for homework?

Children up to 1 <sup>st</sup> class	-	20 minutes approximately
Children 2 <sup>nd</sup> 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> class	-	30 – 40 minutes approximately.
Children in 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> class	-	45 minutes to 1 hour approximately.

**Swimming:** Swimming resumes Friday 11<sup>th</sup> for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes. Our three coaches this year are again Ali, Bernie and Julie. Thanks to Ms. Woods and Mrs. Lambe for organising the aquatics programme in the school.

**School Uniform & Tracksuit:** Thank you for ensuring your daughter wears the correct uniform and tracksuit. Please remember that black/navy shoes are part of the uniform.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *Following the very positive feedback, we are again offering pupils the opportunity to wear their tracksuits from the start of Dec. through to Feb. mid-term so that they'll be extra snug during the cold weather.*

**Parents' Council:** Sincere thanks to our Parents' Council who contributed significantly to the school again last year.

**Extra-Curricular Activities:** *Please refer to the list of activities which accompanies this newsletter.*

**Painting:** Grateful thanks to our caretaker, Murt Brennan, who did a wonderful job maintaining our school during the summer holidays.

**Bereavement:** We extend our deepest sympathies to Mary Hourihane and the recent death of her sister Anne and also to Mrs. McCormack on the death of her gransmother. *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

**Contact details:** *Please remember that if you moved house or changed your mobile number during the holidays you must update these details at the school office.*

Finally, could I emphasise that you are most welcome to contact me regarding any concerns you may have. Please telephone the office to make an appointment.  
I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Kind regards,

***Bernie Murphy***

Bernie Murphy  
Principal